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Cleanup Enforcement in Action:
Cleanup, Access to Drinking Water, and Redevelopment Efforts Benefit the Community and Ecosystem in Seffner, Florida

The Value of Environmental Enforcement

At the Taylor Road Landfill Superfund Site (Site) in the town of Seffner in Hillsborough County, Florida, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the state of Florida ("State"), and Hillsborough County ("County") worked cooperatively, through enforcement mechanisms, to pursue cleanup activities that addressed community priorities and facilitated safe and beneficial redevelopment of the site. This case study illustrates how the Superfund enforcement program works collaboratively with responsible parties, state and local governments, and stakeholders to benefit communities.

The Superfund enforcement program in EPA Region 4 (serving Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) identified multiple potentially responsible parties (PRPs) associated with the Site and successfully negotiated several settlement agreements to get the Site cleaned up. The cleanup work under the settlements allowed the Site to be revitalized. The benefits to the community and the environment include community recycling and collection centers, recreational opportunities, and restored ecosystems, including large ponds for wildlife habitat.

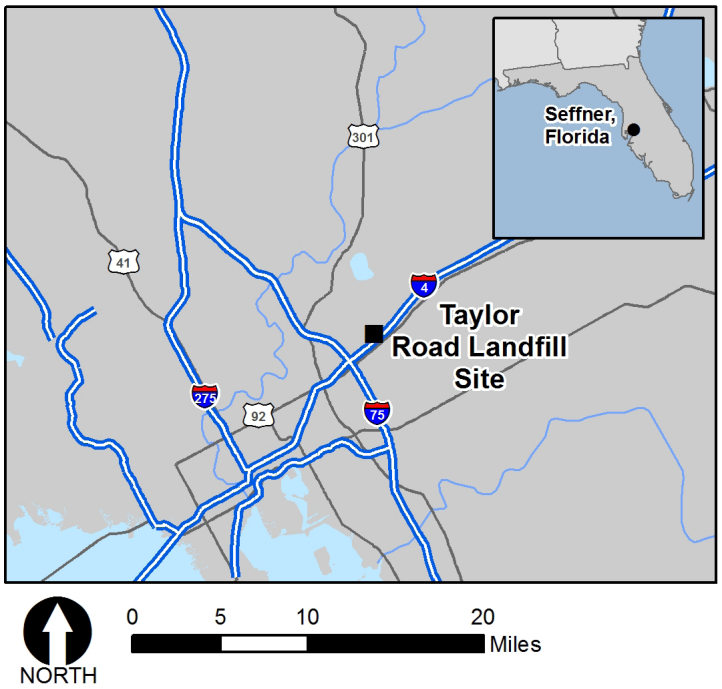
Environmental Enforcement Benefits the Community

Environmental and public health factors affect people most significantly where they live. The EPA works to provide strong, effective enforcement support to all communities. As the Agency implements environmental and public health improvements across the country, the EPA is looking for new ways to assist communities in environmentally overburdened, underserved and economically disadvantaged areas where the needs are greatest.

Collaborative and Proactive Partnerships Between the EPA and Local Governments Contribute to Beneficial Reuse for the Community

The EPA worked with the State and County government to address contaminated groundwater at the Site and coordinate redevelopment plans at the Site. This coordination resulted in site reuse that provides ecosystem services.

The Site's location in Seffner, Florida.



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, AND, Tele Atlas, First American, UNEP-WCMC and USGS.

The settlement agreement with the County resulted in an extension of the municipal water system to provide safe drinking water to nearby residences; the cleanup of contaminated groundwater; and the safe reuse of the Site with significant ecosystem benefits. Enforcement staff also worked with County staff to implement institutional controls that protect residents from drinking contaminated well-water.

Site Overview

The 252-acre site is located in Hillsborough County, about seven miles east of Tampa, Florida. The Site consists of three adjacent landfills owned and operated by the County that accepted residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial solid waste. The County stopped operating the Taylor Road Landfill and the Borrow Pit Landfill in 1980, and the Hillsborough Heights Landfill in 1984. An unknown quantity of hazardous substances was buried in the Taylor Road Landfill, which contaminated groundwater that later migrated off the County's property, impacting private wells, the primary source of drinking water in the area. Residential homes and commercial businesses were impacted by the contaminated groundwater plume.

Project History and Enforcement History

1979 – 2001
Source Control and Groundwater Cleanup

In 1979, while testing the landfill and private wells, the EPA identified volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and metals. In 1980, the EPA brought enforcement actions against the County under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) for the groundwater contamination. The County worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to clean up the contaminated soil, which included closing the Taylor Road Landfill.

