

Johnstown City Landfill

New York

EPA ID#: NYD980506927

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 23

Fulton

1 1/2 miles northwest of Johnstown City

NPL LISTING HISTORY

Proposed Date: 10/1/1984

Final Date: 6/1/1986

Site Description

Thirty-four acres of the 68-acre Johnstown City Landfill site was operated as an open municipal dump from 1947 to 1960. The landfill accepted industrial wastes from local tanneries and textile plants from 1960 until mid-1977. The landfill also accepted sludge from the City's wastewater treatment plant from 1973 to 1979. The sewage sludge that was disposed of on-site contained high concentrations of chromium, iron, and lead. Ground water in on-site monitoring wells is contaminated, and seeps of leachate have occurred. Johnstown City is a residential community of 29,000 people, 1,000 of whom live within a one-mile radius of the site.

There are 10 homes within 1,000 feet of the site, all of which have private wells. The closest of these wells is within 150 feet of the site's northern border and is contaminated.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through a combination of federal, state, and municipal actions.

Threat and Contaminants

On-site monitoring wells contain chlorides and heavy metals, including chromium, lead, and zinc, as well as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). On-site soils (which are currently contained under a cap) are contaminated with VOCs, SVOCs, chromium, and lead. Direct contact with or ingestion of contaminated surface water, ground water, or soils on-site posed a health threat. Private well contamination was never high enough to warrant an advisory. The headwaters of Matthew Creek flow south from the landfill and are located within 500 feet of the site. The landfill's release of leachate may have contributed to fish kills in the creek.

Cleanup Approach

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

Response Action Status

Entire Site: The City of Johnstown, pursuant to a Consent Order with the State of New York, conducted a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the nature and extent of contamination at and emanating from the site and to evaluate remedial alternatives. In March 1993, based upon the results of the RI/FS, EPA signed a Record of Decision calling for the landfill to be capped and for the expansion of the Johnstown City water-supply system to provide potable water to all private water supplies potentially impacted by the landfill. Remedial design activities began in May 1994. Construction activities, which commenced in December 1995, were completed in September 1997. To document the completion of construction activities at the site, a Preliminary Close-Out Report was approved on September 29, 1997.

The effectiveness of the landfill cap in reducing ground- and surface-water contamination will be evaluated through post-construction monitoring. Should the monitoring results indicate that either ground- or surface-water quality is not being restored to acceptable levels through natural attenuation (in combination with the cap), further actions may be necessary.

Five-year reviews are undertaken at sites to ensure that implemented remedies protect public health and the environment and that they function as intended by site decision documents. In December 2000 and December 2005, EPA issued Five-Year Review reports, which concluded that the response actions implemented at the site are in accordance with the remedy selected by EPA and that the remedy continues to be protective of human health and the

environment. EPA conducted the third five-year review in December 2010. The five-year review report concluded that the site-wide remedy protects human health. A protectiveness determination relative to ecological receptors cannot be made until additional information is obtained and corrective measures are undertaken, if necessary. Additional investigative work is being performed now. A report addendum is expected to be issued in June 2012. EPA will conduct another five-year review on or before December 2015.

Site Facts: EPA sent Notice Letters to the City of Johnstown and 14 parties potentially responsible for the site contamination in 1988. In 1988, the State of New York signed a Consent Order with the City of Johnstown to conduct an RI/FS at the site. On three separate occasions, methane gas was detected in the air to the northeast of the site at levels that could cause an explosion. This prompted local health officials to test individual homes in the vicinity of the site. Test results have shown that the houses were free of methane gas.

Cleanup Progress

After adding the Johnstown City Landfill to the NPL, EPA performed a preliminary evaluation of the site conditions and determined that no immediate actions are necessary while remedial design and cleanup activities are undertaken at the site.

A 37-acre cap and the expansion of the Johnstown City water-supply system to provide potable water to all private water supplies potentially impacted by the landfill have been constructed.

Site Repositories

Johnstown Public Library, 38 South Market Street, Johnstown, NY 12095

EPA Region 2 Superfund Records Center, 290 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866