



July 10, 2020

Notice of Five-Year Review at N. W. Mauthe Superfund Site
725 South Outagamie Street, Appleton, WI
DNR BRRTS # 02-45-000127

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on an on-going cleanup of a historically contaminated property in your neighborhood. A routine “five-year review” is starting for the N. W. Mauthe Superfund Site (“the N. W. Mauthe Site”) located at 725 South Outagamie Street in Appleton, Wisconsin. You are receiving this letter as a property owner or occupant of property located near the N. W. Mauthe Site.

Overview

In 1995 and 1996, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) excavated contaminated soil and installed a groundwater collection and treatment system to address contamination from a former metal plating facility. More specific historical information regarding the N. W. Mauthe Site is included later in this letter for your information.

The federal Superfund law requires a review at least every five years at sites where a cleanup is on-going. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) performs the review with support from EPA. The purpose of the routine review is to make sure the cleanup still protects people and the environment. The first five-year review was completed in April 2001, the second in April 2006, the third in April 2011, and the fourth in April 2016. The fifth five-year review is scheduled to be completed by April 2021.

Enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet by EPA on five-year reviews to help you understand the process and how you can participate. If you have information regarding the N. W. Mauthe Site that you would like to provide to DNR for consideration during the five-year review, please submit to me via mail to the address in the letterhead or contact me at the phone number or email at the end of this letter. Information received by **October 1, 2020** will be considered during this review.

The DNR provided a press release to the Appleton Post Crescent announcing the start of the five-year review on June 26, 2020. A second press release will be provided to the Post Crescent when the review is complete. The public will have access to review the final five-year review report. A public record of the activities at the N. W. Mauthe Site is on file at the Appleton Public Library. To learn more about the N. W. Mauthe site electronically, see previous five-year reviews or the next report in April 2021, visit <https://dnr.wi.gov/botw/SetUpBasicSearchForm.do> and enter 0245000127 into the Activity Number field on the search form.

History of the N. W. Mauthe Site

The property at 725 South Outagamie Street in Appleton was a metal plating facility from 1960 to 1987. The Wisconsin Chromium Corporation conducted chrome electroplating there until 1976. Norbert W. Mauthe purchased the property and performed other types of electroplating from 1978 to 1987. Plating operations at the property ended in 1987.

In 1982, the DNR received a complaint about environmental contamination and investigated the property. DNR found contamination from plating solutions in both the soil and the groundwater. These contaminants included chromium, cadmium, cyanide, zinc, and volatile organic compounds. This contamination had also spread to neighboring properties where it was in the soil, the groundwater and some basements.

State and Federal Responses

N. W. Mauthe did not take the legally required environmental response. The DNR installed a temporary groundwater collection system to reduce the movement of contaminated groundwater and investigated the spread of the contamination. In addition, DNR asked the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) to take legal action against N. W. Mauthe, which the DOJ did in 1982.

In 1984, DNR removed the most contaminated soils and paved the property with asphalt. The asphalt prevented people and animals from coming into contact with any remaining contaminated soil, and also prevented rainwater from flushing more contamination into the groundwater. In 1986, N. W. Mauthe passed away, and in 1988, the state settled the legal action with his estate.

DNR requested that the EPA add the N. W. Mauthe property to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), which would make the property eligible for Superfund funding and response actions. EPA acted on the DNR's request in March of 1989. This allowed the state to begin a Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in September of 1989. The RI/FS is a federal requirement to fully understand the extent of the contamination so that the best options can be selected for cleanup.

More Contaminant Removal

EPA began contaminant removal in 1995 with a "removal action". A removal action is a short-term strategy to remove or contain hazards. EPA removed the buildings used for electroplating and excavated all soil with more than 500 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) of chromium. EPA then constructed a groundwater collection system with three trenches to pull contaminated groundwater back to a central location. In 1996, EPA constructed a system to treat the collected groundwater using ferrous sulfate that required an operator to be at the plant daily. After treatment, the water was discharged to the city of Appleton's sanitary sewer under permit. This system started operation in 1997.

Groundwater Collection

In 1998, EPA turned over operation and maintenance (O&M) of the groundwater collection and treatment system to DNR. DNR now supervises a local contractor that performs the site work. This includes testing the groundwater at monitoring points throughout the neighborhood. The contractor historically provided DNR with quarterly reports on the groundwater contamination and system operations.

DNR added four additional deep wells in June 2005 and four shallow wells in June 2006 to determine the severity and depth of the remaining groundwater contamination, and to better evaluate the efficiency of the collection system. In 2006, the DNR also worked with the city of Appleton to review historical groundwater data in an effort to minimize labor-intensive on-site pre-treatment and operation process. As a result of that review, the city of Appleton amended the discharge permit to allow the collected water to be discharged to the sanitary sewer without the costly on-site pre-treatment process. This significantly reduced the DNR's annual O&M costs associated with the system. Reporting on the groundwater contamination and system operations has since been reduced to annually.

