



Superfund Community Update

Berry's Creek Study Area
Bergen County, NJ

August 2008

Where to Get Information:

SITE REPOSITORY

Wood-Ridge Memorial Library
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You can find more information at

EPA's website at:

[www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/npl/
ventronvelsicol/](http://www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/npl/ventronvelsicol/)

Study of Contamination in Berry's Creek to be Conducted

In May 2008, EPA signed a settlement agreement with 98 parties to conduct an investigation of contamination in Berry's Creek and its surrounding waterways and wetlands. The investigation will be conducted under the Superfund program and is called a Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study (RI/FS).

The Berry's Creek Study Area RI/FS will be a comprehensive assessment of multiple contaminants in the water, sediment and biota in the creek, as well as the surrounding wetlands and waterways (collectively referred to as the "Study Area"). Samples will be collected and analyzed and the results used to assess risks to human health and wildlife posed by contaminants. A study of potential cleanup alternatives (feasibility study) will be performed in conjunction with the field investigations and assessment of risks.

A detailed work plan for the RI/FS will be submitted in September 2008.

Previous Settlement Agreement Provided Scoping Information

Certain RI/FS scoping activities, such as compilation of existing data, bathymetry, aerial photography analysis representative of conditions over the last 70 years, and development of conceptual site models were initiated under a settlement agreement for scoping activities signed in July 2007. The information provided by the scoping activities is being utilized to develop the detailed work plan for the RI/FS.

Background

Berry's Creek is an approximately 6.5 mile-long tributary of the Hackensack River. Most of the creek is tidal, and tide gates regulate the extent of tidal influence in the headwater tributaries. The creek originates in the West Riser Ditches near Teterboro Airport, meanders through the reed marshes, and then discharges into the Hackensack River, primarily via the Berry's Creek Canal and also via the lower portion of Berry's Creek. Portions of the creek are located in the Boroughs of Teterboro, Moonachie, Wood-Ridge, Carlstadt, Rutherford, and East Rutherford.

The Berry's Creek Study Area (BCSA) has historically been associated with mercury contamination originating from the Ventron/ Velsicol Superfund site, however the RI/FS will be investigating numerous contaminants within the creek from multiple sources. Two other federal Superfund sites, the Universal Oil Products site and the Scientific Chemical Processing site, as well as several NJ State listed hazardous waste sites are located in the Berry's Creek watershed. Contaminants are known to be elevated throughout the BCSA surface water and sediments and the levels warrant detailed evaluation of nature, extent and potential risks.

In 2005, EPA developed a plan called the Framework Document, which described the type of studies that EPA expected to be conducted for the Berry's Creek Study Area RI/FS. The Framework Document was provided to the parties that were being asked to conduct the RI/FS.

RI/FS Work Plan

One of the first tasks required by the settlement agreement is the submission of a work plan for the RI/FS. The work effort described by the RI/FS Work Plan should closely resemble the scope of work described in the Framework Document, and should also reflect the information that is now available from the scoping activities and from other sources.

The data collections for the RI/FS are anticipated to start in the spring of 2009. An iterative process will be utilized, such that future sampling programs will be determined based on the findings from the previous data collections. Three years of data collection and analysis are anticipated.

EPA Oversight and Decision-Making

EPA will oversee the work being conducted by the parties that signed on to conduct the RI/FS. Oversight consists of, among other things, field observation, split sampling, and document review and approval. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and other agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Fish and Wildlife Service will also review and comment on documents developed for the project.

Following the completion of data collection and analysis and the evaluation of alternatives in the feasibility study, EPA will develop a Proposed Plan for the Berry's Creek Study Area. EPA will address public comment on the Proposed Plan in a responsiveness summary and document the selected alternative in a Record of Decision.