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Community Relations Plan

for

Gulf Metals Industries

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April 1999

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APRIL 1999

Gulf Metals Industries State Superfund Site Houston, Texas

Community Relations Plan

Updated: April 1999

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
for
REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION
and
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Gulf Metals Industries, Inc. Landfill
State Superfund Site
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Updated: April 1999

Office of Waste Management
Remediation Division
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
12100 Park 35 Circle
Building D
Austin, Texas 78753
Telephone -- 1-800-633-9363
(Within Texas calls only)

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
for
REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION
AND
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Gulf Metals Industries Landfill
State Superfund Site
Mykawa at Almeda-Genoa
Houston, Texas

Updated: April 1999

Inquiries relating to the Gulf Metals Industries State Superfund Site should be directed
to:

Joe Shields, Community Relations Coordinator
Remediation Division - Superfund
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
Physical Address: 12100 Park 35 Circle
Austin, Texas 78753

Mailing Address:
PO Box 13087 MC 225
Austin, Texas 78711

Telephone: 1-800-633-9363 (Ask for Ext: 0666)
(800 Number within Texas calls only)
1-512-239-0666

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Overview of Community Relations Plan

This community relations plan (CRP) identifies issues of community concern regarding the Gulf Metals Industries, Inc., landfill state Superfund site, in Houston, Harris County, Texas. It also outlines the anticipated community relations activities to be conducted during each phase of the cleanup at the Gulf Metals Industries site.

The Gulf Metals Industries community relations plan has been prepared to aid the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the community affected by the Gulf Metals Industries site. The TNRCC conducts community relations activities to ensure that the local public has input to decisions and access to information about Superfund activities at the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site.

The information in this plan is based primarily on copies of investigative reports and communications for the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site.

Site Profile

A. Site Location and Description:

The Gulf Metals Industries landfill site is located east of Mykawa Road, north and east of the intersection with Almeda Genoa Road, in southeast Houston. The site is bordered on the south by Telean Street, and on the west by the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad right of way that parallels Mykawa Road. North and east boundaries are surveyed fence lines between the site and adjacent undeveloped land. Three parcels are combined to make a total of 16 acres for the site.

Map coordinates for the Gulf Metals landfill site are Latitude 29°37'30"N and Longitude 95°15'00"W. The physical address of the site is 10601-10899 Mykawa Road.

The Gulf Metals site was operated as a sand and gravel quarry in the 1940s and 1950s. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s the pit was used as an open dump. It is during this time that hazardous liquids were believed to have been disposed of in the sand pits. The waste consisted primarily of oily sludges and other miscellaneous wastes. It is currently unknown who is responsible for the disposal of the oily sludges.

From 1965 through 1967, the site was operated as a commercial landfill for the disposal of metal slag and other foundry debris, including furnace sand and refractory brick. Much of this waste was apparently placed in the sand and gravel pits in an attempt to stabilize the petrochemical waste.

The site's most prominent feature is an unlined impoundment of unknown depth measuring approximately 400 feet by 190 feet.

Gulf Metals purchased the site for class II and Class III commercial waste disposal. In 1973 the Texas Water Quality Board directed the company to not accept Class II wastes because of previous poor management practices at the landfill. The TWQB instructed GMI to fill in the oily sludge pits. Through the late 1970s, GMI filled the site to grade with steel mill waste and miscellaneous construction debris. Use of the site as a disposal facility stopped in 1981.

MEDIA AFFECTED:

Soil, groundwater

CONTAMINANTS:

Lead, zinc, chromium, barium,
aliphatic and polynuclear aromatic
hydrocarbons

B. Background and Operating History:

July 1965, waste disposal operations began at the Mykawa-Alameda Genoa landfill that was to be identified later as the Gulf Metals Industries state Superfund site.

While the site is identified as the Gulf Metals Industries, Inc. landfill on the state Superfund registry, Gulf Metals has vigorously denied any involvement with the contaminants except for the brief period between 1965 and 1967 when they purchased the site with plans to operate it as a landfill for Class II and Class III commercial waste (primarily wood and paper).

April 1972, an engineering report by Turner, Collie and Braden, which accompanied a request for a certificate of registration to operate the site as a commercial Class I landfill, said that the site had been accepting waste since July 1965. The report indicated that the facility was registered as a sanitary landfill (Class II) and a reclamation and salvage facility, accepting furnace sand, refractory brick and dry slag from metal furnaces in addition to other Class III materials.

January 23, 1973, Texas Water Quality Board directed the company to discontinue accepting Class II wastes because of poor management practices at the landfill.

March 23, 1973, Texas Water Quality Board granted Certificate of Registration No. 20406 to the landfill for disposal of Class III wastes. The Class III wastes were to be used "to fill low areas of the site, including some existing sludge pits and ponds". GMI disposed of slag, brick and other Class III materials into the sludge pits in an effort to cover and stabilize the sludge until some time prior to 1980. The closure effort ceased apparently because GMI lost a contract with Cameron Iron Works to accept its residual slag.

