



Koppers Co., Inc. Superfund Site Update

United States Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • August 2003

EPA REQUESTS YOUR COMMENTS ON CONSENT DECREE AMENDMENT

INTRODUCTION

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites the public to review and comment on a Consent Decree (CD) amendment concerning the cleanup of the Koppers Superfund site in Oroville, CA. The CD availability notice has been published in the Federal Register on **August 7, 2003**. In addition, the EPA has placed a notice in the City's local newspaper announcing the opening of the 30-day public comment period that ends on **September 7, 2003**. This fact sheet also gives an update on the soil and groundwater cleanup. Terms that appear in **bold** are defined in the Glossary on page 4.

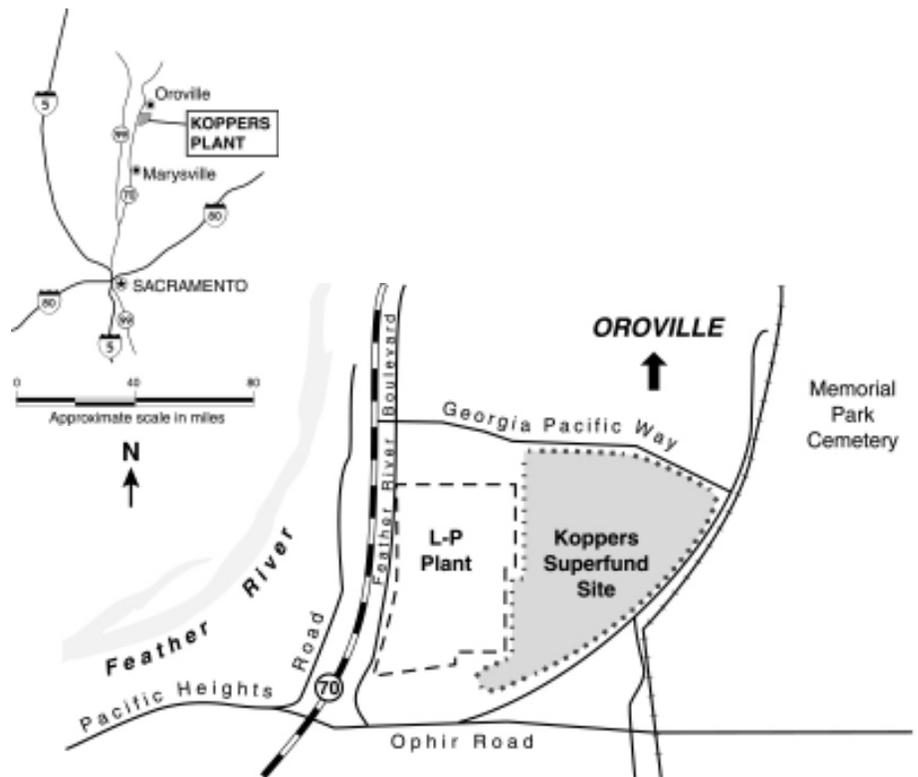


Figure 1: Location of Koppers Co., Inc. Superfund Site

CONSENT DECREE AMENDMENT

The 1989 **Record of Decision** (ROD) called for the restoration of groundwater to a safe public drinking water level and provided an alternative water supply to those residents potentially affected by the contamination until groundwater is restored. The terms of the original CD signed on February 7, 1992, do not reflect the changes in the cleanup work that will be performed as a result of the

signing of ROD Amendment #1 on August 29, 1996 and the signing of ROD Amendment #2 on September 23, 1999. The amendment brings these decisions into one document. A CD is a legal document, approved by a judge, that formalizes an agreement reached between EPA and the potential responsible parties (PRPs) through which the PRPs will conduct all or part of a cleanup action at a Superfund site and reimburse EPA's past costs for work

