

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, February 26, 2007

From: Kenneth Rhame

To: Bob Bittinger, ERRB
Jim McGuire, US EPA

Taylor Matt, ERRB

Subject: Groves Drum
Hwy 77, Ohatchee, AL
Latitude: 33.7889000
Longitude: -86.0317000

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	A4NX
Reporting Period:	2/21/2007 to 2/26/2007	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	2/21/2006	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	2/21/2006	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On 12-Feb-07 Alabama Dept. of Env. Management (ADEM) was notified, by Hancock Forest Management (HFM), of abandoned drums on a wooded property owned by John Hancock Life Insurance Company. HFM requested ADEM to investigate the drums as to content and possible criminal activity. HFM, the property manager, is a subsidiary of Hancock Timber Resource Group and leases the property to a hunting club. The property consists of approximately 200 acres and is surrounded by farm and residential land. ADEM performed some "haz-cattng" of the containers, the results indicate possible incompatible hazardous materials staged next to each other. ADEM notified U.S. EPA Region 4 on Friday, 2-16-07. On 2-21-07 OSC Ken Rhame mobilized to the site to provide an assessment. Noticing the potential threat, he is currently in discussions with HFM to have them removed.

Current Activities

According to HFM, a Mr. Robert Groves had been implicated as being the individual that dumped the drums at the Peaks Hill Hunting Club. On 2-22-07 contact was made with Mr. Robert Groves. Mr. Groves admitted to being responsible for placing the drums at the Peak Hill Hunting Club. Mr. Groves explained to OSC Rhame that he had worked for a chemical company, Etowah Chemical Environmental Systems, for 15 years and retired approximately 6 to 7 years ago. While he was employed with Etowah, Mr. Groves would service customers (deliver drums of product and pick up "empties" for refurbishing). Mr. Groves admitted that while picking up "empties", usually these drums still had some product in the drums. Mr. Groves decided to consolidate the material in these "empties" into drums for his potential use in a "side business". This side business never progressed. Mr. Groves stored these drums at his uncles house. In August of 2006, Mr. Groves uncle passed, the beneficiaries of the estate wanted to sale this property thus forced Mr. Groves to remove these drums. Mr. Groves stated that with time constraints pressuring him, he approached the hunt club and the hunt club allowed him to place the drums on the property for the time.

OSC Rhame explained to Mr. Groves that he was responsible for these drums and their removal. On 2-23-07 Mr. Groves contacted the Etowah Chemical Company and asked if they would be willing to accept these drums back for potential use. Etowah Chemical sent a chemist out to the site to performs some field screening and determined that there were some drums that they would be willing to repackage, label, manifest and transport back to their facility for re-use. EPA requested and Etowah Chemical agreed to provide a letter stating which chemical/drums would be re-used and provide EPA with the opportunity to provide oversight and documentation of this re-use.

The remaining drums which cannot be re-used, HFM will take responsibility for the proper waste characterization, stabilization, transport and disposal.

Key Issues

HFM installed two additional gates with new locks in an attempt to secure the site.

