

# Cleanup to Begin/ Opportunity to Talk with EPA

## Elm Street Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site

Terre Haute, Indiana

March 2024

### We would like to hear from you!

See the back of this fact sheet for information on an opportunity to talk one-on-one with EPA.

### Contact EPA

For more information about the site contact:

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You may call EPA's Chicago office toll-free at 800-621-8431, 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. weekdays.

### On the Web:

[www.epa.gov/superfund/elm-street-groundwater](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/elm-street-groundwater)



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will oversee cleanup at the Elm Street Groundwater Contamination Superfund site, which will begin this summer. In addition, EPA is developing a Community Involvement Plan for the site. This plan is a communication strategy guide the agency uses to enable meaningful community involvement throughout the Superfund cleanup process. In April, EPA will be available to talk one-on-one with area residents about the site cleanup. These discussions provide the foundation for the plan as they help us learn your concerns and how best to keep you informed and involved in the upcoming cleanup. (*See back page for detailed information about how to participate.*)

### Site cleanup activity update

On September 14, 2023, EPA signed a legal agreement with the parties considered potentially responsible, or PRPs, for the contamination to implement cleanup at the Elm Street Groundwater Superfund site. The PRP companies include: GCSC Enterprises, Inc. (formerly Gurman Container and Supply Co.), Valvoline LLC, CR-Troy, Inc. (formerly Consolidated Recycling) and Machine Tool Service, or MTS. In 2017, EPA and the companies agreed on a cleanup plan for the site, which was explained in a document called the record of decision, or ROD. In 2019, EPA and the companies signed an agreement to design the cleanup. That cleanup plan included:

- Removing contaminated soil from areas accessible to the public. The contaminated soil will be disposed of off-site.
- Installing wells to extract vapors using a process called soil vapor extraction, or SVE, where soil contaminated by volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, is too deep to be removed. VOCs are organic compounds that can easily turn to gases.
- Monitoring groundwater until cleanup goals are met and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the soil cleanup, which will reduce contaminants in the groundwater.
- Implementing land-use restrictions to eliminate the disturbance of contaminated soil in the area where the contamination is too deep to be removed.

Based on additional data collected during the pre-design phase, soil vapor extraction will be deferred until further monitoring data is collected after soil excavation. If monitoring shows that soil removal alone is not enough to meet the cleanup goals, then the companies will need to proceed to design and implement SVE, as required under the 2017 ROD. If the monitoring shows the soil removal alone is enough to meet the cleanup goals, EPA will propose a formal change to the cleanup plan to no longer require the SVE component of the remedy.



## Pre-design investigation

The pre-design investigation was divided into four parts and included the following activities:

- Locating all utilities and surveying for old lost off-site wells
- Sampling soil
- Sampling and evaluating the ground water
- Conducting the SVE pilot test

Ground penetrating radar was used to locate lost pre-existing wells. Soil samples taken in locations around the site (see map above.) confirmed the presence of elevated levels of VOCs tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, trichloroethylene, or TCE, and 1,1-dichloroethane, or 1,1-DCA; arsenic; and PCBs above their cleanup goals. They also helped confirm the planned shallow soil excavation areas and provided information on how porous the soil is and how easily the contamination can move through it. It also provided information on how effective SVE will be at removing any remaining contamination from the soil after shallow soil removal.

The groundwater study involved evaluating the existing monitoring wells and installing and sampling nine new wells to monitor the groundwater contamination and learn about the dynamics of the groundwater such as the direction of the flow of the water and how fast the groundwater moves. The results of the groundwater sampling showed that cleanup goals for the groundwater have already been met at the site boundary downgradient from the contamination and off-site. On-site, PCE

is the only contaminant of concern in groundwater above the cleanup goals, and it was detected at levels only slightly above the cleanup goals. As such, the groundwater cleanup design focuses on the following activities:

- Implementing institutional controls (land-use restrictions to eliminate the disturbance of contaminated soil in the area)
- Monitoring PCE to determine when groundwater cleanup goals are met
- Collecting data to support decisions regarding the deferment of the SVE remedy

The SVE pilot test involved installing and testing one SVE extraction well on the Ashland property and four monitoring probes at 20, 40, 60 and 80 feet away. The SVE pilot test revealed that SVE removed very low amounts of contamination and would be an inefficient technology. In addition, the pre-design investigation demonstrated that after removing the contaminated shallow soil, the levels of VOCs in the soil are expected to be below their cleanup levels. The lower levels of the VOCs in the soil will limit leaching of VOCs to the groundwater and allow natural processes to break down the contamination and reach the groundwater cleanup goals.

## Background

The 18.5-acre Elm Street site is in Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana. In the 1980s, several wells in Terre Haute's Elm Street municipal well field were found to have VOCs in them. In

response, Indiana American Water Co. installed a well in 1991 outside the contaminated area. The city's water is primarily provided through this well. It is also important to note that all of the city's water is treated at the water treatment plant to meet safe drinking water standards.