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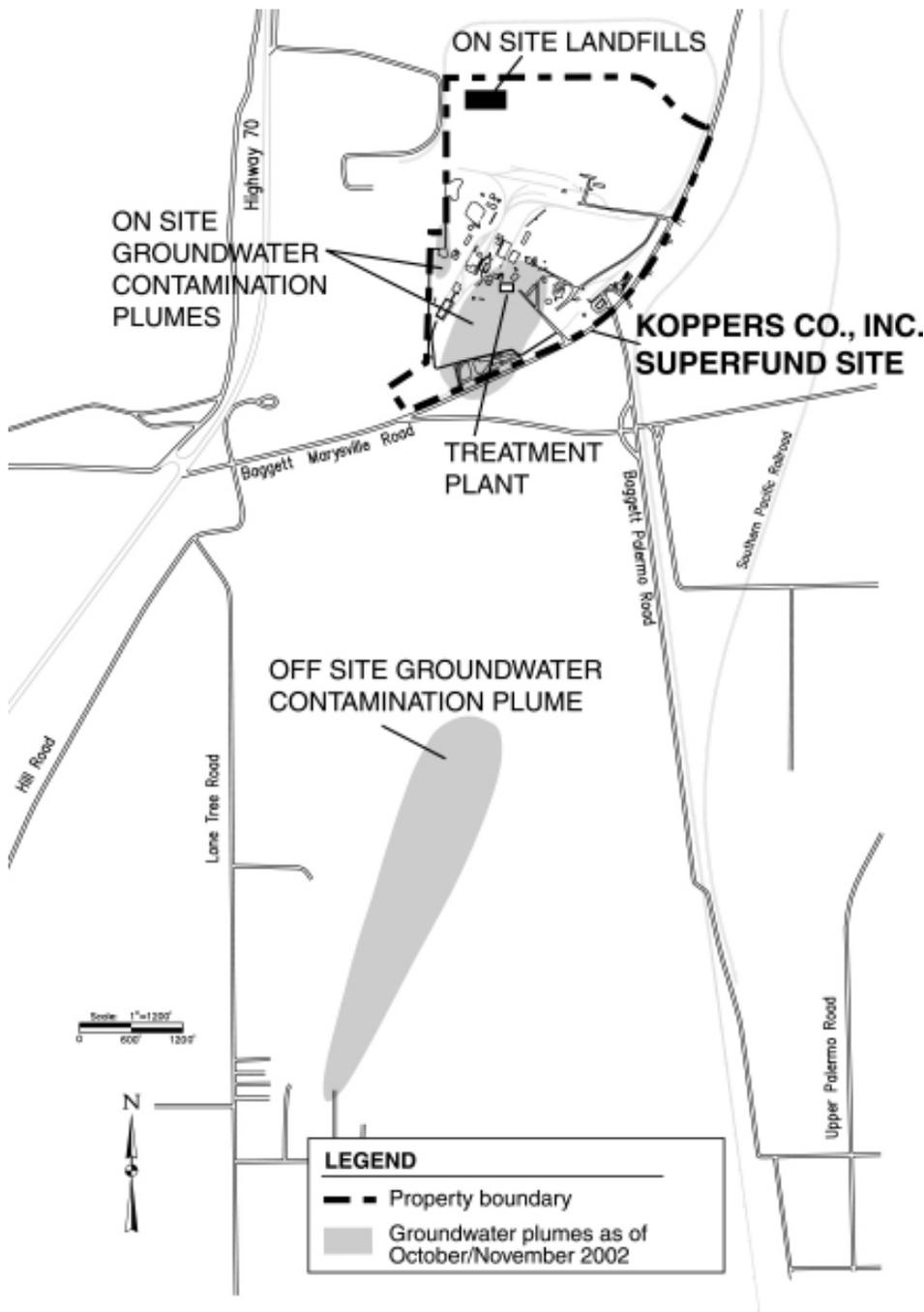


Figure 2: *Koppers Superfund Site, 2002, showing groundwater plumes*

performed at the site. The CD is subject to a public comment period before a judge approves the agreement. If it is approved, the court will enforce the order.

The work to be performed by the PRP is outlined in the Statement of Work (SOW) which is appended to the CD amendment. The following is a summary of the SOW:

ROD Amendment #1 provides for the consolidation of the site contaminated soil in an **on-property** landfill, including soils beneath the capped portions of the process area (see Figure 3). This work was completed September 2002 and a preliminary close-out report is being prepared.

ROD Amendment #2 provides for a Technical Impracticability Waiver (TIW) of the groundwater cleanup at the former **creosote** pond and cellon blow down areas due to the presence of dense non-aqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs). DNAPLs are liquids that are both not mixable and denser than water such as creosote. A TIW waives the requirement to clean up the groundwater to drinking water standards for certain highly contaminated areas of groundwater near non-aqueous phase liquid. EPA believes it is technically infeasible to clean groundwater in these areas to drinking water standards at this time. The ROD amendment also allows the pump and treat remediation to be augmented by enhanced **in-situ bioremediation** and makes provision for **monitored natural attenuation**, if necessary.

