

Water supply

continued from front

from the facility and stockpiled in an area deemed safe by EPA.

Pending the results of EPA's testing of the contaminated soils, treatment of the soils could be done off-site. Treatment or disposal of the soils will begin this summer.

The chemicals found at the site and in the adjacent South Yamhill River are arsenic, pentachlorophenol (PCP), polynucleararomatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and various metals.

These chemicals are less dense than water and travel on the surface water.

Creosote was also found in the soil at the site. Creosote is heavier than water and concentrates in the soil and sediment. Creosote can be extremely difficult to clean up. In most cases, the contaminated soil must be removed and replaced with fresh ground.

Taylor Lumber began operating a sawmill on the site in 1946. Lumber is peeled, milled, planed and chipped to produce lumber products.

Waste and debris from the site were historically deposited in an area southeast of the mill from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Wood treating of poles, pilings, posts, railroad ties and plywood began at the facility in 1966. Creosote, PCPs and chemonite (a water-based solution containing arsenic acid, coppersalts, zinc and ammonia) was used as a wood preservative from 1982 to 1996.

According to the EPA, the facility had numerous creosote and PCP spills, including a 3,500-gallon spill in February of 1999 and a 30,000-gallon spill in September of 1999. EPA is overseeing the cleanup of the spill sites.

Surface water from the drainage ditches empty into the South Yamhill River less than two miles from the City of Sheridan's drinking water uptake. The Yamhill River is also a popular swimming and fishing area and home to salmon and steelhead populations.

According to the EPA, the site is currently being evaluated for placement on the EPA's national priority list and possible listing as a Superfund site.

Currently, Taylor Lumber and the EPA are installing a concrete cap around the main treatment plant. The cap is intended to prevent further movement of airborne contaminants, such as arsenic, in airborne dust. The cap is also intended to prevent additional seepage of water into the ground, where it could be contaminated by the wood treating chemicals in the soil.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and EPA are charged with being Taylor's watchdog during the cleanup effort. They are responsible for making sure that all environmental rules are followed.

"There are a lot of issues here — legal as well as environmental," said Bruce Summers, the president of Taylor Lumber. "The most important thing is the fact that we don't pollute. It is not our intention. I live here. My family lives here. We don't want to do anything that will damage the environment or in some way endanger anyone."

Summers pointed out that no chemicals from Taylor's treatment plant have been found downstream in Sheridan's drinking water supply.

"The city of Sheridan draws water down stream from our location," said Summers. "They test it and even during when we had the spill here a year ago, the water was still being tested, we didn't find anything that would cause a problem. We test to very stringent specifications. To my knowledge, we haven't had any real issues of any type of endangerment. It is a very complex issue as far as the testing — the regulations and so forth."

Mark Prevo of the city of Sheridan's water plant confirmed what Summers said about no pollution showing up in Sheridan's drinking water.

"That's true," said Prevo of Summers' statement. "We have done extra testing above and beyond our required testing to insure that there has not been a problem because of Taylor Lumber being upstream of our river intake. All together, we probably took over to the lab probably seven to eight different samples and all of those samples were negative. There was no sign of anything to give us any alarm."

Prevo said he has worked closely with the Oregon Health Department, DEQ and EPA on the water quality testing.

"We all have been working together to make sure that there would not be a problem concerning the

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~ Kathleen Feehan
Tribal Environmental Specialist

safety of the city's drinking water downstream of them," said Prevo.

Prevo said the city will soon issue its annual drinking water report. He said the report, known as a consumer confidence report, is a new requirement of all drinking water systems. The report will include all testing information on the drinking water supply.

Summers said the company is taking actions to mitigate the pollution problems.

"We're in the process of developing our storm water treatment plant," said Summers. "We've got a removal action in place right now. That is the game plan at this point in time."

"That has really been a driver for the company — is how do we go about dealing with issues of the practices that were legitimate 30 years ago now have led to problems we have to remediate," said Summers. "So, we are virtually spending every dime we have in the investigation and working with EPA as far as ways to insure that we don't pollute. And, it is very expensive, but we're going forward with it."

Mike Slater, of the Oregon EPA office, confirmed that Taylor is building a stormwater treatment facility on site and will be using a charcoal filtration system to treat the surface water runoff.