March 1976 the landfill's registration number was changed to 39015 from 20406.

September 9, 1980, during an open dump inventory inspection, Class I and Class II waste material was noted at the facility. The site's waste permit No. 39015, allowed only Class III non-hazardous material. The landowner was listed as Isadore I. Robinson.

January 29, 1981, the facility was disqualified from participation in the Open Dump Inventory program following the observance of Class I hazardous waste material at the Class III facility.

May 24, 1982, the GMI landfill was inspected to determine the closure status of the sludge pit. Tar-like sludges were exposed at the surface on the east side of the landfill.

October 5, 1982, a lead-acid battery recycling competitor of Gulf Metals Industries, filed a complaint with the Texas Department of Water Resources that the company was buying batteries, had recently acquired battery-splitting equipment, and may have started a battery recycling operation at either the Market Street location or 6020 Esperson Street. The caller wanted TDWR to investigate Gulf Metals waste acid management practices.

October 20, 1982, the GMI landfill was inspected to determine the closure status of the sludge pit. Tar-like sludges were exposed at the surface on the east side of the landfill.

January 10, 1983, Texas Department of Water Resources inspected the inactive facility and reported that it was nearly at capacity with Class III type material.

March 30, 1987. The site was inspected and samples were collected from two domestic wells, two monitor wells and two slag areas and submitted for analysis. One of the slag area samples showed high chromium. One domestic well sample was high in barium. Other than that, no metals or organic contamination was detected in any of the other samples. The owner of the land was listed as Robinson Iron and Metal Co.

October 16, 1987, a legal notice was published in the Texas Register, proposing the site to the state Superfund registry, and announcing that a public meeting to receive comments would be held at the Pasadena Convention Center on November 19.

January 22, 1988, the Gulf Metals Industries site appeared on the list of state Superfund sites.

September 8, 1992, TNRCC approved terms of an agreed order signed by Isadore Robinson, the owner of the land; Gulf Metals Industries, and Cooper Industries (successor to Cameron Iron Works) to underwrite the costs of a remedial investigation / feasibility study of the site.

February 1, 1993, Houston Representative Ron Wilson met with a nearby resident to hear her concerns about contamination possibly spreading into nearby water wells.

March 4, 1993 members of the Minnetex Civic Club were updated on activities at the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site by Texas Water Commission Project Manager Carol Boucher.

June 24, 1993, representatives of the Texas Water Commission (TWC) hosted a site tour at the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site, for the benefit of several area residents who had previously expressed an interest in the site. Representatives from Gulf Metals, Gulf Reduction, Cooper Industries and Camp-Dresser-McKee were also present, at the request of the TWC.

August 6, 1993, representatives of the contractor and the Texas Water Commission as well as several members of the Minnetex Civic Club toured the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site.

October 5, 1995, representatives of the Texas Water Commission attended the meeting of the Minnetex Civic Club.

April 8, 1999, TNRCC Project Manager Alonzo Arredondo updated members of the Minnetex Civic Club on recent activities at the Gulf Metals landfill Superfund site.

Community Profile

The Gulf Metals Industries landfill site is located east of Mykawa Road, north and east of the intersection with Almeda Genoa Road, in southeast Houston. The site is bordered on the south by Telean Street, and on the west by the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad right of way that separates the site from Mykawa Road. North and east boundaries are surveyed fence lines between the site and adjacent undeveloped land.

While the area around the site has been considered geographically rural, residential and business development has moved to within a half mile at the southwest, and Hobby Airport is only a little over a mile away toward the northeast. The stretch of properties between Almeda Genoa Road and Telean Street eastward from the railroad right of way, has been residential for about the same length of time that the site has existed.

Residents to the south and west of the area have organized into a civic group to focus their concerns about the possibility of groundwater contamination from the Gulf Metals Industries wastes. At the requests of homeowners, private wells have been tested numerous times. And while the standards for water contamination have tightened over the years since activity was halted at the site, reports of well tests by Gulf Metals Industries have consistently shown very limited relationship of well contamination and the constituents at the landfill site, according to Richard Gunther, Gulf Metals Industries facilitator coordinator in a September 1993 report.

The City of Houston is governed by a mayor and a 14-member council. The city is divided into nine council districts, each represented by a specific council member. The five other members of the council are elected on an at-large basis. The Gulf Metals Industries landfill site is within District E, the specific area served by Councilman Rob Todd.

At the county level, the site is in Harris County Precinct 1 served by Commissioner El Franco Lee.