HOW TO COMMENT AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The public is encouraged to comment on this document and especially the Statement of Work which gives details about the work that will be performed. You can find a copy of this document at the site information repositories listed at the end of this fact sheet or call Jackie Lane at Toll-free (800) 231-3075 or her direct line at (415) 972-3236.

You may send your written comments on the Consent Decree amendment postmarked no later than **September 7, 2003** to the following address:

Bill Weinischke

U.S. Department of Justice
 P.O. Box 7611
 Washington, D.C.
 20044-7611

After the Consent Decree comment period ends, the Department of Justice (DOJ) will review and develop responses to all significant comments and submit both to the District Court. Once the court makes a decision, the DOJ will publish a notice in

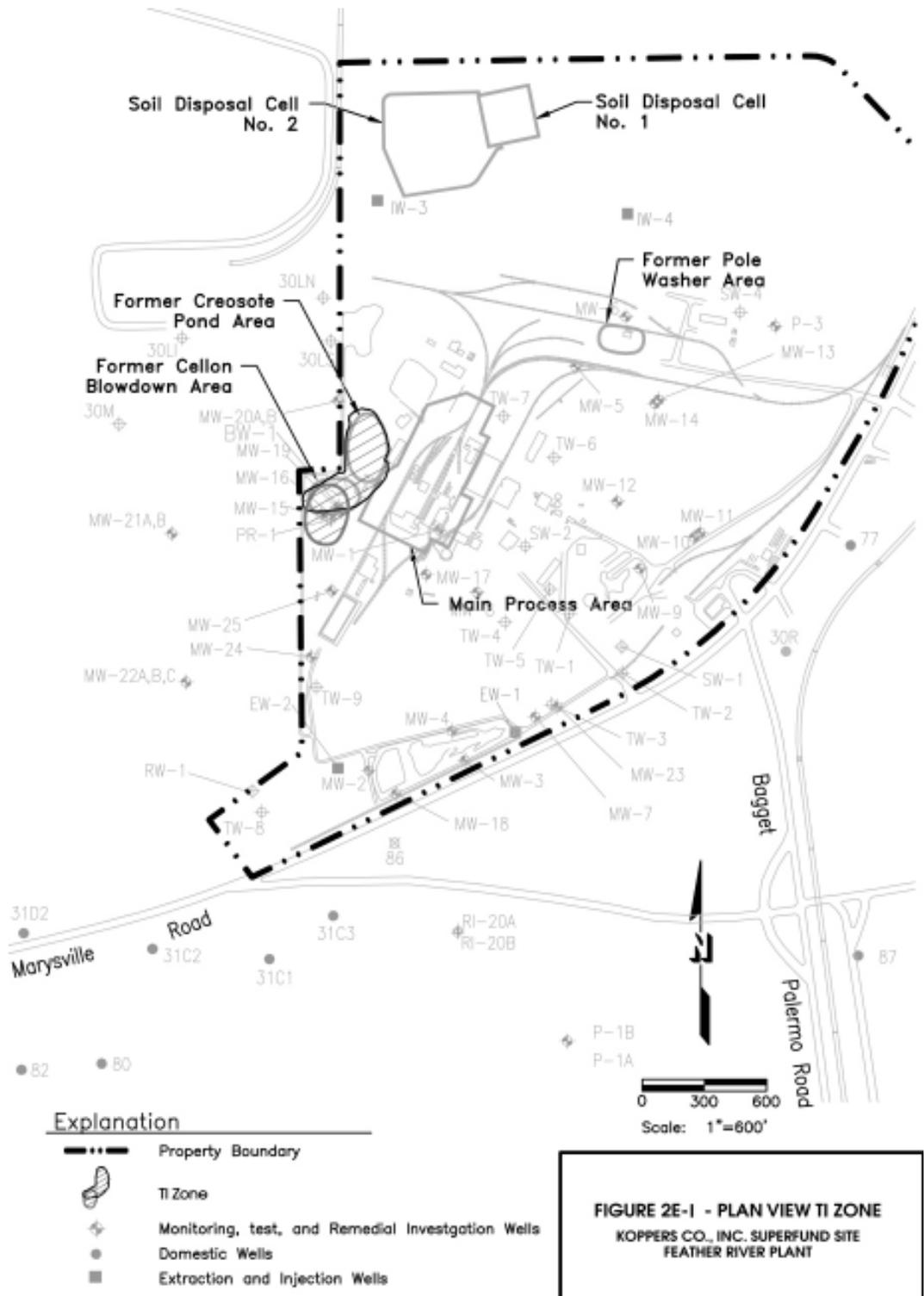


Figure 3: Koppers site, showing on-property plume where the process area is and the TI and soil areas

the Federal Register announcing the decision including any comments and the responsiveness summary. EPA will follow up this publication with a short announcement in the City's local paper.

