Rocky Hill Municipal Well

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD980654156

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 12

Somerset

Rocky Hill Borough

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 12/1/1982
Final Date: 9/1/1983

Site Description

The Rocky Hill Municipal Well Site (Site) covers 2 acres in the southern part of Somerset County and consists of two wells that were constructed in 1936 to supply the residents of the Borough of Rocky Hill with a source of drinking water. In 1978, the first well was sealed and abandoned because it was contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs), in particular trichloroethylene (TCE). The second well continued to operate until 1979, when it was also closed due to high levels of TCE. The well reopened for a short time when TCE levels declined, only to be closed again in 1982, when contamination levels increased in the groundwater. The Borough temporarily used a private water supply until an air stripper could be installed on the municipal well. The air stripper has been operating since 1982 to assure drinking water standards are met. Approximately 700 people depend on the Rocky Hill Municipal Well as their drinking water source.

An investigation of the Site led State officials to sample private wells in the neighboring Montgomery Township Housing Development. Results indicated widespread contamination with various VOCs. Because of the proximity and the similarity of the contaminants present, it was decided to address the Rocky Hill Municipal Well Site and the Montgomery Township Housing Development Site, also on the NPL, jointly

. Site Responsibility: This Site is being addressed through Federal actions.

Threat and Contaminants

Groundwater at the Site is contaminated with VOCs. Contaminated groundwater is treated to drinking water standards before being supplied to the residents of Rocky Hill

Cleanup Approach

The Site is being addressed in a single long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Entire Site: Following the closure of the wells and completion of a RI/FS, EPA selected a remedy for cleaning the contaminated groundwater plume in 1988. The remedy features: (1) extracting contaminated groundwater from the primary plume area; (2) treating the groundwater to Federal and State cleanup standards using carbon; (3) discharging the treated water to surface water; (4) connecting residences to the public water supply as needed; (5) sealing private wells within the contaminant plume; and (6) implementing a groundwater sampling program to monitor the contaminant plume and the effectiveness of the cleanup. This cleanup covers not only the Rocky Hill Municipal Well Site but also the Montgomery Township Housing Development Site.

The State of New Jersey began the design of the groundwater remedy in 1991. In December 1996, the Site was transferred from the State to EPA and became a Federal lead site. A potentially responsible party (PRP) had indicated an interest in implementing the remedy and EPA initiated enforcement negotiations. As a result, remedial design activities were temporarily suspended.

In June 1998, EPA performed a field investigation at the Former Fifth Dimension Facility, located in the vicinity of the Rocky Hill Municipal Well. EPA installed a deep monitoring well on this property, conducted soil gas sampling, and sampled groundwater. Results of this investigation confirmed that elevated levels of TCE exist within the soil and groundwater beneath this property.

EPA's complaint for cost recovery, which was initially filed in 1991, was amended to add two parties as a result of the investigation at the Former Fifth Dimension Facility. A PRP associated with this property also joined the enforcement negotiations. Enforcement negotiations were successful and have resulted in a monetary settlement with one of the PRPs. EPA established a special account for settlement funds, which are used for action at the site.

In August 1999, EPA restarted remedial design activities. EPA completed design of the groundwater pump and treatment systems in August 2003. Construction of the groundwater treatment was initiated by EPA in 2004 and completed in 2005. Quaterly groundwater sampling began in 2005 and is currrently ongoing. A Five Year Review of the remedy will be completed in Spring 2010. The purpose of the Five Year Review is to determine whether the remedy at the Site is protective of human health and the environment.

The First Five Year Review

The remedies at the MTHD and RHMW Superfund Sites are protective of human health and the environment. Implementation of the OU1 and OU2 remedies has provided for the protection of public health and the environment by connecting affected residents to the public water supply, sealing of the provate water supply and monitoring wells within the containment plume, and pumping and treating of contaminated groundwater, thereby eliminating the possibility of exposure to the contaminated groundwater. The remedies are protective in the short-term. In order for the remedies to be protective in the long-term, the CEA must be established by NJDEP to ensure protectiveness.

Cleanup Progress

The cleanup of the groundwater in the area called for pumping the contaminated groundwater from the aquifer in two different areas, treating the groundwater with carbon and discharging the treated water to a surface water body. In January 2005 construction of the extraction wells and two groundwater treatment plants were completed. Over 100 million gallons of water have been pumped from the aquifer and cleaned since the plants started operation.

A Five Year Review of the remedy was completed in April 2010. The purpose of the Five Year Review is to determine whether the remedy at the Site is protective of human health and the environment.

The First Five Year Review found that the remedies at the MTHD and RHMW Superfund Sites are protective of human health and the environment. Implementation of the OU1 and OU2 remedies has provided for the protection of public health and the environment by connecting affected residents to the public water supply, sealing of the provate water supply and monitoring wells within the containment plume, and pumping and treating of contaminated groundwater, thereby eliminating the possibility of exposure to the contaminated groundwater. The remedies are protective in the short-term. In order for the remedies to be protective in the long-term, the CEA must be established by NJDEP to ensure protectiveness.

Site Repositories

Mary Jacobs Memorial Branch Library, 62 Washington Street, Rocky Hill, N.J. 08553

Montgomery Township Municipal Building, 2261 Route 206, Belle Mead, N.J. 08502