Site History

The Matlack Inc. site (Site) is located on the south side of Route 322 in Woolwich Township. It is bordered to the northwest and west by a State Wildlife Management Area and Grand Sprute Run, a tributary of Racoon Creek, which flows into the Delaware River. To the northeast, the Site is bordered by residential/commercial properties and farm fields form the southeast border. The Site, a 31-acre truck terminal and tank-trailer cleaning facility, operated between 1962 and 2001. However, during the last few years of operation there were minimal tank cleaning operations.

Contaminants of Concern

The Site’s primary waste was generated during tank cleaning operations. Rinse water from the cleaning of the tanks was disposed of in an unlined sand and gravel pit (lagoon) at the Site between 1962 and 1976. The lagoon was eventually covered with demolition rubble and fill when Matlack began using underground tanks to hold the rinsate. Additional sources of contamination on the Site were underground storage tanks and a diesel fuel line leak. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) consisting of tetrachloroethylene (PCE), benzene and trichloroethylene (TCE) are the primary contaminants of concern in groundwater, soil, surface water and sediment at the Site.

Field Activities

Based on numerous investigations that were conducted at the Site, the facility installed a system to pump and treat contaminated groundwater. The system was shut down because of issues involving adequate monitoring. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) required modification of the treatment system, however, the system was never upgraded because Matlack filed for bankruptcy and liquidated in 2001. A court ordered agreement established with the company to clean up the site was no longer valid. However, DEP did use a two million dollar Letter of Credit that was still available for the cleanup costs.

In 2005, field sampling was performed by DEP at the Site and at Grand Sprute Run. Findings revealed that contaminated groundwater was impacting the stream. In Spring, 2006 DEP refurbished
and re-activated the groundwater pump and treat system left behind by Matlack using funds from the Letter of Credit.

Potable well samples have been collected at several residential wells located near the Site. No VOCs have been detected. Well sampling conducted in 2003, 2005 and 2008 by DEP identified no impacts from site related contaminants.

In 2005 and 2008, DEP conducted sampling of surface water and sediment in and around Grand Sprute Run. Results indicated that TCE and PCE were detected above New Jersey Surface Water Quality Criteria (standards) for freshwater trout and non-trout waterways. Sediment sample results indicated that several volatile and semivolatile contaminants were present above the New Jersey Sediment Ecological Screening Criteria. Currently DEP continues to operate the ground water Pump and Treat system. However, recent testing has shown that there is still significant underground source of contamination. The existing balance of funds from the responsible party is insufficient to complete the remediation. Therefore, DEP nominated the Site for inclusion on the USEPA's National Priorities List for the Superfund program.

For more information about State Cleanup Criteria please see: http://www.nj.gov/dep/standards/.

The following Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) webpages have more information about Matlack Inc. -
http://epa.gov/region02/waste/matla725.pdf
http://epa.gov/region02/waste/fsmatlack.htm

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