

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VIII
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2004

From: Hays Griswold

Subject: St. Elmo Well

25850 County Road 162, St. Elmo, CO

Latitude: 38.7331000

Longitude: -106.1647000

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	FU
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	11/6/2002	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:		Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	
CERCLIS ID #:	CON 000802079	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

Site description:

The Site is a Bed and Breakfast that the owner is in the process of building. It is located at 25850 County Road 162, St. Elmo, Colorado, 81236. Used oil and pentachlorophenol were dumped into a drinking water well. Nearby homes have wells in the same aquifer and could be affected if the chemicals migrate outside the well into surrounding groundwater.

Removal Site Evaluation:

The owner and his wife discovered that something was in their well when they noticed an odor in the water coming from the tap and the owner had to go to the hospital after drinking "two gulps" of the water. EPA was contacted after the owner could not find any other agency that could help. The OSC visited the Site on November 6, 2002; and, after seeing the containers from which the solvents/oil were dumped into the well and sampling the well water, the OSC initiated an emergency removal action at the property.

Description of threat:

Pentachlorophenol and used oil were dumped into a private drinking water well; they are hazardous substances as defined by CERCLA Section 101(14). The presence of these substances in the well obviously contaminated the well and created a potential of contamination of the aquifer and other down-gradient wells in the area. The local agencies did not have the capability or financial ability to determine amount of contamination or to treat the water. Therefore, EPA and its contractors, responded to the scene.

Current Activities

On November 6, 2002, the OSC, EPA's Emergency Response Contractor (ERRS), and representatives from the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office mobilized to the Site:

EPA/its ERRS contractor examined the containers from which the pentachlorophenol and used oil were dumped into the private drinking water well and sampled the well water (concentrations of pentachlorophenol and Volatile Organic Compounds [VOC] contamination in the drinking water were very high - well above the Maximum Contaminant Level [MCL]).

The Chaffee County Sheriff's Office initiated an investigation of the dumping of the chemicals/solvents in the well.

EPA commenced to remove the hazardous substances from the well by pumping and treatment, using activated carbon filtration.

As of August 14, 2003, the well water concentrations of pentachlorophenol and VOC-contamination were below the MCL, and the Removal Action was considered complete.

On January 20, 2004, EPA was notified that the odor in the water coming from the tap had returned and the contamination of the drinking water appeared to be present again.

The well water was re-sampled on January 23, 2004, to determine the concentrations of pentachlorophenol in the drinking water. The level of pentachlorophenol was found to be 150 parts per billion which is above the Maximum Contaminant Level.

Planned Removal Actions

It will be necessary for EPA to “restart” the process to remove the hazardous substances from the well by pumping and treatment, using activated carbon filtration.

The Local and State authorities were initially called by the homeowner regarding the problem but were uncertain of their jurisdiction. Chaffee County Sheriff’s office asked EPA for help in the Removal, was present during the assessment, and initiated a criminal investigation. Neither the State nor local authorities have the resources to conduct a removal action.

Key Issues

None at this time, except for the concern as to why the contamination has returned.

response.epa.gov/stelmo