



Environmental Fact Sheet: Colbert Landfill

EPA Conducts Fourth Five-Year Review of Cleanup

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

July 2009

Background

EPA Region 10 is conducting the fourth Five-Year Review of the cleanup of the Colbert Landfill located approximately 2.5 miles north of Colbert, Washington. The review will evaluate the cleanup work that was completed at the site in 1987 and should be finalized by September 30, 2009. Once final, a notice and brief summary of the results will be placed in The Spokesman Review. The results will also be available on the EPA website <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/colbert> and in the EPA records center (see details below).

Why is a Five-Year Review being done for the Colbert Landfill cleanup?

A five-year review is required by law on any site where hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants remain at the site after cleanup. It answers the following questions:

- Is the remedy functioning as intended by the decision document that guided the cleanup?
- Are the assumptions used at the time of the cleanup still valid?
- Has any other information come to light that could call into question the protectiveness of the cleanup?

This is the fourth five-year review of the landfill cleanup. Previous five-year reviews have found that the cleanup was still protective of human health and the environment.

Landfill history

The Colbert Landfill site spans 40 acres and is located two miles north of Colbert, Washington. From 1968 through 1986, the landfill received municipal and commercial wastes. Between 1975 and 1980, a local electronics manufacturing company disposed of spent organic solvents at the landfill. These wastes typically were brought to the landfill in drums and were poured down the sides of open trenches containing soil and ordinary municipal refuse. During the same period, Fairchild Air Force Base disposed of various solvent wastes at the site. The six chemicals of concern at the site are: methyl chloride, 1-1-1, trichlorethane, 1-1, dichlorethylene, tetrachlorethylene, 1-1, dichloroethene, and trichloroethylene.

In 1980 nearby residents complained to the Eastern Regional Office of the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) about the chemical disposal practices. EPA and Ecology along with Spokane County Utilities Department conducted an investigation into these complaints by initiating a groundwater sampling study of nearby domestic water wells. Twenty domestic water wells had contaminants above drinking water standards which could in part be traced to the spent solvents disposed of at the landfill. The landfill was closed in 1986.

Cleanup of the landfill

The remedy for the site included the following:

- The landfill was closed and covered (also known as capping)
- A landfill gas management system was installed
- A groundwater extraction and treatment system was installed for the upper (south) and lower (west) aquifer and for source contaminant control (east)
- An alternate water supply was provided to residences affected by groundwater contamination from the landfill
- An institutional control agreement was established to limit the way the site can be used. Institutional controls are put into place to reduce the possibility

Information for Residents

Is my drinking water safe?

As a part of the cleanup process, all of the people that had contamination in their wells were hooked up to water provided by the Whitworth Water District. Remaining domestic wells with a history of contamination are monitored by the County. In addition, quarterly monitoring is done near the extraction well systems.

Do I need to have my well tested?

Existing wells within the plume boundaries should currently be or have historically been sampled. If you have questions about well water quality, please contact Bill Wedlake: Spokane County, 509-238-6607, wwedlake@spokanecounty.org or Steve Holderby at 509-324-1571 in the Solid Waste Division for Spokane County.

Learn more about the landfill cleanup and review the site documents

Online:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/colbert>

In Person:

EPA Region 10 Superfund Records Center
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECL-076
Seattle, WA 98101
Call for an appointment: 206-553-4951

Contact

For more information or to report concerns about the site that may be helpful to the Five-Year Review Process, please contact:

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