



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

Number 4

December 2012

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Reef LLC facility located at 71 Twin Street, Sylacauga, Alabama was a centralized industrial waste water treatment facility. The facility was permitted to accept waste water and oily waste from other industries for treatment and discharge to a public operated treatment works (POTW) in Sylacauga. Shortly after the first waste deliveries began, local and state government officials received numerous odor complaints. Subsequent assessments identified unstable conditions relating of 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 investigate an oily sheen on Shirtee Creek next to the Site. Further investigation lead to the discovery of the tarp that was stressed and under pressure over the two equalization basins. 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 oily wastewater from the facility.

On-scene personnel continue to monitor and control the area seepage area around Shirtee Creek for adverse impacts to fish and other aquatic organisms. The release of untreated waste water to Shirtee Creek has been halted. 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 operated between October 5 and October 7, 2012 and removed approximately 170,000 cubic yards of gas from under the tarps. In October and November 2012, ADEM, EPA and its contractors, including waste water specialists and engineers, conducted numerous tests of the waste water on the Reef site and, specifically, bench scale treatment tests on how to control the gas and odor evolving from the basins.

## **NEXT STEPS**

EPA and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) continues to actively monitor the air in the community and on-site. In coordination with ADEM and local officials, EPA is about to conduct its first full scale treatment on the three major holding basins with hydrogen peroxide beginning mid-December. The test conducted by EPA and its contractors with the hydrogen peroxide treatment has been demonstrated as a safe and effective measure in eliminating the hydrogen sulfide gas and odor that is currently evolving from the basins. Hydrogen peroxide treatment is commonly used as an effective treatment measure in waste water treatment systems throughout the world. This is the first of several stages of treatment that EPA will conduct over the next few months that will support the eventual disposal of the approximately 14 million gallons of waste water.

**ATTENTION: DURING THE TREATMENT PERIOD, THE NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES TO THE REEF SITE ARE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE GREATER THAN NORMAL TRAFFIC OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING TANKER TRUCKS. PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY AND BE ALERT!**



**Pictured here are two of the three major holding basins on site.**

## Contact Information

For more information or should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to phone, write or email one of the following points-of-contact:

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