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Minocqua Venting Wells Drilled

RHINELANDER, WI -- Drilling for the purpose of groundwater extraction at the former Minocqua Dry Cleaners site will begin this week, announced Scott Watson, Environmental Repair Fund Specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In addition to groundwater extraction wells, work will also begin soon on the soil venting system which will clean up the source of contamination.

In 1984, tetrachloroethylene, used in dry cleaning, was discovered in Minocqua's well number 3, one of two drinking water sources for the city. The source of the dry cleaning fluid was determined to be the former Minocqua Dry Cleaners, which operated during the 1970's and early 1980's.

An emergency action was begun in 1987 to protect the drinking water supply from further contamination from the dry cleaning fluid. The well head protection system has contained the underground movement of contaminants and assured Minocqua residents of a safe supply of drinking water.

This week's drilling begins a new phase of the Minocqua Dry Cleaner site remediation which will address the source of contamination, eventually cleaning up the tetrachloroethylene in the soil. The cleanup chosen for the site consists of water extraction wells hooked into the existing water purification system and soil venting wells which will be connected to a soil venting purification system.

Project manager, Scott Watson, reports that site access will be restricted during the drilling process. "At no time will public health be compromised," said Watson, "although there is a slight chance higher levels of contamination will be temporarily encountered at the test boring site, resulting in workers observing an increased level of safety protection."

The Minocqua Cleaners site remediation is being financed by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Environmental Repair Fund money.

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David J. Daniels
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