At the state level, the Gulf Metals Industries landfill state Superfund site is wholly within the boundary of House District 146 served by State Representative Al Edwards. However, on the state senate side, Mykawa and Almeda Genoa roads are the boundaries between three state senate districts (11,13, 17). The physical location of the site, north and east of the intersection, is in District 11, served by State Senator Mike Jackson. The main populated areas north and west of the intersection are represented by State Senator Rodney Ellis, while residents to the south of Almeda Genoa Road are included in the district of State Senator J.E. "Buster" Brown.

While the site is located physically within the state Senate district 11, the impacted population areas are in Senate districts 13 and 17 and House district 146, meaning that demographic information would be more representative when it is extrapolated from the two senate districts and blended with the house district.

Census estimates for 1996 (the latest available from the U.S. Census Bureau) show a modest 10 percent influx in population since 1990, not as rapid a pace as areas closer to the core of the city. And, while there are no focused data available on the racial breakdown of the population, the spread for the entire House district 146 shows approximately 65 percent of the population is black or Hispanic, 30 percent is Anglo and the balance is made up of other racial groups.

The census figures for the district sub-group show that the area's wage earner group, those from 18 years of age to 64, make up is consistent with the statewide average of 80 percent.

The school enrollment profile apparently keeps pace with the statewide averages, but the graduation and drop-out figures are higher. This trend is also shown in the numbers of residents holding college degrees – about 15 percent lower than the overall averages for the state.

The area has nearly double the number of single parent households (4 of 10) compared to the state average of 2 in 10. And has nearly double the statewide average of the civilian labor out of work, with blacks taking the hardest hit at almost 50 percent greater than overall state figures.

Looking at income figures, annual per household income is 5-30 percent lower in all categories. And, 30-50 percent more of the population is classified as living in poverty, with twice the state average receiving either Social Security or public assistance to live.

Housing costs, however, are not reflected in the lower incomes of the area residents, averaging about the same as in other areas where annual income is up to about 70 percent greater.

Approximately 60 percent of the homes are owner-occupied, and about 69 percent of those owner-occupants are living in homes that are appraised at less than \$50,000 value, according to 1998 figures from the Harris County Appraisal District. Less than 3 percent of the homes within the legislative district would have an appraised value greater than \$100,000, compared to an all-Texas average of nearly 18 percent.

Community Involvement

There have been at least five community meetings regarding the Gulf Metals Industries landfill site since the initial meeting November 19, 1987, when the site was proposed to the state Superfund registry.

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Specific Objectives of the Community Relations Program

Responsibilities of Community Relations Liaison:

- A. Maintain open communications between the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Harris County, City of Houston, state and federal officials and concerned citizens.
- B. Continue to expand the mailing list to include additional agencies, organizations, and residents that are interested in the project.
- C. Provide a central information contact from whom interested parties can receive information on site activities, project status, and study results.
- D. Provide citizens, involved agencies, elected officials, and the media with accurate, timely information concerning the scope, progress, and findings of site-related activities by issuing press releases and conducting community meetings.
- E. By telephone, written correspondence and attending public meetings, interested parties can make inquiries to ensure communication.
- F. Brief field teams on community relations issues before performing on-site investigations.
- G. Provide all information, especially technical findings, in a language that is understandable to the general public and in a form useful to interested citizens and elected officials through the preparation of fact sheets and news releases, when major findings become available during project phases.
- H. Monitor community concerns and information requirements as the project progresses by monitoring the community response to news releases and community meetings.
- I. Modify the community relations plan as changes in community attitudes and needs occur and maintain accuracy during different project phases.

Community Relations Techniques

- A. **Project Status Briefings for state and local officials**- To periodically inform, State and Local officials of project developments over the course of the program during the investigations, findings and as project developments occur.
- B. **Project status briefings for community groups and concerned citizens (may include public meetings, if needed)** - To periodically inform the general community of significant project developments and findings; to respond to inquiries accordingly and incorporate local concerns into the decision making process as appropriate.
- C. **Press releases/Press conferences** - To periodically inform the general community of project status, i.e. significant changes or developments related to schedule, scope, and/or objectives.
- D. **Project mailing list** - To provide the means through which press releases, project status reports and other significant communications can be distributed to concerned groups and individuals.
- E. **Public consultations** - Conduct informal meetings (if needed) with residents. To provide an opportunity for affected residents to express any concerns and to make inquiries to insure effective two-way communication.
- F. **Program document repositories** - To maintain easily accessible repositories through which the public may review project outputs. The public will be periodically informed of the availability of project documents and the location of repositories via techniques A thru D.
- G. **Revise Community Relations Plan**- To reflect changes in site activities or local concerns. After the Remedy Selection Document (RSD) has been issued, the CRP will be revised to address implementation of the selected remedial action alternative.

