

# Higgins Farm

## New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD981490261

### EPA REGION 2 Congressional District(s): 12

Somerset  
Franklin Township

NPL LISTING HISTORY  
Proposed Date: 6/24/1988  
Final Date: 3/30/1989

## Site Description

The Higgins Farm Superfund site is located in a rural area along Route 518 in Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. The site is approximately 75 acres in size and is currently operated as a cattle farm. The site is primarily pasture land with two residences. The site is bordered to the south by Kingston Quarry of Trap Rock Industries, Inc. and to the east and west by private residences.

In 1985, the Franklin Township Health Department conducted sampling of a nearby residential well and found elevated levels of chlorobenzene. Subsequent investigations by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) led to the discovery of a drum burial dump at the site approximately 40 yards from the contaminated well.

In March 1987, NJDEP requested that EPA assume the lead role for mitigating the site. In April 1987, EPA stabilized the site to control further releases of hazardous substances into the environment. The site was proposed for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL) in June 1988. In March 1989, the site was formally placed on the NPL.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through federal, state, and potentially responsible party actions.

## Threat and Contaminants

Groundwater is contaminated with VOCs, semi-VOCs, and metals. Potential health threats include exposure to contaminants through ingestion of contaminated groundwater.

## Cleanup Approach

Site contamination was addressed in two stages: (1) immediate action to provide affected residents with an alternate water supply and (2) a permanent long-term remedial action to address the groundwater contamination.

### Response Action Status

**Alternate Water Supply:** A Record of Decision was signed on September 24, 1990, and the remedial action was completed in November 1993. This interim remedy included the design and construction of a water main distribution system extension and connection to an existing water supply system. A total of 26 homes were connected to the distribution system extension and the residential wells were closed to prevent future use.

**Long-Term Groundwater Remedial Action:** A second Record of Decision was signed on September 30, 1992, which selected a remedy for contaminated groundwater at the site. The major components of the remedy included the installation of groundwater extraction wells around the perimeter of the site, the construction of an on-site groundwater treatment plant, and implementation of a long-term groundwater monitoring plan to evaluate the continued effectiveness of the groundwater treatment system.

By providing a permanent alternate water source, the EPA and the State have eliminated threats to potentially affected residents from contaminated groundwater at the Higgins Farm site. In addition, the on-site groundwater treatment system limits further migration of contaminated groundwater, while actively reducing contaminant levels.

## Cleanup Progress

All planned remedial action construction activities have been completed at the site. An optimization study was conducted to determine how to better improve the operation of the groundwater treatment plant. A groundwater modeling study was conducted to redefine the extent of the plume. An evaluation of potential off-site migration of groundwater contamination will be conducted.

Site Facts: EPA notified the potentially responsible parties of their liability for cleanup activities in 1988 and 1989 and offered them an opportunity to conduct or finance the initial investigation of site contamination. These parties refused to finance or undertake the investigation. EPA also offered the potentially responsible parties the opportunity to conduct or finance the remedial design and remedial action for the site. Again, these parties refused.

In order to recover EPA's past costs, EPA and the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the potentially responsible parties in September 1998. Following numerous negotiation discussions, a settlement was reached with potentially responsible parties. A Consent Decree was lodged on August 10, 2006 and was entered on October 26, 2006. NCH Corporation took over O&M operations on September 9, 2006. Also, on November 21, 2006, NCH and FMC Corporation submitted payments to EPA as part of the settlement. On July 16, 2007, NCH streamlined the pump and treat facility.

On September 30, 2008, EPA is issued a second five-year review report and it was determined that the site still remains protective of human health and the environment. The PRP conducted an off-site investigation to determine if contaminants are migrating off-site. A bioremediation treatability study was started in November 2010 to evaluate the potential of enhanced biological degradation through reductive dechlorination as a viable solution to address residual contaminants in soil and groundwater in the area.

## **Site Repositories**

Franklin Township Public Library, 485 Demott Lane Somerset, New Jersey 08873

U.S. EPA Records Center, Region 2 290 Broadway, 18th Floor. New York, New York 10007-1866 Hours: Monday-Friday - 9 am to 5 pm