



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
REEF Environmental Facility
Update on Community Activities
Sylacauga, Talladega County, Alabama

Number 1

October 2012

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Reef LLC facility located at 71 Twin Street, Sylacauga, Alabama was a centralized waste treatment facility. The facility planned on accepting waste water and oily waste from other industries for treatment and discharge to a Sylacauga waste water treatment plant. Shortly after the first waste deliveries began, local and state government officials received numerous odor complaints. Subsequent assessments identified unstable conditions relating to accumulating gases (organic and hydrogen sulfide) under a tarp/liner over the Biological Treatment Basin at the facility and an oily sheen being released from the facility as well as abandoned hazardous chemicals both on the facility grounds and in the onsite facility lab.

RESPONSE ACTIONS TO DATE

On October 1, 2012, Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) requested assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Region 4 to assess the site and to assist with emergency stabilization. An EPA On-Scene-Coordinator (OSC) was dispatched to the scene. A network of absorbent booms has been placed in and around Shirtee Creek to address the unpermitted surface discharges of wastewater from the facility. On-scene personnel continue to monitor the area around Shirtee Creek for adverse impacts to fish and other aquatic organisms. In addition, an air scrubber system was installed to alleviate the large bubble of gases underneath the tarp covering the wastewater basins. The scrubber system began operating on October 5, 2012 and will continue to operate until the gases/vapors are removed from underneath the tarp. Air monitoring was conducted on site and at seven locations throughout adjacent neighborhoods to ensure citizens are safe and are not being adversely impacted by the on-site response activities. Data from the air monitoring in the neighborhoods has not identified any concentrations that present any health hazards. The materials in the basins were treated to greatly reduce the amount of fugitive gases until they can be removed during the next cleanup phase.

DESCRIPTION OF THREAT

The abandoned facility has several priority issues that will be addressed under a phased approach. This emergency response action is primarily addressing the trapped gases that exist under the tarps/liners over the two 3 million gallon treatment basins. The trapped gases total approximately 175,000 cubic feet and evidence indicates elevated levels of organics and hydrogen sulfide. Once the gases have been removed the basin material will be treated to reduce gas production.

NEXT STEPS

EPA will continue air monitoring during removal actions to ensure no unacceptable air concentrations impact nearby residents or worker safety and continue to mitigate waste oil contamination migrating off-site. EPA will also complete an inventory of onsite hazardous chemicals and initiate a cleanup to remove the material in the basins and other onsite hazards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator

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