



EPA

J. H. BAXTER SUPERFUND SITE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • April 2006

EPA Announces Completion of Construction Activities and Closure of Area B

Introduction

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.EPA) is announcing the completion of remedial action construction activities at the J.H. Baxter Superfund Site located in Weed, California. This fact sheet explains those construction activities and the related closure of Area B.

Background

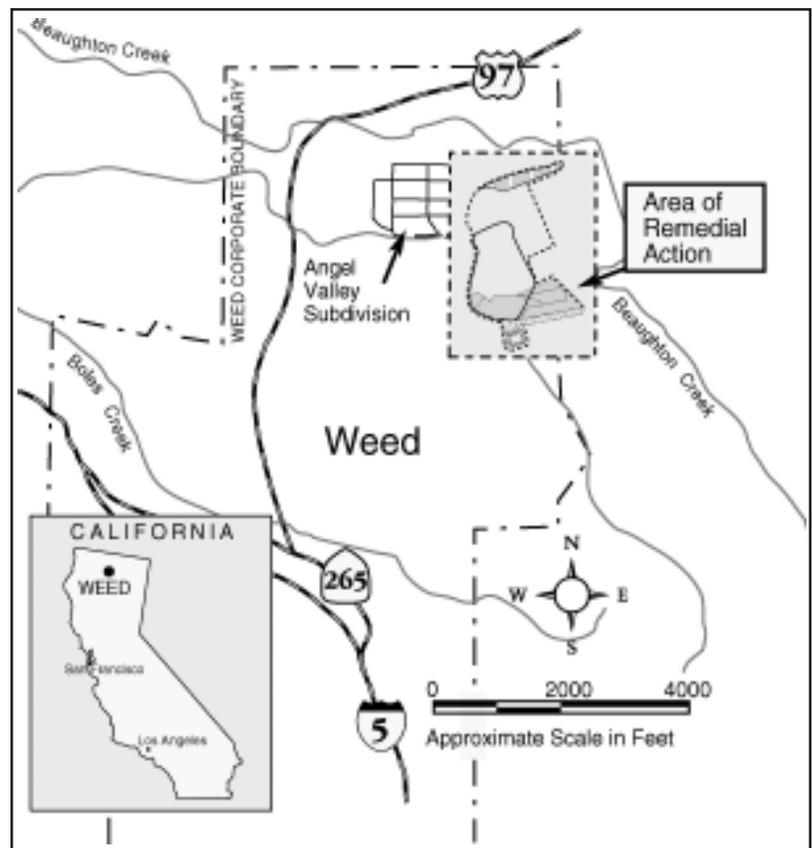
The J.H. Baxter Superfund Site is located in the northeastern portion of the city of Weed in Siskiyou County, California (see map below). The Site includes property owned by J. H. Baxter and Roseburg Forest Products. J.H. Baxter operates a wood treatment plant. Roseburg operates a lumber mill and veneer plant. Wood treatment is intended to protect wood from deterioration from insects and fungi and has historically used a variety of chemical compounds including creosote, arsenic, chromium, copper, zinc and pentachlorophenol.

The Site is bordered on the northwest by residential areas of Weed, to the north by the Angel Valley Subdivision and Lincoln Park, to the east by mixed woodlands and to the south by irrigated pasture. Beaughton Creek runs through the eastern portion of the Site.

Site History

Wood treatment operations using chemicals to preserve lumber products started at J.H. Baxter in 1937. Some of the preservatives believed to have been used included sodium fluoride, sodium dichromate, arsenic, dinitrophenol, diammonium phosphate, ammonium sulfate, sodium tetraborate and boric acid.

Wood treatment operations and related waste disposal, handling and discharge practices over the past 60 years resulted in soil, surface water,



J.H. Baxter site location

sediment and groundwater contamination. Wastes generated at the Site included retort drippings, tank and retort sludges, process water, wastewater, drying area drippings and storage area drippings.

