

NPL Site Narrative for Pester Refinery Co.

PESTER REFINERY CO. El Dorado, Kansas

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Pester Refinery Co. Site occupies 10 acres in El Dorado, Butler County, Kansas. Operations began in 1917. Pester bought the site in January 1977.

Refinery operations have contaminated soil, ground water, and surface water. Sludges and sediments from an on-site impoundment contain lead, chromium, vinyl chloride, and benzene, and soil contains lead, chromium, and barium, according to tests conducted in October 1986 by a consultant to Pester. In December 1986 and January-February 1987, the consultant found 1,1,1-trichloroethane, benzene, ethylbenzene, vinyl chloride, and lead in monitoring wells. An estimated 160 people obtain drinking water from private wells within 3 miles of the site.

In February 1987, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) found cadmium, selenium, benzene, and toluene in surface water. The impoundment is immediately adjacent to the West Branch of the Walnut River, which is used for recreational activities. In April 1987, KDHE observed seepage from the impoundment entering the river and in August 1987 confirmed contamination of the river. Seepage from the impoundments has been diked, forming a "seepage pit," but the contained sludge has overtopped the diking on occasion and contaminated both the river and floodplain.

On February 25, 1985, Pester filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the Federal bankruptcy code. In February 1986, KDHE issued an Administrative Order under KSA 65-161 and 65-3430 requiring Pester to conduct certain studies of the site to develop a plan to close the impoundment in accordance with the requirements of Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). On June 8, 1987, the company refused to continue monitoring and develop the closure plan.

The facility acquired Interim Status under Subtitle C of RCRA when the owner filed a Notification of Hazardous Waste Activity and Part A of a permit application. Later, EPA terminated Interim Status when the facility indicated that it was not a RCRA treatment, storage, or disposal facility. EPA then found that the facility was storing hazardous waste and should have retained Interim Status. The site is being proposed for the NPL because it satisfies a component of EPA's NPL/RCRA policy: the owner has demonstrated inability to finance appropriate remedial action by invoking bankruptcy laws.

Status (March 31, 1989): EPA's preliminary plan for fiscal year 1989 includes a remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action.

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) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.