

EPA SUPERFUND UPDATE – HURRICANE HARVEY

Gulfco Marine Maintenance

Post-Hurricane Harvey conditions of groundwater and sediment at the Gulfco Marine Maintenance Superfund site are consistent with historical site conditions that existed before the hurricane made landfall.

On September 11, 2017, groundwater and sediment samples were collected and analyzed for volatile organic chemicals to evaluate the potential effects from Hurricane Harvey. In one of two groundwater well samples, 1,2-dichloroethane was detected at a concentration of 0.0013 milligram per liter (mg/l). This concentration is less than 20% of the 2015 concentration of 0.007 mg/l and is less than the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 0.005 mg/l. No volatile organic chemicals were detected in the sediment samples. These results indicate that site remedy is operating as intended, and the remedy will be protective of human health and the environment.

The 40-acre Gulfco Site is located in the City of Freeport, Brazoria County, Texas, and borders the Intracoastal Waterway. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Site operated as an off-shore oil platform fabrication facility, and later as a barge cleaning and repair facility. Waste oils, caustics and organic chemicals were stored in three surface impoundments until 1981, when they were closed and capped. The Site continued operations until 1998 when the operator declared bankruptcy. A removal was completed in 2011 to remove and dispose of the former aboveground storage tanks, which contained hazardous substances left from the barge cleaning operations. The underlying contaminated soil also was removed for off-site disposal. A Record of Decision (ROD) was issued in 2011 to place institutional controls, perform ground water monitoring, repair the impoundment cap, and implement an operation & maintenance plan.

A Five-Year Review completed 9/21/2016 determined that the site is protective in the short-term and will be protective in the long-term following full remedy implementation. The former impoundment cap protects against direct contact with the underlying soil contamination, and the groundwater, which is salt water, contamination plume is stable and not spreading, and has not impacting surface water.

The next site evaluation will be during the Superfund Five-Year Review. EPA is responsible for reviewing Superfund remedial actions at least every five years where hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants will remain on site above levels that allow for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) also requires that EPA report to Congress regarding these sites. A Superfund Five-Year Review Report to Congress is prepared each fiscal year.