In 1983, the County entered into a RCRA corrective action order with the EPA and the State to construct landfill caps to prevent rainwater infiltration and prevent direct contact with contaminated soil, and required the County to connect all properties within the site boundaries to the public water system.

In 1983, the EPA listed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL) due to the groundwater contamination. In 1993, the EPA negotiated a voluntary agreement with the County and 13 other PRPs to conduct a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) at the Site.

In 1996 and 1997, the EPA reached agreements with approximately 40 other PRPs who had contributed minor amounts of hazardous substances to the Site. These

Responsible Parties Clean Up Under CERCLA

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, commonly known as Superfund), establishes a comprehensive liability scheme to require certain categories of parties to conduct or pay for cleanup of contaminated lands. These parties include owners, operators, generators, transporters and others involved in the disposal of hazardous substances. CERCLA's liability scheme ensures that wherever possible, PRPs, rather than taxpayers, clean up the contamination, thus conserving taxpayer money for sites where there are no financially viable PRPs.

Site boundaries.

agreements helped achieve the EPA and seven other PRPs' mutual objective to simplify enforcement activity at the Site by resolving potential liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, commonly referred to as Superfund) for a substantial number of PRPs.

In 1998, the County and another 16 PRPs signed a consent decree with the EPA, agreeing to clean up the contaminated groundwater through natural attenuation (a process that relies on natural processes to decrease or "attenuate" pollution in soil and groundwater). The agreement also provided for modifying a ring of monitoring wells and extending additional water service to residences within the ring of wells and a 270-foot buffer zone. Finally, the PRPs agreed to put in place institutional controls that restrict the land use and prohibit the use or further construction of private wells.

In 2001, the County began operation and maintenance efforts for the landfill cap and the groundwater cleanup remedy to make sure the cleanup work remained protective of human health and the environment. Today, groundwater data clearly indicates the effectiveness of the cleanup in reducing contamination at the Site.

2001 – Present
Working Together to Facilitate Redevelopment

While cleanup work was underway at the Site, the EPA's regional Superfund enforcement team worked with the County to coordinate multiple redevelopment

Monitoring well at the Site.

plans for the Site. The County collaborated with the Tampa Radio-control Aircraft Club and the Academy of Model Aeronautics to build a new park for flying model airplanes that includes a paved runway and covered work areas for the model planes. About 1,000 people visit the airfield each year.

By 2010, the County had established several community facilities on the Site, including a recycling center, a community collection center, a household chemical/electronics collection center, a site maintenance facility and an environmental field office.

Additionally, the County and the U.S. Department of Energy conducted a study to evaluate the use of methane from the landfills to create a renewable energy source. This study provided valuable information on the use of landfill gas for power generation.

The Tampa Radio-control Aircraft Club and the Academy of Model Aeronautics have established flying space and work areas on the Site.

Hillsborough County has established several community and county resources on the Site, including a waste collection area.

The County's collection and recycling facilities.

The model airplane runway.

Throughout cleanup and redevelopment planning, the EPA provided support to the County to ensure that plans to reuse the Site would be compatible with the Site's cleanup plan and maximize community and environmental benefits.

Redevelopment Success and the Excellence in Site Reuse Award

In June 2010, the EPA's southeast regional office gave the County its Excellence in Site Reuse Award in recognition of its leadership and creative reuse of the Site for multiple purposes that benefit the community and enhance the cleanup work.

Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services are important environmental benefits provided to communities such as clean drinking water, wildlife habitat, energy resources, and recreation areas. Ecosystem service benefits are an additional way to measure successful cleanups. Direct ecosystem benefits for people at this Site include the provision of clean drinking water to area residents (replacing well-water sources with connections to public water supply lines) and a recreational use of the created greenspace. Indirect ecosystem benefits at the Site include the incidental use of the stormwater retention ponds for wildlife habitat.

Enforcement Makes a Difference

The EPA's enforcement program has helped make a difference in thousands of communities affected by hazardous waste contamination. At sites such as the Taylor Road Landfill Site, the program helps ensure liable parties perform and pay for prompt and protective cleanups and facilitates revitalization. In Hillsborough County, Florida, enforcement actions held approximately 57 PRPs accountable to fund a site cleanup that resulted in clean drinking water for area residents as well as ecosystem and community benefits. Significant and sustained cooperation and communication among the County, the EPA, the PRPs, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection enabled a timely cleanup that laid a strong foundation for long-term benefits at and near the Site.

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