

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region V
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, July 31, 2008
From: Lori Muller/Kevin Turner

Subject: Initiation of Action
Vincennes Tar Seeps
714 Bambino Drive, Vincennes, IN
Latitude: 38.6622000
Longitude: -87.5386000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	B5V8
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	001
Start Date:	7/28/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	7/22/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	EP-S5-08-03
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Vincennes Tar Seeps Site is located at South 14th Street in Vincennes, Knox County, Indiana. The Site is a community baseball complex made up of five ball fields. The complex consists of Veterans Field to the east, Red Diamond Field and Joe Bilskie Sr. Field to the middle, Blue Diamond Field and Yellow Diamond Field to the west. The complex also has a concession stand, batting cages and play ground. The property is surrounded by a cemetery on the north side, residential and commercial mixed property on the east and south side of the site.

Around 1995, the Little League Baseball Association constructed Veterans Field over the top of a tar pit that had existed on the property since at least 1944. Many reports exist concerning the origin of the tar pit, but none have been verified or tied to any specific facility or operation.

In February 2000, there was a fire within a storm sewer that parallels the former tar pits and runs between Veteran's and Joe Bilskie Sr. Field. The Vincennes Fire Chief indicated that children had entered a 6-foot-diameter storm sewer and started a tar-like substance on fire. It is suspected that tar from the former tar pits may have migrated and seeped through the pipe joints and into the storm sewer.

Over the years, tar has been observed seeping from below ground surface in several locations throughout the baseball field. Parents complained that their children had come home with tar stains on their clothes and hands after using the field. Reportedly, the tar caused skin irritation. At the beginning of each season, the ball field association would remove the surface tar from the playing field.

In February 2001, at the request of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the U.S. EPA conducted a removal site assessment. The tar was found in both surface and subsurface soil and was considered characteristically hazardous for corrosivity due to a pH level below 2.0. In April 2001, the Site Assessment Report was prepared, and in February 2002, IDEM formally requested that the U.S. EPA perform a removal action at the site. Due to a request by the Little League Baseball Association, removal activities were not conducted during the summer of 2002.

The first removal action was completed at the site in July of 2003. The source tar was considered removed and the affected fields were put back into use. During the summer of 2004 the tar began to reappear in the previously excavated parking lot area as well as the outfield of Veteran's Field. The problem continued to expand until IDEM and U.S. EPA agreed that the problem needed to be readdressed. IDEM referred the site again in March of 2008.

Current Activities

- * On July 28, 2008, US EPA OSC Muller, Superfund Technical Assessment Response Team (START) and Emergency Rapids Response Services (ERRS) contractor arrived on site to commence site work.
- * After the initial health and safety meeting, OSC Muller led a site walk through on Veterans Field and pointed out the locations where the excavation will be taking place.

- * ERRS initiated pre-excavation work by locating the underground sprinkler system located within Veterans Field. Some of the sprinkler heads were disassembled from the underground sprinkler system where the excavation will take place. The sprinkler system located where the excavation will not be conducted was separated from the system to protect from possible damage during excavation.
- * A portion of the fence was disassembled to construct a heavy equipment entry into Veterans Field.
- * On July 29, 2008 excavation of the tar began. The excavation activities consist of separating clean soil from the tar-contaminated soil. Perimeter air monitoring is being conducted during the excavation.

Planned Removal Actions

- * Continue to excavate the tar located within Veterans Field.
- * Excavate the tar located in the parking lot adjacent to Veterans Field.
- * Dispose of the tar-contaminated soil at non-hazardous landfill.
- * Continue perimeter air monitoring

Next Steps

- * Backfill the excavated areas with clean soil.
- * Restore the surface of Veterans Field and replace the chain-link perimeter fence.

response.epa.gov/VincennesTarSeeps