



# Fruithurst Community Soil and Water Studies

*Cleburne County, Alabama*

Fact Sheet 2 | March 2020

## Introduction

Following an Auburn University study in 2017, local residents expressed concerns about cases of childhood illness in the communities of Fruithurst and Muscadine, Alabama, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM).

In response, EPA and ADEM performed several environmental investigations in the communities for the possible presence of contaminants. These included sampling at and around a nearby former rubber manufacturer (the Preferred Compounding Corp, also known as ProBlend), and re-sampling the same former drinking water wells that Auburn University researchers tested.

This fact sheet summarizes the results of the investigations. No contaminants were detected above action levels in any of the samples collected, and no further investigative actions are planned. The detailed sampling report is posted online at: [www.epa.gov/al](http://www.epa.gov/al)



*Direct-push technology used to install temporary ground water monitoring well.*

## Contaminants Studied

The investigations focused on the following contaminants: volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and metals in soils, surface water, groundwater and sediment. These included bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate and lead, which were reportedly detected in some of the former drinking water wells tested as part of the Auburn University study.

## Activities Near ProBlend

In April 2018, ADEM conducted an investigation of the former ProBlend facility. Two soil samples were collected from the facility, and one surface water sample was collected from an unnamed tributary of Muscadine Creek that receives surface water runoff from the facility. EPA's Removal Management Level (RML) table was used to determine action levels. All contaminants detected in soils were below action levels. All contaminants detected in water were below action levels and EPA Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), where established. An MCL is the legal threshold limit on the amount of a substance that is allowed in public water systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Because no contaminants were detected above EPA RMLs in any of the samples collected (soil and surface water), ADEM recommended no further action at the time.

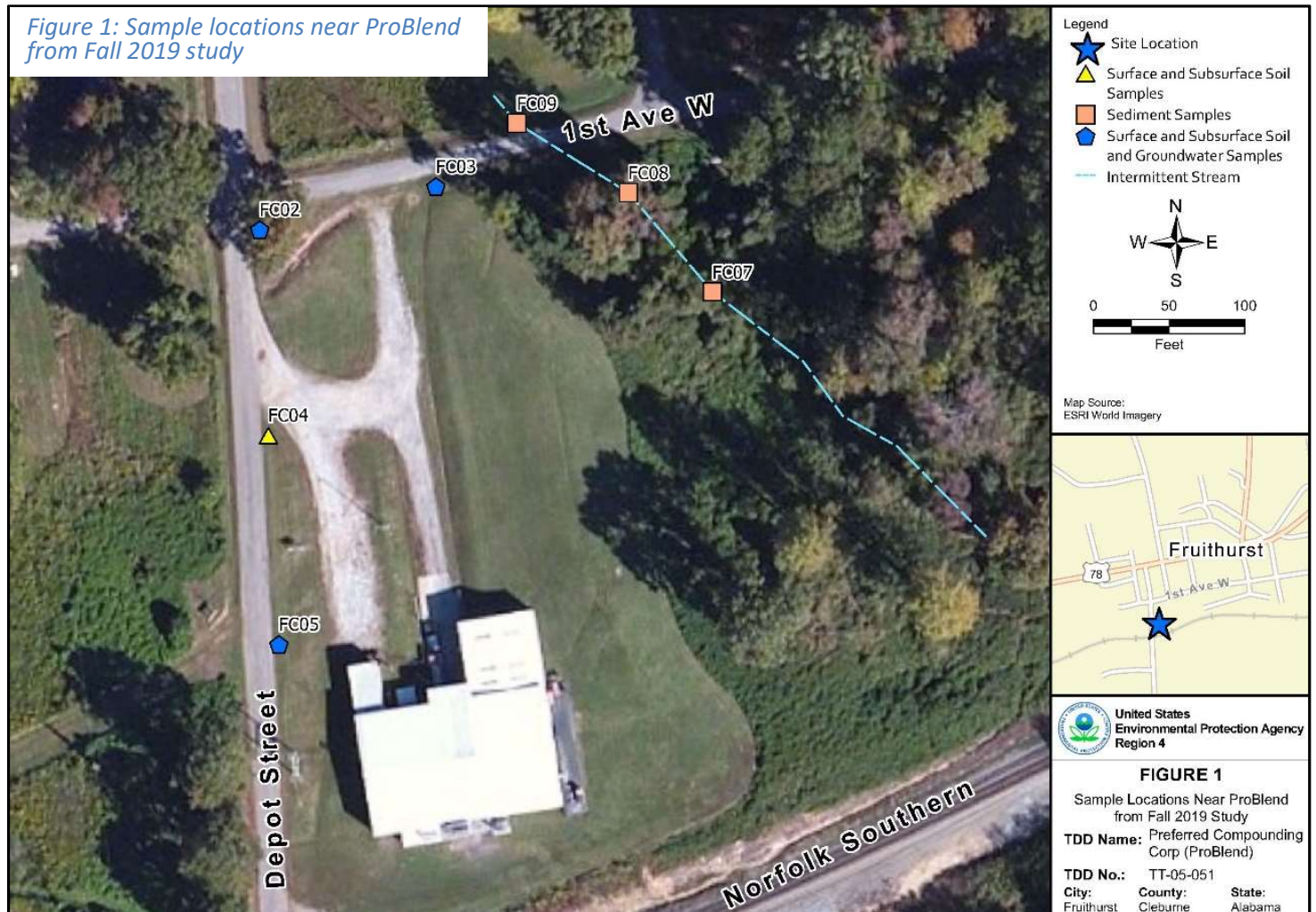
# Activities Near ProBlend (continued)

