Federated Metals State Superfund Site Harris County, Texas

May 2011

SITE UPDATE

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D.
Chairman

Buddy Garcia
Commissioner

Carlos Rubinstein
Commissioner

Mark R. Vickery, P.G.
Executive Director

Site Description and Background

The Federated Metals State Superfund site (the Site) is located in the 9200 block of Market Street, at the intersection of Market Street and Interstate Highway (IH) 610, in Houston, Harris County, Texas. The Site is bound on the north by Market Street, on the west by IH-610, on the south by a diked area formerly used for the disposal of Houston Ship Channel dredging spoils, and on the east by currently vacant private property. Union Pacific Railroad tracks divide the Site into a production area to the north and a landfill area to the south.

The landfill was used as a disposal facility from the 1940s to 1979 for magnesium dross and sludge; breakout material from electrolytic chlorine cells, such as graphite anodes, asbestos material and contaminated concrete; gasket rubber rings; and refractory brick from recovery activities of nonferrous metal alloys.

The Site is currently owned by ELT Houston, LLC, and was previously owned by ASARCO Master, Inc. In August 2008, the transfer of property and environmental liability was a result of negotiations between the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ, commission or agency); the Texas Office of the Attorney General; ASARCO Master, Inc; Environmental Liability Transfer, Inc. (ELT); and Energy*Solutions*, LLC (ES).

The TCEQ has provided oversight of remedial investigation and removal action activities at the Site, conducted by the previous owner and current owner of the Site. The TCEQ will continue to monitor and provide oversight of activities conducted by the current owner (and its contractors) to ensure the protection of human health and the environment.

IH-610 Seep Monitoring

In July 2007, whitish colored groundwater was found seeping around the IH-610 and Union Pacific Railroad intersection near Market Street. ASARCO Master, Inc. and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) conducted separate investigations regarding the seepage and determined the seepage was not attributable to activities at the Site. TxDOT determined that the seep water exhibited an elevated pH, which is the numerical measurement of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution, and concluded that the seep water did not pose a threat to human health. The elevated level of the pH was a result of groundwater seepage through concrete stabilized backfill supporting a roadside retention wall. The TCEQ concurred with TxDOT's findings. In July 2009, TxDOT and its contractor installed a trench drain to control the seepage in this area and has determined the trench drain effectively controls seepage in the area.

Removal Action Activities

To determine soil and groundwater contamination and safe levels for chemical compounds, the commission uses rules and guidance including the TCEQ Texas Risk Reduction Program (TRRP) Protection Concentration Levels and TCEQ Radioactive Substance Rules Decommission Standards.

Between fall 2007 and summer 2010, ES removed 260,375 cubic feet of waste and contaminated soil containing heavy metals and radiological constituents above guidance levels from the landfill area, which is located immediately south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

The excavated waste and soils were characterized and transported to an appropriate TCEQ approved landfill for disposal. In fall 2010, ES submitted its final soil removal report. The TCEQ reviewed and approved completion of the removal action at the landfill area.

Future Plans

The TCEQ will continue to monitor and provide oversight to activities performed by the current owner (and its contractors) to ensure the protection of human health and the environment. The TCEQ has instructed ELT to further its efforts towards completion of the groundwater investigation. Upon completion of its groundwater investigation, ELT will begin the Feasibility Study (FS). The FS will assist in the development, screening and detailed evaluation of remedial alternatives to address the contamination associated at the Site.

Additional Information

For additional information, you may contact any of the Site contacts by calling the Superfund toll-free line at 1- 800-633-9363, by electronic mail at superfnd@tceq.texas.gov or by mail at MC-142, PO Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087.

Additionally, information about this Site is available on the TCEQ Superfund website at http://www.tceq.texas.gov/remediation/superfund/state/fedmetal.html.

You may request to receive notification of these updates via e-mail by contacting Crystal Taylor, Community Relations Liaison, crystal.taylor @tceq.texas.gov or superfnd@tceq.texas.gov.

Additional Contact Information

Phone 1-800-633-9363

E-mail:
superfnd@tceq.texas.gov

Project Manager

Fay Duke

Toxicologist

Tracie Phillips, Ph.D.

Community Relations Liaison

Crystal Taylor

Records Repositories

Pleasantville Branch Library
1520 Gellorn Drive,

Houston, Texas 77029

Phone: (832) 393-2330

TCEQ Central File Room
12100 Park 35 Circle Building E, First Floor Room 103, Austin, Texas 78753

Phone: 512-239-2900

Fax: 512-239-1850

E-mail: cfreq@tceq.texas.gov