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EPA Continues Cleanup Activities at the Lawrence Aviation Industries Superfund Site

Port Jefferson Station, Suffolk County, New York

Community Update

January 2010

EPA encourages public participation. If you have questions or would like additional information about the LAI Site, please contact:

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is continuing cleanup activities at the Lawrence Aviation Industries (LAI) Superfund Site. On September 29, 2006, EPA issued the Record of Decision (ROD) selecting the cleanup action for the Site. The selected remedy addresses both soil and ground water contamination.

Current Activities

This community update is focused on the construction of the ground water extraction and treatment system at the LAI facility. The ground water remedy for the Site includes the installation of two ground water extraction and treatment systems, one to be located at the LAI facility and the other to be located within the contaminant plume near Old Mill Pond. In addition to the treatment system at the LAI facility, EPA will use "in situ" chemical oxidation (ISCO) within the area of high trichloroethene (TCE) concentrations to reduce the overall ground water cleanup time at the Site.

The ground water treatment system at the LAI facility will include an air stripper and a filter bag to remove suspended solids. Air stripping is the process of forcing air through contaminated water to remove harmful chemicals. The air causes the chemicals to change from a liquid to a gas. The contaminants, now in the gas, are removed by granulated activated carbon units. Treated ground water will then be returned or discharged into ground water at the southeast corner of the facility. ISCO uses chemicals called oxidants (such as hydrogen peroxide and potassium permanganate) to destroy contamination in soil and ground water. Oxidants help change certain harmful chemicals, like fuels, solvents, and pesticides, into harmless ones. To implement chemical oxidation, the oxidant is pumped into the ground in the contaminated area. The oxidant mixes with the harmful chemicals, causing them to break down, leaving only water and other harmless chemicals.

Construction of the ground water remedy at the LAI facility is expected to be complete by September 2010. Construction activities will occur during normal business hours and will comply with all local laws and regulations. Conventional engineering controls will be implemented to minimize noise, dust generation, and disturbances to local traffic. Standard health and safety procedures/protocols, including health and safety monitoring, use of personal protection equipment, and site air monitoring will also be followed to ensure that there are no health risks to workers or the public during construction.

SITE HISTORY

The LAI Site is located in the Village of Port Jefferson Station, Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York. The Site is surrounded by residential areas and a few commercial properties. The Port Jefferson Harbor, an outlet to the Long Island Sound, lies approximately one mile to the north. The Site includes LAI's inactive manufacturing plant (referred to as the LAI facility), the "Outlying Parcels" (which consist of 80 vacant and wooded acres to the northeast and east of the LAI facility), and the contaminated ground water plume, located to the north of the facility in a primarily residential area. The LAI facility includes 10 buildings in the southwestern portion of the property. An abandoned, unlined, earthen lagoon that formerly received liquid wastes lies west of the buildings.

Since 1959, the 42-acre LAI facility manufactured products from titanium sheet metal, including products for the aeronautics industry and golf clubs. Past disposal practices have resulted in a variety of contaminant releases including TCE, PCE (tetrachloroethene), acid wastes, oils, sludge, metals, and other plant wastes. During the 1970's and 1980's, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) conducted several visits and investigations at the Site and documented various potential environmental concerns. Surface samples from the LAI facility were found to contain high levels of fluoride, toluene, carbon tetrachloride, and heavy metals. Adjacent residential wells were found to be contaminated with fluoride, nitrates, TCE, 1,1-dichloroethylene, cis-1,2-dichloroethene (DCE), PCE, and heavy metals. In 1980 and 1981, SCDHS required LAI to remove numerous drums of waste materials from the Site. LAI reportedly crushed more than 1,600 drums, allowing their liquid contents to spill onto unprotected soil.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS AND CLEANUP ACTIONS

In 1987, as part of a removal action, EPA provided bottled water to affected residences and subsequently connected those homes whose private wells were affected by contaminated groundwater to public water supplies. NYSDEC oversaw a major drum removal action in 1991. In the 1990s, the Suffolk County Water Authority connected additional homes affected by ground water contamination attributed to LAI to public water supplies. NYSDEC conducted a limited remedial investigation (RI) in 1997; the results from this limited RI revealed that ground water and surface water have been affected by elevated concentrations of chlorinated volatile organic compounds (CVOCs). In 1999, based on previous investigations, NYSDEC requested that EPA place the site on the National Priorities List (NPL). EPA prepared a hazard ranking system (HRS) report and proposed the Site for inclusion on the NPL on October 22, 1999.

The Site was listed on the NPL on March 6, 2000. After an additional inspection of the Site in April 2003, NYSDEC ordered LAI to cease production until all noted violations of air, soil, solid waste, chemical bulk storage, and hazardous waste regulations were resolved. In 2004, EPA removed more than 1,000 drums and containers from the Site. In March 2005, a 13.5-ton shipment of transformers and capacitors filled with suspected polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) liquids was removed from the Site and disposed of as part of a removal action.

A remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) of Site soils and groundwater was performed by EPA from August 2003 to May 2005. The RI included soil and ground water screening, surface water and sediment sampling, soil sampling, and ground water monitoring well installation and sampling. The RI identified a ground water contamination plume originating at the LAI Site and PCB-contaminated soil at the Site. The FS Report, which evaluated the cleanup options for the Site, was completed in July 2006. The Pre-Design Investigation and Remedial Design for ground water treatment at the LAI facility was completed in April 2009.

