



EPA

TANAPAG VILLAGE PCBs

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION IX • JUNE 2003

CLEANUP OF CONTAMINATED SOIL COMPLETE

This fact sheet is being distributed to the Tanapag Village community and greater Saipan to update residents on the soil cleanup project that has been going on in the village for the past several years. We will also discuss other aspects of the PCB cleanup that have affected and concerned the community since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) began addressing the contamination issue some time ago.

STATUS OF THE SOIL CLEANUP

In spite of some concern that enough funds to complete the soil treatment might not be available, the Corps has been able to secure the money needed to finish the project. This includes completion of contaminated soil excavation, treatment and off-island shipment and disposal of remaining contaminated soils and filter cake. There is also funding to conduct restoration of the Lower Base Cemetery area.

At this time, all PCB-contaminated soils identified in and around Tanapag Village have been excavated and soil stockpiled and successfully treated. Each excavation was sampled by the Corps and confirmed by EPA to contain PCB levels below the action level of 1 part per million (ppm). Each of the areas in the Village were backfilled with clean material, except for Cemetery 1 and the Lower Base Cemetery areas which were backfilled with a combination of clean and treated soils.

All stockpiled soils from excavations in the Lower Base Cemetery and around Tanapag Village have now been treated using indirect thermal desorption. As a result, these treated soils have PCB levels of 1 ppm or less. EPA has also performed confirmation sampling to make sure this has been accomplished. Once most of the soil was treated, the indirect thermal desorption unit was shut down so it could be decontaminated, dismantled and prepared for off-island shipment. Some contaminated soils, which were inaccessible because of the unit, were then excavated. These areas were also sampled to ensure

levels of 1 ppm or less. This remaining soil, which was not treated in the thermal unit, has been bagged and will be shipped off-island for disposal on the Mainland. Along with the untreated contaminated soil, the last of the filter cake will also be shipped for off-island disposal. Also, the final pieces of the treatment unit and associated equipment are being decontaminated, taken apart and shipped off-island. We expect all this to be accomplished by June 10.

Once the treatment unit was off the concrete pad, work on the concrete pad began. The pad has been decontaminated, sampled and any remaining areas of contamination have been addressed. The concrete debris from the pad will be brought to the Marpi landfill.

This effort has resulted in a greatly improved environment for the people of Saipan.

RESTORATION OF THE LOWER BASE CEMETERY

Now that contaminated soil has been excavated and treated, backfilling and restoration of the Lower Base Cemetery will occur. A local contractor has been hired to conduct the restoration work in the Lower Base Cemetery area. Restoration of these areas will begin in June and take approximately two months to complete. The work will involve grading the treated soils on site, applying topsoil and planting grass. The site will be monitored and maintained for two months to ensure grass growth and site stability before turning the site back over to the Mariannas Public Lands Authority.

RESULTS OF GROUNDWATER SAMPLING

In December 2002, the Corps installed three groundwater monitoring wells in areas of high contamination: the Lower Base Cemetery, the Village Cemetery and the Beach Park. Following the installation, groundwater sampling was conducted and the samples were sent for PCB analysis on the U.S. Mainland. A draft report has been prepared, reviewed and is in the process of being finalized. Although the report is not final, it indicates that no PCBs were detected in any of the groundwater samples collected.

EPA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

On April 30, 2003, at the request of the Corps, EPA granted a time extension for completion of the work associated with EPA's Administrative Order. This extension allows the Corps until December 2003 to complete the project and the items contained in the Administrative Order. EPA anticipates that on-site work will be completed by Fall 2003, and final reports and review will proceed into the winter. It is our hope that site reports will be completed by the December 2003 deadline.

LAND CRABS

Once the work on site is complete, EPA plans to return to re-sample land crabs. This sampling will occur in some of the same areas where they were sampled before. This sampling will be performed to determine whether the ban

on eating them can be removed. We will keep the community updated on this effort.

HEALTH ISSUES

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has completed its report entitled "Evaluation of Public Health Implications of Polychlorinated Biphenyl Contamination in Tanapag Village." This report will be released to the public for comment by July 30. A press release announcing the report will be sent to the news media, and copies of the report will be available at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. Community members may request additional copies of the report or get more information on how to comment by contacting ATSDR Toxicologist Scott Sudweeks toll free at (888) 422-8737 or by email at [Community members may also contact ATSDR Regional Representative Gwen Eng at \(415\) 947-4317.](mailto:scott.sudweeks@atSDR.hhs.gov) Please say you are calling about Tanapag Village, Saipan.

OTHER SITES ON SAIPAN

EPA is aware of concerns by residents about other sites on the island that may need to be addressed. EPA has been working with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Division of Environmental Quality to assess information which has already been gathered about these sites and determine appropriate next steps. If the sites are former military facilities, the Corps, as the implementing agency for the Formerly Used Defense Sites (or FUDS) program, will be involved in the discussions. We will keep the community informed of these efforts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact any of the people listed below if you have questions regarding the PCB cleanup in Tanapag or other issues discussed in this fact sheet:

John I. Castro, Jr.
Director
CNMI Division of Environmental Quality
(670) 664-8500

Michelle Rogow
On-Scene Coordinator
U.S. EPA
75 Hawthorne St. (SFD-9-2)
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 972-3082 or (800) 231-3075
(leave a message and your call
will be returned)

Scott Sudweeks
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease
Registry
1600 Clifton Road, MS E-32
Atlanta, GA 30333
(404) 498-0390 or (888) 422-8737

Wendell Awada or Helene Takemoto
Environmental Branch, Programs and
Project Management Division
U.S. Army Engineer District, Honolulu
Ft. Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440
(808)438-1634