In February 2019, the EPA recommended further investigation to address remaining community concerns about possible soil and drinking water contamination in the Fruithurst community. In fall 2019, EPA performed soil, groundwater and sediment sampling near the ProBlend facility. In addition, EPA sampled tapwater and re-sampled the same former drinking water wells that Auburn University researchers tested.

EPA, with the support of ADEM, sampled areas near the ProBlend facility between September 30 and October 4, 2019. A total of 11 soil samples (six surface and five subsurface, including a duplicate and two backgrounds), five groundwater samples (including a duplicate and a background), and three sediment samples (including a background) were collected (see Figure 1). All detected concentrations of contaminants in surface and subsurface soil were below EPA's Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) and/or consistent with background. No contaminants were detected above EPA MCLs in any of the groundwater samples. Sediment samples collected from the unnamed tributary did not contain organic or inorganic contaminants above background.

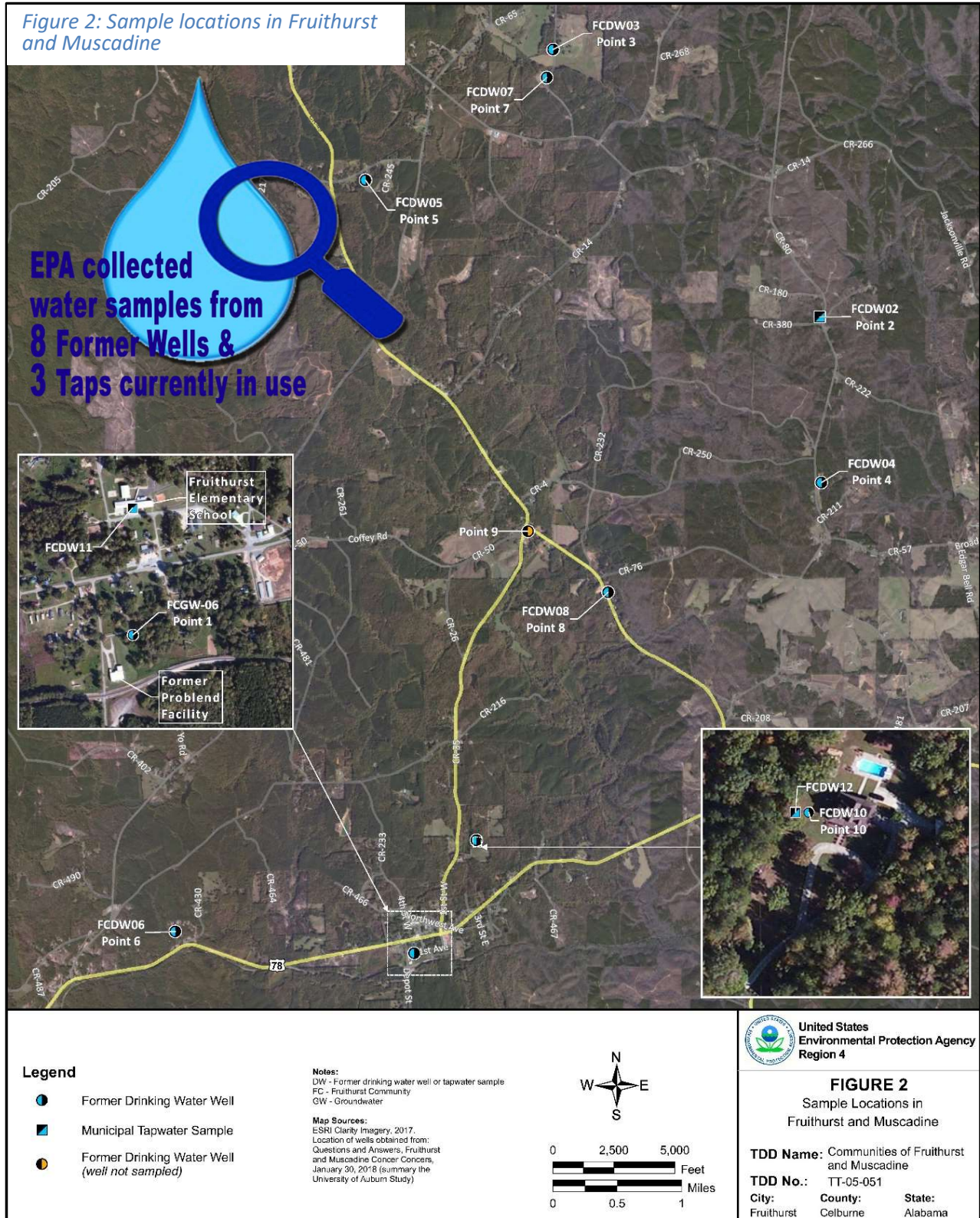


*Operations at the former ProBlend facility ceased and property is for sale.*



# Water Testing in Fruithurst and Muscadine

During the week of September 30, 2019, the EPA also sampled three tapwater sources (two residences and the Fruithurst Elementary School) and the eight (former drinking water wells sampled during the Auburn Study (see Figure 2). There were no exceedances of EPA MCLs or action levels in any sample collected (tapwater or former drinking water well). The wells sampled during the 2017 Auburn Study and by EPA in fall 2019 are no longer used for drinking water.



# Conclusion and Next Steps

All detected concentrations of contaminants near the facility and in the communities of Fruithurst and Muscadine were either below their respective screening or action levels, and/or consistent with background.

Bis-2(ethylhexyl)phthalate was not detected in any of the soil, groundwater, sediment, tapwater or former drinking water well samples collected during EPA's fall 2019 sampling. Lead was detected at low concentrations in some groundwater, tapwater and former drinking water well samples; however, the concentrations were neither above background nor above its action level.

Because no contaminants were detected above action levels in any of the samples collected (soil, groundwater, sediment, tapwater and former drinking well water), EPA plans no further investigative actions at this time.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Sampling reports and more information are posted at:**

[www.epa.gov/al](http://www.epa.gov/al)