



Wright Chemical Corporation NPL Site

Public Health Assessment Summary
May 2013

Background

The site is the location of the former Wright Chemical Corporation facility and the associated areas of contamination. The site is located on State Road 1878 near Neils Eddy Road, Riegelwood, Columbus County. Sulfuric acid, fertilizer and specialty chemicals were manufactured on the site beginning in 1883. Sulfuric acid manufacturing continued on the site until 1991.

In 2011, the site was added to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) – a program to clean-up abandoned hazardous waste sites that threaten to harm the environment or people. The NPL listing is a result of contamination released from the area of the former sulfuric acid plants and found in the site soil and the sediment of the nearby wetlands and Livingston Creek. The contamination identified includes high concentrations of the metals lead and arsenic and lower levels of several pesticides.

Current Environmental Situation

The contaminated area drains to the west/northwest into Livingston Creek and the associated wetlands. Some of the former sulfuric acid manufacturing areas are characterized by a lack of vegetation and dis-colored soil. Elevated concentrations of metals and pesticides were detected in 2007 in the sediments of Livingston Creek. Elevated concentrations of metals were reported in 2004 in fish and clams collected in Livingston Creek. The

full extent of the contamination is still being defined by the EPA.



Purpose of the Public Health Assessment

The assessment evaluated available environmental data to determine if the site presents a health hazard to the community.

How was the Public Health Assessment conducted?

The data evaluated came from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and past and present property owners. The data included soil and sediment collected in 2007 and fish tissue collected from 1994 through 2008.

Conclusions

- DPH cannot conclude whether or not people can get sick from contact with the chemicals present at the site:
 - Sampling was not conducted until 2007 and is not sufficient to adequately evaluate the potential health effects.

- The levels of mercury in the fish are at levels that could harm people, especially women and children. The source of the mercury in the fish is not known and has not been linked to the Wright Chemical Corp. site.

Recommendations

- Expand the surface soil evaluation to assess potential human ingestion, inhalation and dermal exposures.
- Discourage access to the site by posting warning signs or fencing the area.
- Persons that come into contact with the contaminated soils or sediments should follow decontamination procedures as soon as possible.
- Monitor contaminants in local fish.
- Inform the local population – especially sensitive populations such as children and women of childbearing age – of the

potential health effects of eating contaminated fish.

- Continue to monitor the data generated for this site.

Contact:

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Additional Information

The full report is available under Columbus County at
<http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/oe/hace/normap/Coun tyInfo.html#Columbus>



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