NPL Site Narrative for Reasor Chemical Company

REASOR CHEMICAL COMPANY
Castle Hayne, North Carolina

Conditions at Proposal (September 13, 2001): The Reasor Chemical Company site is an inactive pine stump rendering facility located at 5100 North College Road in Castle Hayne, New Hanover County, North Carolina. The facility is located approximately 1/2 mile south of Route NC 132 and US 117 and is approximately 25 acres in size. Although little information is available regarding specific site operations and hazardous substances used at the Reasor Chemical Company facility, elevated levels of metals, including lead and mercury, and organic compounds, including benzo(a)pyrene, toluene, and xylenes, have been detected in the waste lagoons and soils that comprise the source areas at the site. Dioxins also have been documented at elevated levels in the source areas. The site is being placed on the NPL because toluene and dioxins have been detected in wetlands adjacent to the facility. In addition, site-related hazardous substances detected in drainage ditches that receive runoff from the source areas pose a threat to downstream wetlands and commercial and recreational fisheries.

Reasor Chemical Company produced turpentine, resin, pine oil, and related compounds from pine tree stumps at its facility from 1959 to 1972. By 1969, most operations at the facility had ceased, buildings were demolished, and equipment was removed. In April 1972, a fire destroyed additional structures. The property then was sold to Martin-Marietta Corporation (MMC) for limestone mining purposes. After MMC's permit application was denied, the property was sold to the current owner, Cameron Company, on August 5, 1986. The site currently is vacant and receives no routine maintenance.

Features at the site include areas formerly housing an extraction unit, a refinery, distillation units, a scrap copper area where copper and plastic were burned, a pipe shop area, ten tank cradles, and a drum disposal area. The drums have since been removed. Other identified site features include five ponds and a sparsely vegetated sluice area. Four of the ponds (the waste lagoons) located near the former distillation and extraction areas drain via overland flow to a ditch that empties into wetlands located at the southern portion of the property. A gate restricts vehicle access to the site.

From 1997 to 1999, EPA conducted a Remedial Investigation (RI) at the Reasor Chemical Company facility. More than 130 samples were collected from facility soils, ponds, and drainage ditches. Surface water and sediment samples also were collected from a wetland and Prince George Creek, downgradient of the facility. Hazardous substances detected in the source, process, and drainage areas during the RI include volatile organic solvents (including ethylbenzene, toluene, and xylenes), metals (including arsenic, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, iron, and zinc), semivolatile organic compounds (including benzo (a) pyrene), and dioxins. Toluene was documented in a wetland sediment sample at 460 µg/kg. Iron was documented in surface water samples at levels up to 13,000 µg/L, which exceeds the Ambient Water Quality Criteria/Ambient Aquatic Life Advisory Concentration benchmark.

Approximately 150 residences within 1/2 mile of the site are served either by private wells or one of two community wells. Low levels of solvents were detected in the shallow aquifer beneath the facility but have not been documented in the drinking water wells. Approximately 0.8 mile of wetland frontage has

been impacted by the site, and site-related hazardous substances pose a threat to more than 70 miles of wetland frontage that border the surface water migration pathway downstream of the area of documented contamination. The surface water pathway includes commercial and recreational fisheries and a habitat known to be used by Federally designated endangered species.

Status (September 2002): EPA is considering various alternatives for this site.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at ATSDR - ToxFAQs (http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.