Gila River Boundary Site

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • FEBRUARY 2005

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has produced this fact sheet to provide information about cleanup work conducted at the Gila River Boundary Site, located along the west side of 51st Avenue near the intersection of 51st and Komatke Lane.

Background

The Gila River Boundary Site (hereafter referred to as the Site) covers approximately 18 acres and includes two residential parcels. The Site is located on parcels of allotted land adjacent to the community boundary. In the past the allotted parcels were used as homesites, however no one is currently living on the Site.

The Site was used by crop dusters as a base of operations from 1959 until the early 1980s. Crop dusters commonly used toxaphene and other pesticides for application to nearby fields. It is believed that residual pesticides were cleaned out of the planes at the north end of the airstrip that was once located on the Site. The north end of the airstrip, sometimes called the turnaround area, is the portion of the Site that contained the highest concentrations of toxaphene.

EPA had installed a "cap" or protective barrier on this Site in 1985; however, the cap was later damaged and became ineffective. In response to a request from the Gila River Indian Community, EPA conducted a site assessment in late October 2002 and collected over 800 soil contamination "profile" samples at a total of 120 locations. Toxaphene concentrations in surface soils measured as great as 660 parts per million (ppm). Toxaphene concentrations in below-surface soil were as great as 88 ppm in some locations. The Gila River Indian Community will use the State of Arizona industrial soil remediation level of 17 ppm as the cleanup standard.

Removal Action

In April and May 2004 EPA dug out large areas of shallow contaminated soil totaling approximately 8,000 cubic yards. To treat the contaminated soil EPA mixed the soil with fertilizer and loaded it into large pits, or cells, lined with thick plastic sheeting. The cells were flooded with water, covered and sealed. During the Removal Action EPA excavated and treated all areas that exceeded the 17 ppm cleanup goal.

Results and Next Steps

Soil sampling of the treatment cells was conducted in May, September and November 2004. The results showed that concentrations had been reduced by between 65 and 82 percent between May and November. The concentrations observed in November met the 17 ppm cleanup goal. In February 2005 the treatment cells were punctured so that water could drain out. Clean soil was then used to re-grade the Site.

The excavation and treatment of toxaphene-contaminated soils ensures that the remaining surface soil on the Site is significantly below the cleanup level. Any remaining concentrations are consistent with background concentrations for the area surrounding the Site. Remaining toxaphene concentrations in the treatment cells may continue to degrade after the cells have been decommissioned. A round of sampling followed the decommissioning of each cell. A report that includes all the sampling results related to the Removal Action will soon be available to the public at the Laveen Public Library as well as both Gila River Department of Environmental Quality and EPA offices.

At this time EPA has not been informed of any proposed future land use restrictions for the Site. Any restrictions put in place will be at the discretion of Gila River Indian Community officials.

Gila River Boundary Site

For More Information

Vicki Rosen
Community Involvement Coordinator (SFD-3)
(415) 972-3244
rosen.vicki@epa.gov

Harry Allen
On-Scene Coordinator (SFD-9-2)
(415) 972-3063
allen.harryL@epa.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
75 Hawthorne St.
San Francisco, CA 94105

You may also reach Vicki or Harry toll-free at **(800) 231-3075**.
Please leave a message and your call will be returned.

Gila River Indian Community:

Mike Daniel
Project Hydrologist
Department of Environmental Quality
(520) 562-2234, ext. 252
mike.daniel@gric.nsn.us

Printed on 30% Postconsumer *Recycled/Recyclable Paper*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901
Attn: Vicki Rosen (Gila Riv 2/05)

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Address Service Requested