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Clean up set for dump threatening area water supply

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BY [JOANNE HUIST SMITH](#)- STAFF WRITER

Federal and state officials are moving quickly to clean-up a newly designated SuperFund site in Moraine, a decades-old illegal dump that poses a threat to Opossum Creek, a tributary of the Great Miami.

The property contains 50 to 100 rusted drums of lead-based ink or paint and 80,000 scrap tires, a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The location was designated a SuperFund site and classified as a "time critical removal action," that must be cleaned up within six months, after a Dec. 12 investigation documented lead and arsenic in the drums.

The proximity of the drums to Opossum Creek, a tributary of the Great Miami, got federal officials involved in the clean-up. The Great Miami River is important surface water that may have influence on the county's ground-water quality.

"Groundwater is our drinking water source," Sarah Hippensteel Hall, manger of watershed partnerships for the Miami Conservancy

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Clean-up of one of Montgomery County's most egregious illegal dump sites, a remote ravine in the city of Moraine with an estimated 80,000 scrap tires and 50 to 100 drums of dye and lead-based paint begins April 22. The clean-up of the partially buried drums on the banks of Opossum Creek - a joint project by the U.

District, said. “The river is the great corridor that connects all of our cites and provides recreational [opportunities](#), which creates workforce retention.”

The clean-up of the tires and drums – a joint project by the U. S. and Ohio EPAs – begins April 22 and is expected to take several months, Steve Renninger, the on-scene coordinator for the U.S. EPA said. Each drum will be tested on site to determine its contents, so that it can be disposed of properly.

The 20-acre site off Soldiers Home-West Carrollton Road is thick with vegetation. Trees are growing around and through mountains of tires, the frames of old trailers, broken bottles, and a lot of trash. Officials from Public Health - Dayton and Montgomery County believe the property may have been a junkyard decades ago, but neither city officials, neighbors or property records could confirm that. One of the drums carried a label dated August 1969 and another a McCalls label, a Dayton printing company that closed in 1982.

The only way to reach the dump is to hike to it. The U.S. EPA plans to build a 100-yard gravel road and staging area to bring in earth moving equipment and trailers. Air-quality monitoring will be ongoing throughout the operation to ensure the safety of the public and the work crews.

The SuperFund program – with money coming from taxes on the chemical and petroleum industries – was established by the federal government to address hazardous waste sites. There are more than 50 such sites in Ohio, including the Behr Dayton Thermal Systems VOC Plume stemming from a plant at 1600 Webster Street.

The EPA is still assessing the full extent of the contaminates near Opossum Creek. Local officials estimate the total clean -up could cost \$1 million, but Renninger wouldn't put a dollar figure on the drum removal saying it depends on how many they find. Between 50 and 100 are visible, but more could be buried.

The cost to clean up SuperFund sites vary depending on the contamination. While about \$700,000 has been spent to clean up the Behr site so far, the EPA estimates that work on the Nease Chemical site in northeast Ohio will cost \$22 million.

Heather Lauer of the Ohio EPA also was reluctant to put a dollar figure on the tire clean-up. Early estimates set the price at \$150,000, but that figure could change depending on what they discover on the property.

S. and Ohio EPA - is expected to take several months, Steven Renninger, the on-scene coordinator for the U.S. EPA said. The dump was discovered by investigators for Public Health: Dayton and Montgomery County after trespassers started burning tires near the creek to get at the metal rims to sell as scrap.



Montgomery County Sheriff's Office environmental crimes enforcement officer Deputy Victoria Dingee helped to start cleanup of a 20 acre site on Soldiers Home-West Carrollton Rd. that contains nearly 80,000 tires, auto parts and about 100 barrels of dye near the banks of Opossum Creek. Metal scrappers have been burning the tires off the rims, leaving the tire waste to seep into the creek. The Ohio and U.S. EPA offices are to begin cleanup on April 22. TY GREENLEES / STAFF



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The EPA has the authority to make the people responsible for contamination pay for studies and cleanup work.

Montgomery County Auditor's records show Lois Gilboy of Dayton as the owner of the Moraine property. Gilboy was granted the property in 1982 by way of a court order from the estate of Elbert Sohm, according to Montgomery County Common Pleas Court documents.

Gilboy's attorney, Chris Walker, said negotiations between his client and the Ohio EPA are ongoing, but they've reached a tentative deal for Gilboy to contribute \$10,000 toward the tire clean-up.

"Mrs. Gilboy was not aware of the extent of the tire dumpings that had taken place," Walker said. "She has not been on the property for some time."

Deputy Victoria Dingee, an environmental crimes investigator for the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, estimates there are 1,000 illegal dump sites throughout the county including some with just a few bags of trash. Only one in Jackson Twp. with thousands of scrap tires, but no drums, comes close to the scope of the Moraine site, Dingee said.

"It's amazing to see, but not in a good way," Dingee said.