Slater said Taylor Lumber has a long history of problems and violations on the site, but he said the company has been fairly compliant with EPA cleanup requests in the last year.

"There is a pretty long history of the site," said Slater. "They have been treating wood poles out there for a long time. They were regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act which is for hazardous waste management so the Oregon DEQ and EPA have been working out there since the mid-80s. We still have a lot of stuff left over from the old days and some problem with spills from the tank with pentachlorophenol in them. They had some accidents and equipment failures, so the ground is kind of contaminated with pentachlorophenol and arsenic. So those are the two things that we are trying to cleanup out there. The cleanup program was out there in November, December and through January."

According to Slater, although Taylor Lumber has been compliant in the past year, they have not always been so cooperative with EPA.

"The company has had a few environmental violations over the years," said Slater. "They have faced some enforcement actions from the EPA and DEQ. I wouldn't say that they have a history of being outstanding environmental performers. I would say that maybe that has improved over the last year or two. They tell us that all these environmental requirements are pretty expensive and it is hard to do everything that EPA and DEQ would like done."

Slater said the main threat to human health and fish populations will come during high water and storm water events. Since these events usually occur in the winter months, this summer's recreation and the city's drinking water supply should be safe for now.

"I don't see a lot of human health exposures during the dry season," said Slater.

Tribal Environmental Specialist Kathleen Feehan said the Tribe will continue to monitor the cleanup efforts and express concern over fish consumption risks and the impacts of the pollution to endangered species in the river.

"We want to make sure our Tribal members are safe and not at risk from this situation," said Feehan. "And, we want to know the risks from recreational exposure."

Mentors needed

The Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Program is interested in developing a mentor program for our Tribal children. Many of our children are in need of companionship and positive role modeling. The purpose of the mentor program is to provide at risk youth with a relationship that will help to foster healthy lifestyle choices. Mentors may spend 4 to 6 hours per week with a child. Mentors will be compensated for their time.

The ICW Program would like to develop a list of people interested in mentoring a Tribal child. These children need consistency so it is important that mentors are able to make a 3 to 6 month commitment. If you are interested in more information please contact Danis Bazy-Bucknell or Dana Leno at 1-800-242-8196.

Apprenticeship opportunity in Traditional Arts

The Oregon Historical Society Folklife Program has applications available for the 2000-2001 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP). TAAP is an annual program that encourages the continuation of traditional artistic skills within communities by awarding stipends to master traditional artists to teach a specific cultural tradition to one or more apprentices. An average of ten are funded each year. The postmark deadline for applications is July 21, 2000.

All traditional artists are eligible for this program. Traditional arts are forms of artistic expression learned as part of the cultural life of a community (such as an ethnic group, Tribe, religious or occupational group, or region). Traditional arts reflect the history, culture and values of a community. They are often learned informally, passed down from one person to another.

Masters and apprentices apply together to the program and can apply for up to \$2500. They decide when and where they will meet to work during the year and set their own goals for what they will achieve during the apprenticeship. Apprenticeships last eight months (September through April) and generally involve 80-120 hours of instruction time.

Apprenticeships must be Oregon residents and from the same cultural community as the master artist. For application information, contact Leila Childs at (503) 306-5292.

Summer Safety Tips

Once again summer is here. The Grand Ronde medical staff would like to share safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

POOL SAFETY

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool or any body of water — a creek, a lake, or even a bathtub even for a moment.
- Make sure the adults that are watching young children in the water know CPR and can rescue a child if necessary.
- If you have a pool, surround it with a sturdy five foot fence.
- Make sure the gates self-close and self-latch at a height children can't reach.
- Keep rescue equipment near the pool — a shepherd's hook (a long pole with a hook on the end), a life preserver and a telephone.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not suitable for approved life vests and can give children a false sense of security.
- Children are not developmentally ready for swim lessons until after their fourth birthday. Swim programs for children under 4 should not be seen as a way to decrease drowning.
- Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be within arms length, providing "touch supervision."

FUN IN THE SUN

- Babies under six months of age should be kept out of direct sunlight. Move your baby to the shade or under a tree, umbrella or the stroller canopy.
- Dress babies in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs and use brimmed hats.
- Apply a sun screen at least 30 minutes before going outside and use sun screen even on cloudy days.
- The sun protection factor (SPF) should be at least 15.
- Try to keep children out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. — that's when the sun's rays are the strongest.