Where the Contamination Occurred

1. **Tank Berm Area around the 500,000-Gallon (#3) Tank** — The tank was converted to a process-water surge tank in 1983. Sludges were removed from the bermed area in 1985. However, contaminated soils remained.
2. **Retort and Process Area** — Several leaks and direct discharges of wood treatment chemicals from the process area onto the western portion of the property were reported from the 1940s through the 1970s.
3. **Buried Pond Area** — Unlined settling ponds and pits containing wood treatment salts, and dip ponds containing creosote were located at the north end of the wood treatment property.
4. **Oil/Water Separator & Creosote Pit Area** — Discharges and oil spills from the unit were reported as well as leaks in the inlet pipe leading to the oil/water separator.
5. **Waste Water Vaults** — Two concrete-lined vaults were used to hold wastewater from oil and water-based chemical solutions, condenser water, cooling water, spillage drainage, wash water from retorts and runoff.
6. **Transferring Chemicals** — The process of transferring wood treatment-related chemicals from rail tank cars to facility storage vessels was also reported as a source of spills.

What Construction Was Completed?

The Remedial Construction activities conducted included:

1. **Bioventing of Area B soils** — The selected remedy for Area B was insitu bioventing. Bioventing uses

biological processes in the soil to degrade contaminants so that the compounds are no longer harmful. Construction of the bioventing system began in October 1998 and was turned on in March 1999.

2. **Construction of a slurry wall to contain DNAPL (dense non-aqueous phase liquid) contaminants in the vadose zone** — The vadose zone is the region in the ground between the surface and the water table in which pores are not filled with water. The slurry wall was constructed from 27 to 52 feet deep (depending on location) and more than four thousand feet long with bentonite soil backfill. The slurry wall construction took place between March and October 1999. The slurry wall prevents migration of DNAPL contaminants by containing the source of the dissolved contaminants, which enhances the restoration of the aquifer outside the slurry wall. The contaminants of concern include arsenic, carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pentachlorophenol and dioxin. The slurry wall reduces the required total groundwater extraction rate outside the slurry wall, which reduces the treatment plant capacity requirement and the period during which groundwater extraction outside of the slurry wall would be required.
3. **Extraction/monitoring wells** — Groundwater extraction wells are placed inside the perimeter of the slurry wall to enhance hydraulic containment. Extraction wells are also placed outside the perimeter of the slurry wall to extract contaminated water, which is currently being treated in the water treatment plant. The extraction well system became fully operational in December 1999. It is anticipated that the system within the slurry wall will continue to operate indefinitely, and EPA will continue quarterly monitoring of the groundwater slurry wall remediation system.
4. **Construction of a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-equivalent disposal cell** — The RCRA-equivalent disposal cell includes: a liner, leachate collection and removal system, a cover system, stormwater runoff controls and utilities. Construction of the RCRA-equivalent soil cell and

related activities took place between February 2000 and August 2001. All elements of the remedy were found to be constructed in accordance with Record of Decision (ROD) standards and requirements. The leachate collection system is monitored quarterly. Long-term operation and maintenance of this portion of the remedy are being carried out in accordance with the ROD.

5. **Institutional Controls** — Institutional controls are administrative and/or legal controls that minimize the potential for human exposure to contamination and/or protect the integrity of a remedy by limiting land or resource use.

EPA conducted a pre-final inspection in August 2001 and verified that the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) had constructed all remedial action portions of the remedy in accordance with remedial design plans and specifications.

What Does Closure of Area B Mean?

A letter from EPA was issued on June 23, 2005 stating that the biovent system at Area B had achieved the ROD standard for cleanup and was approved for closure. Between July and December 2005, the following closure activities were performed:

- The biovent system was removed (subsurface piping was left in place);
- The existing vegetation was removed and hauled to an offsite location for disposal;
- A soil cover with minimum thickness of two feet was installed over the Area B soils; and
- The cover soil was hydro-seeded and mulched.

A site visit was made on December 9, 2005 documenting the completion of closure activities. EPA has recommended that a fence be constructed around Area B to restrict access. Once installed, the remedy will be complete.

Information Repositories

EPA maintains two information repositories in the Weed area that contain project documents, federal and state regulations, fact sheets, the Community Involvement Plan and other reference material.

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