UPDATE ON SOIL REMOVAL WORK

On March 15, 2001, Koppers Industries, Inc. (KII) ceased operations and began working with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control to conduct a Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) closure for the facility. RCRA is a law and a program that manages the operators that generate and transport hazardous wastes. With the completion of the KII RCRA closure in July 2002, the remaining soil remediation effort under Superfund was completed September 2002. A preliminary closeout report is being prepared for the soils remedy.

GROUNDWATER STATUS

The groundwater monitoring reports show continued improvement in the shrinking of the **off-property** contaminated groundwater at the site (see Figure 2). Due to the receding off-property contaminated groundwater plume, the EPA has returned thirty-one of the original thirty-eight residential wells to domestic use. Residents are removed from the water subsidy program when their well, tested for a full year, is free of contamination and within the Federal and State drinking water standards. Quarterly groundwater monitoring is conducted and the EPA continues to review the site's semiannual groundwater monitoring reports.

GLOSSARY

Bioremediation - is the use of microorganisms (such as bacteria) to transform substances into nontoxic compounds

Creosote - is a semi-volatile organic compound composed of numerous polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) used as a wood preservative - some PAHs can cause cancer cPAHs

In-situ - is a Latin term meaning *in place*; in situ treatment of soil is performed without the need for excavation

Off-Property - is an area off the property south of the wood treatment facility with impacted groundwater (south of Baggett-Marysville Road)

On-Property - is an area on the wood treatment facility property (north and west of Baggett-Marysville Road)

Record of Decision (ROD) - A legal document issued by EPA that provides the remedy actions for cleaning up a Superfund site

Superfund - is a program operated under the legislative authority of Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Superfund Amendment Reauthorization Act (SARA) that funds and carries out the EPA solid waste emergency and long-term removal remedial activities

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

EPA maintains two information repositories in the Oroville area that contain project documents, fact sheets and other reference materials.

Butte County Public Library

1820 Mitchell Avenue
Oroville, CA 95966
(530) 538-7641

Meriam Library

California State University at Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0295
(530) 898-5720

Superfund Records Center

95 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 536-2000

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Anyone who has questions or comments can call Jackie Lane, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Toll-free at (800) 231-3075 or directly at (415) 972-3236. If you did not receive this fact sheet through the mail, but would like future publications, you can leave your name and address on the toll-free line as well. You can also contact Charles Berrey, EPA Remedial Project Manager for the site, by calling him directly at (415) 972-3146 or leave a message at (800) 231-3075.

SITE BACKGROUND

Since the 1940's, the 205-acre Koppers Company, Inc. (Oroville Plant) site was used to conduct wood treating operations designed to prevent wood deterioration by insects or fungi. Koppers purchased the plant from the National Wood Treating Company in 1955. The facility closed on March 15, 2001.

Chemical and wastewater handling procedures and wood treatment and storage operations have contaminated the soil and groundwater on- and off-property. Fires at the Koppers facility occurred in 1963 and 1987, causing increased contamination at the site. Groundwater, on- and off-property, has been contaminated primarily with pentachlorophenol (PCP). PCP is a polar organic compound used as a wood preservative which has been shown to increase the risk of cancer in laboratory animals and, thus, could possibly be associated with cancer in humans. Soils on-property have been contaminated with PCP and other hazardous substances used in Koppers' wood treating activities. The contaminated groundwater is beneath this site and off-property south of the Koppers site. In 1973, PCP was discovered in nearby residential wells that are used as a source of drinking water.

In 1988, the Koppers Company, Inc. was bought by the parent company of Beazer East, Inc. (Beazer). Beazer later sold the wood treating plant to Koppers Industries, Inc. (KII). KII sold the Oroville facility back to Beazer, Inc. in November 2002. Beazer continues to be recognized as the potentially responsible party for Superfund remediation. Beazer has installed both a 600 gallons per minute (gpm) Pump and Treat System (P&T) for off-property and a 400 gpm P&T for the on-property groundwater contamination and treatment. The off-property P&T was discontinued due to significant progress cleaning up the groundwater. Since 1998, in-situ bioremediation additives have been added to both the on- and off-property groundwater plume areas to speed up the cleanup.

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