

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Proposed NPL Site

September 2024

J. H. BAXTER | Eugene, Oregon
Lane County

Site Location:

The J. H. Baxter site is a former wood treating facility located at 3494 Roosevelt Blvd. in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. The approximately 32-acre facility is adjacent to two drainages, Roosevelt Channel and an unnamed drainage ditch, and is located in a mixed residential, commercial, and industrial zoned portion of the city of Eugene.

Site History:

Wood treating operations began in 1943 and continued until the facility closure in January 2022. Due to violations of air and water quality permits, as well as hazardous waste violations and complaints of intense odors, the site has been under investigation since 1989 by the EPA and state and local agencies. The facility is currently owned by J. H. Baxter & Co.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Contamination is present in groundwater, sediments and soils from historic operational practices and spills. Wood treating chemicals were also left in place in tanks, retorts, and other containers when facility operations halted in 2022. Sampling conducted by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the EPA indicates that facility and nearby residential property soils are contaminated with dioxins, arsenic, dieldrin, dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene (DDE), benzo(a)pyrene, cadmium, and lead. Sediments in Roosevelt Channel and an unnamed ditch are contaminated with dioxins, arsenic, dieldrin, DDE, benzo(a)pyrene, and cadmium. Soil samples collected from residential properties identified concentrations of dioxins above the EPA Residential Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) at 15 of the 26 properties sampled. Sediment samples collected downstream of the facility contained concentrations of metals above the respective Oregon DEQ Risk-Based Concentration up to three miles downstream of the facility.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

Contamination in facility and residential property soils may pose a threat to remaining workers, trespassers, and residents that include children. Areas of soil contamination at residential properties include areas used by residents for recreation, lawn and house maintenance, and gardening. Additionally, there is evidence of sediment contamination in Roosevelt Channel and an unnamed drainage ditch which pose potential risks to human health and downstream fisheries and wetlands. Fishing in the area including Roosevelt Channel is known to occur and consumption of fish may pose a risk to human health. Contaminated groundwater also presents concerns to the environment.

Response Activities (to date):

As of May 2024, Oregon DEQ conducted soil cleanup activities at seven nearby residential properties. The EPA initiated a time critical removal action in early August 2024 to remove bulk chemicals from tanks and piping.

Need for NPL Listing:

The state of Oregon referred the site to the EPA because of the contamination present at the J. H. Baxter wood-treatment facility. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated, but no other program has the appropriate authorities or resources to address the site at this time. The EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state of Oregon.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. [ATSDR ToxFAQs](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp) can be found on the Internet at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp> or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.