The dump may have existed for decades, but it was just discovered by authorities last year when a neighboring property owner called 911 after seeing black smoke rising from the treetops.

Scrapers were burning tires to get at the rims.

"We've been out there a couple of times. It uses a lot of our resources because the area is so remote," Doug Hatcher, a fire inspector for the Moraine Fire Department said. "It's dangerous to burn anything, but tires are especially bad for the environment. Any time we can get something like that cleaned up, it's a good thing."

When tires burn, they break down into hazardous compounds including gases, heavy metals, and oil. The average passenger car tire is estimated to produce more than two gallons of oil when burned.

"Everybody knows it's not safe to burn tires," said Sogel, who claims it was his club members who reported the scrapers.

The Forgotten Breed Motorcycle Club purchased 14.7 acres at 3929 Soldiers Home-West Carrollton Road in 2004 and the group has been helping to remove some of the tires. Rick Sogle, president of the club said he often walks along the Opossum Creek with his children and dogs.

"There are rabbits, foxes and deer out there. To find out there is hazardous waste is alarming," Sogle said.

Walking the dump site last Monday, Dingee identified five tire burn sites, including a fresh one where a black oil had bled down to the creek bank.

“I was just out here a few weeks ago and this one wasn’t here,” Dingee said. “Tires will light up like a torch and they will burn for days. The tires also become incubators, breeding grounds for mosquitoes, including the ones that carry West Nile.”

Initially, money to clean up the tires will come from Ohio’s scrap tire program, which is funded by a \$1 per tire fee that is assessed on every new tire sold by tire wholesalers.

Lauer said the Ohio EPA may place a lien on the property to recover the full cost of the tire clean-up should the owner ever sell it.

Sarah Cullin, a spokeswoman for Rumpke, said the company was the preferred bidder for the tire removal, but has not officially been awarded the contract. The U.S. EPA will pack up the tires, in containers paid for by the state. Rumpke will then haul them to its tire recycling facility in Hamilton, where they will be shredded into 2” chips and used as a liner for the company’s Colerain Township Landfill.

Noteable U.S. EPA SuperFund clean-up sites in the region

Behr Dayton Thermal Systems VOC (volatile organic compounds) Plume Site: A plant located at 1600 Webster Street, Dayton, that manufactures vehicle air conditioning and engine-cooling systems. Chrysler Corporation owned and operated this facility from about 1937 until April of 2002. The ground water beneath this plant was found to be contaminated with volatile organic compounds. The U.S. EPA tested 276 homes in the McCook Field neighborhood for potentially hazardous vapors and installed mitigation systems in 148 residences to remove the vapors.

The East Troy Contaminated Aquifer: An area where volatile organic compounds, including the common industrial chemicals PCE and TCE, have contaminated ground water, soil and the indoor air in basements. EPA addressed the indoor air health risk by installing vapor abatement systems in 16 homes in the summer of 2007. EPA and Ohio EPA data also shows that VOCs have contaminated ground water below the city of Troy, as well as a local drinking water well field. To address this, Ohio EPA and Troy have taken steps to contain one potential source of the contamination, and are treating contaminated ground water prior to use.

The Lammers Barrel Factory site: The site is on the northeast corner of Grange-Hall and East Patterson Roads in Beavercreek. The company operated as a chemical recycling facility from 1953 until 1969. The facility burned to the ground in September, 1969. As a result, chemicals migrated into the soil and ground water. On-site soil is now contaminated with organic chemicals and metals. Contamination in some private residential wells was first discovered in the mid-1980s. In 1985, U.S. EPA extended county water service to nine residences along East Patterson Road with wells containing vinyl chloride, a known cancer-causing chemical. Through additional investigations, U.S. EPA and Ohio EPA learned that ground water contamination extends from the site outward to the east, south, and southeast and impacts an area along the northern end of the Woodhaven subdivision. EPA extended water lines to three additional homes in 2000.

The Valleycrest Landfill Site: The site is roughly 100 acres formally listed at 950 Brandt Pike. The site is above the Great Miami Aquifer, which is the sole source of drinking water for the city of Dayton. U.S. EPA, helped by the Ohio EPA, proposed installing a solid waste cap, a perimeter

extraction system for liquid seepage and gas extraction wells to clean up and contain remaining waste at the North Sanitary Landfill.

The West Troy Contaminated Aquifer: This is in a wellfield in the city of Troy. The municipal system supplies water to about 28,000 people. Since 1986 volatile organic compounds, primarily tetrachloroethene (also referred to as PCE), have been detected in one of the five production wells in the West Well Field. The Ohio EPA conducted several investigations beginning in the early 1990s; however, a definitive source of VOC contamination in the West Well Field has not been identified. A separate ground plume has led to VOC contamination in the city's East Well Field which is part of the East Troy Contaminated Aquifer National Priorities List site.

Source: U.S. EPA

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