Elected Officials

State

The Honorable Mike Jackson
State Senate District 11
District Office
1109 Fairmont Parkway
Pasadena TX 77504-2941
Phone 713/948-0111

The Honorable Mike Jackson
State Senate District 11
Capitol Office
PO Box 12068
Austin TX 78711-2068
Phone 512/463-0111

The Honorable Rodney G Ellis
State Senate District 13
District Office
440 Louisiana, Ste 575
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/236-0306

The Honorable Rodney G Ellis
State Senate District 13
District Office
2440 Texas Parkway, Ste 260
Missouri City TX 77489
Phone 713/261-2360

The Honorable Rodney G Ellis
State Senate District 13
Capitol Office
PO Box 12068
Austin TX 78711-2068
Phone 512/463-0113

The Honorable J.E. "Buster" Brown
State Senate District 17
District Office
PO Box 888
Lake Jackson TX 77566-0888
Phone 409/297-5261

The Honorable J.E. "Buster" Brown
State Senate District 17
Capitol Office
PO Box 12068
Austin TX 78711-2068
Phone 463-0117

The Honorable Al Edwards
House District 146
District Office
4913 Griggs Road
Houston TX 77021
Phone 713/747-0369

The Honorable Al Edwards
House District 146
Texas House of Representatives
PO Box 2910
Austin TX 78768-2910
Phone 512/463-0518

County

The Honorable Robert A Eckels
Harris County Judge
Harris County Courthouse
1001 Preston
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/755-6666

The Honorable El Franco Lee
County Commissioner Pct 1
Harris County Courthouse
1001 Preston
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/755-6111

City

The Honorable Lee P Brown, Mayor
City of Houston
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2200
FAX 713/247-2355

The Honorable Rob Todd
Council Member District E
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2008

The Honorable Annise Parker
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2014
FAX 713/247-3519

The Honorable Joe Roach
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2013
FAX 713/247-3322

The Honorable Orlando Sanchez
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2005
FAX 713/247-3322

The Honorable Chris Bell
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562-
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2006
FAX 713/247-2998

The Honorable Carroll Robinson
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251-1562
Phone 713/247-2012
FAX 713/247-1424

Houston News Media

Houston Chronicle
ATTN: City Editor
PO Box 4260
Houston TX 77210
Phone - 713/220-7171
FAX --- 713/220-6806

KHYS-FM
ATTN: News Director
24 Greenway Plaza #1508
Houston TX 77046
Phone - 713/622-0010
FAX --- 713/623-8173

KLAT-AM/KLTN-FM
ATTN: News Director
1415 N Loop West #400
Houston TX 77008
Phone - 713/260-3600
FAX --- 713/407-1400

KMJQ-FM
ATTN: News Director
24 Greenway Plaza #1508
Houston, TX 77046
Phone - 713/623-0102
FAX --- 713/623-0106

KMPQ-AM/FM
ATTN: News Director
1415 N Loop West #400
Houston, TX 77057
Phone - 713/342-6601
FAX --- 713/407-1400

KPRC-AM
ATTN: News Director
11767 Katy Fwy. Ste 1170
Houston, TX 77079
Phone - 713/558-4800
FAX --- 713/493-2885

KTRH-AM
ATTN: News Director
510 Lovett Boulevard
Houston, TX 77251
Phone - 713/526-5874
FAX --- 713/630-3614

KHOU-TV
ATTN: News, Assignments Editor
1945 Allen Parkway
Houston, TX 77001
Phone - 713/521-4384
FAX --- 713/521-4326

KPRC-TV
ATTN: News, Assignments Editor
8181 Southwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77252
Phone - 713/771-9194
FAX --- 713/270-9334

KRIV-TV
ATTN: News, Assignments Editor
3935 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77227
Phone - 713/625-1897
FAX --- 713/625-1809

KTMD-TV

ATTN: News, Assignments Editor

3903 Stoney Brook

Houston, TX 77063

Phone - 713/783-5863

FAX --- 713/974-5875

KTRK-TV

ATTN: News, Assignments Editor

3310 Bissonet St

Houston, TX 77001

Phone - 713/666-8711

FAX --- 713/664-0013

KXLN-TV

ATTN: News, Assignments Editor

9440 Kirby Drive

Houston, TX 77054

Phone - 713/662-4545

FAX --- 713/668-9054

Key Project Personnel

Alonzo Arredondo.
Project Manager
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
PO Box 13087 MC-221
Austin, TX 78711
Phone 1-800/633-9363 (Ask for Ext 2145)
1-512/239-2145

Joe Shields
Community Relations Coordinator
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
PO Box 13087 MC 225
Austin, TX 78711
Phone 1-800/633-9363 (Ask for Ext 0666)
1-512/239-0666
FAX 1-512/239-2469

Program Document Repositories

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission

Central Records

12100 Park 35 Circle

Building D North Entrance

Austin, TX 78753

Phone 1-800/633-9363 (Ask for Ext 2920)

(Toll free for Texas calls only)

512/239-2920

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