

News Release
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
New England Office
September 5, 2008

Contact Information: Paula Ballentine, 617.918.1027

Cleanup of Contaminated Soils in Belchertown & Palmer Mass.

Public meeting at Palmer Town Hall, Monday Sept. 8 at 7PM

(Boston, Mass. – September 5, 2008) – EPA and the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will coordinate on the removal of soils contaminated with lead and arsenic at the Old Bondsville Factory Site located in Belchertown and Palmer, Mass.

The site is located off of Depot Street in Belchertown and Main Street in Bondsville Village of Palmer, and is bordered by residential properties as well as open space. The focus area for contaminant removal and soil restoration is the strip of land between the Swift River and the canal that runs parallel to Main Street.

The site has been publicly accessible and is a popular local fishing area. Worn footpaths, campfire circles, fishing tackle and beverage containers are evidence to its popularity. As a result, EPA is moving forward with this cleanup as efficiently as possible. Residents are encouraged to stay away while cleanup crews work. Security fencing will be installed and local law enforcement officials have been notified to keep an extra watch in the area for the duration of the cleanup. Work is expected to begin by the end of this month.

While the exact cause of the contamination is unclear, the location and type of contamination suggests that it resulted from either industrial activity or activities from the railway as it is located in between the factories original footprint and the railway trestle. Prior removal actions have taken place at this site, but areas of concern were located north of the former railroad trestle whereas this removal will take place to the south.

The Belchertown Land Trust currently owns the property with the goal of keeping the land available for public open space and recreation. During a spring 2008 Brownfields Assessment high levels of lead and arsenic were discovered. The site was then referred to EPA's Emergency Planning and Response Branch which has the capability to address this potential contact threat. Since then, over 350 soil samples have been taken to confirm the exact hot spots of lead and arsenic.

"I am pleased that the state and federal environmental agencies are working together to remediate this site," said Matthew Streeter, Town Manager of Palmer.

The 12-acre site was formerly occupied by a textile mill consisting of about 12 buildings built on both sides of the Swift River. Originally the Boston Duck Company owned and operated the complex from 1845 to 1936, manufacturing cotton and woolen goods. Otis Mill of Three Rivers in Palmer took over when the Boston Duck Company moved out of state in 1936 until 1941. Final ownership settled with Warren Textile Print Works (also Bondsville Realty, Inc) who used a portion of the mill for textiles and leased the rest to various industrial tenants.

In 1968, a large fire swept through and destroyed most of the mill complex. With the exception of the condominium development that was constructed in 1998, the site has remained vacant. Since 1987, MassDEP has been involved at the site and has coordinated with the EPA when additional resources are necessary. Currently, MassDEP is sampling and evaluating sediments in the Swift River while EPA

works to remove the contaminated soil. Upon completion of the removal MassDEP will continue to be the lead environmental agency for the site, coordinating with EPA, Belchertown and Palmer.

EPA and MassDEP officials will give a brief update on the site during a publicly broadcast public meeting, which will be on Monday, Sept. 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the Palmer Town Hall.

More information: [EPA's Emergency Response Program and Short Term Removals](http://epa.gov/region1/superfund/er)
(epa.gov/region1/superfund/er)

#