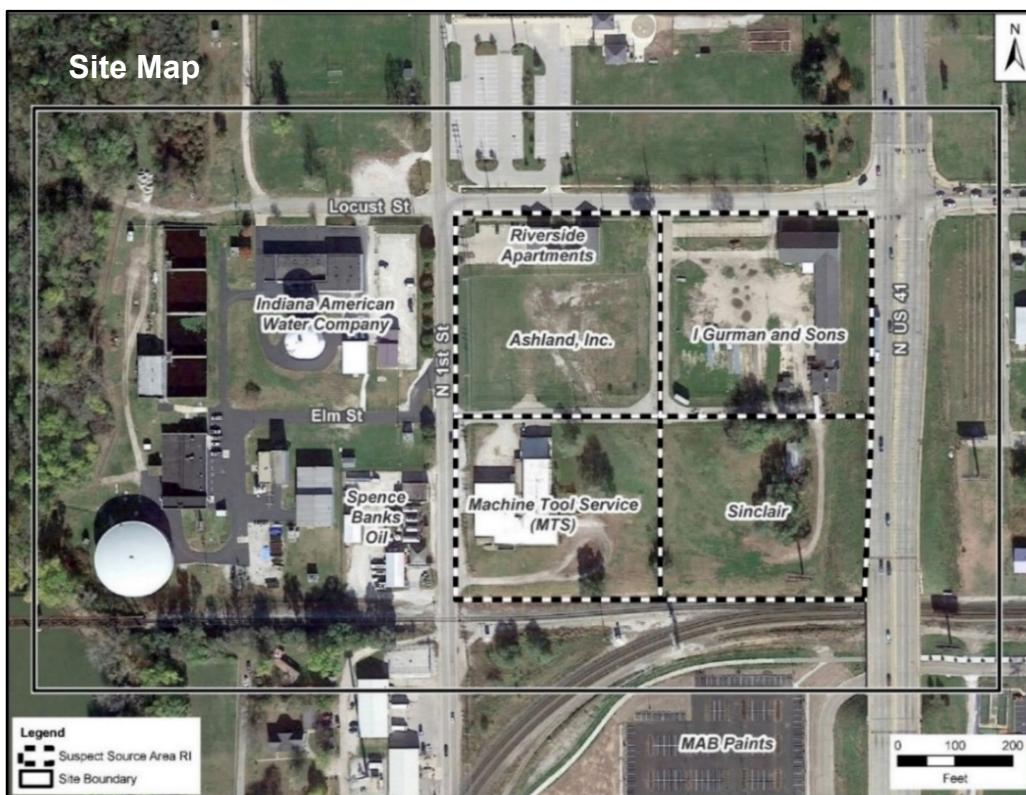
## Source identification

Indiana Department of Environmental Management, or IDEM, identified three potential source areas for the VOC contamination through the site assessment process conducted from 1987 to 1989. The potential source areas include the Gurman property (now GCSC Enterprises, Inc.), the Ashland property (formerly known as BiState Products, purchased by Consolidated Recycling (now CR Troy, Inc.) for petroleum recycling in the late 1980s and now owned by Valvoline) and MTS (See map below). The Gurman facility has been in operation since 1922. From 1930 to 1980, Gurman primarily reconditioned and sold steel barrels. It is believed that Gurman accepted drums containing various types and likely small quantities of product or waste material. The standard practice for most of its operational history was to open the drums and dump their contents onto the ground and then rinse the remaining contents down the storm sewer located in the process areas prior to refurbishing. The Ashland facility served as a local supplier of Texaco products from the 1930s through the 1980s. Petroleum products were stored in bulk and distributed, and solvents were used for parts cleaning at local service stations. In 1980, MTS purchased the property and leased it to BiState, which

operated the facility for collection and storage of waste oils. In addition, a Sinclair Oil facility also stored petroleum products and solvents on the eastern portion of the MTS property. A former locomotive repair and maintenance facility (roundhouse) also existed on the eastern side of the Sinclair portion of the property. Although no evidence exists to substantiate the use of solvents during locomotive repair operations at the facility, the use of solvents is considered common practice during that period.

## Investigation and voluntary removal activities

In 1999 and 2000 IDEM sampled soil and groundwater and found that some of the chemicals detected in the municipal wells were also detected in soil and groundwater at the three facilities investigated. From about 2003 to 2006, EPA issued a series of letters to Ashland, Gurman and MTS requesting information regarding their operations. Each of the parties submitted to EPA their response to the information requests. On March 7, 2007, EPA placed the site on the National Priorities List, a list of Superfund sites nationwide. Because the PRPs declined to participate in the remedial investigation and feasibility study, or RI/FS, EPA began the investigation with federal funds. (*Note: These funds have been recuperated through the recent legal agreement with the companies.*) During the RI, which examines the extent of the contamination, VOCs were detected in the groundwater and surface and subsurface soil. Arsenic was found in the groundwater and soil. Other metals, PCBs and pesticides were also found in the soil.



In 2013, Ashland notified EPA that it would voluntarily remove contaminated soil from its property and demolished several on-site buildings and structures. An inactive railroad spur, seven subsurface pipes and fluid in the pipes were also disposed of off-site.

The RI was completed in October 2016 and the FS, which evaluates cleanup alternatives, was completed in July 2017.

## **We would like to hear from you!**

EPA representatives would like to talk with area residents about its cleanup of the Elm Street Groundwater Contamination site.

Cheryl Allen, EPA Community Coordinator, and Celine Wysgalla, EPA Remedial Project Manager, will be available to talk with you either in person, over the phone or virtually on **April 23, 24 or 25**, between **10 a.m. and 7 p.m.** During the 30-minute session, U.S. EPA will ask questions to help us understand your concerns and questions about ongoing work at the site.

The information gathered from residents will be used to create a Community Involvement Plan, which is a communication strategy guide the agency uses to enable meaningful community involvement throughout the Superfund cleanup process.

If you would like to schedule a time to talk with EPA, please contact Meg Moosa, EPA contractor, at: 440-688-4006 or **meg.moosa@tetrtech.com**.

You can also contact Cheryl Allen toll-free at 800-621-8431, Ext. 36196, weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. or at **allen.cheryl@epa.gov**.

For more information on the site, visit **www.epa.gov/superfund/elm-street-groundwater**

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## **ELM STREET GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION SITE: Cleanup to Begin/Opportunity to talk with EPA**

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