In 2007, the DNR worked with the city of Appleton's Parks and Recreation Department to develop a Cooperative Agreement. The Cooperative Agreement allows the city to utilize the previously vacant truck bay on-site in exchange for maintenance of the grounds.

Five-Year Reviews

Federal law requires a review of operations every five years at Superfund sites with continuing cleanups. The first four five-year reviews for the N. W. Mauthe site were completed in April 2001, April 2006, April 2011, and April 2016, and concluded that the groundwater collection and treatment system was operating as designed. The fifth five-year review has now begun and provides another opportunity for residents to ask questions and learn more about the status of the cleanup. The fifth five-year review is scheduled to be completed in April 2021. If you have information regarding the N. W. Mauthe Site that you would like to provide to DNR for consideration during the five-year review, please submit to me via mail to the address in the letterhead or contact me at the phone number or email below. Information received by **October 1, 2020** will be considered during this review.

For More Information

To learn about the N. W. Mauthe site, see previous five-year reviews or the next report in April 2021, visit <https://dnr.wi.gov/botw/SetUpBasicSearchForm.do> and enter 0245000127 into the Activity Number field on the search form.

To view the EPA website and additional information for the property, visit the following address:
<http://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csinfo.cfm?id=0505061>

Please contact me with any questions in Oshkosh by phone at 920-510-4343 or by email at gwen.saliares@wisconsin.gov.

Sincerely,



Gwen Saliars
Hydrogeologist
Remediation & Redevelopment Program

Encl.

Electronic Copy:

- Alderperson Alex Schultz (District 9, Ward 28)
- Dean Gazza, Appleton Parks, Recreation & Facilities Management Director – dean.gazza@appleton.org
- Brian Kreski, Appleton Utilities Environmental Programs Coordinator – brian.kreski@appleton.org
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Checking Up On Superfund Sites: The Five-Year Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts regular checkups, called five-year reviews, on certain Superfund sites. EPA looks at sites where cleanup left wastes that limit site use. For example, EPA will look at a landfill to make sure the protective cover is not damaged and is working properly. EPA will also review sites with cleanup activity still in progress after five-years.

In both cases, EPA checks the site to make sure the cleanup continues to protect people and the environment. The EPA review team conducts the review and writes a report on its findings. At some sites, other federal agencies, a state agency, or an Indian tribe may do the review, but EPA stays in the process and approves the report.

The Five-Year Review is:

- a regular EPA checkup on a Superfund site that has been cleaned up—with waste left behind;
- where clean-up activities were initiated five years earlier;
- a way to make sure the cleanup continues to protect people and the environment; and
- a chance for you to tell EPA about site conditions and any concerns you have.

During the review, EPA studies information on the site, including the cleanup and the laws that apply, and inspects the site to make sure it continues to be protective. EPA needs information from people who are familiar with the site. As someone living close to the site, you may know about things that can help the review team decide if the remedy is still protective. Here are some examples of things to tell EPA about:

- Broken fences, unusual odors, dead plants, materials leaving the site, or other problems
- Buildings or land around the site being used in new ways
- Any unusual activities at the site, such as dumping, vandalism, or trespassing
- Ways the cleanup at the site has affected the neighborhood.

For More Information...

... about a Superfund site in your neighborhood, please call the toll-free Superfund/TRI, EPCRA, RMP and Oil Information Center at 1-800-424-9346 or the Community Involvement Coordinator in the EPA regional office for your site. Your local EPA office can tell you where you can go to review files on every Superfund site in your area. Often, EPA holds community meetings to let people who live near a site know about site activities. You also may find useful information on the Superfund home page (www.epa.gov/superfund) by clicking on “Superfund Sites Where You Live.” For more information on the review process, see “Comprehensive Five Year Review Guidance,” EPA 540-R-01-007, OSWER 9355.7-03B-P, June 2001.

The Five-Year Review

Continuing to Protect You and the Environment

Step 1: Develop Plan

To plan a five-year review, the site manager forms a review team, which may include an EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, scientists, engineers, and others. The team members decide what they will do at the site and when they will do it. The Community Involvement Coordinator is the member of the team who works with your community during the review.

Your role: EPA will announce the start of the review, probably through a notice in a newspaper or a flyer. Review the notice to see when the review will start.

Step 2: Collect Information

The review team members collect information about site cleanup activities. They talk with people who have been working at the site over the past five years, as well as local officials, to see if changes in local policy or zoning might affect the original cleanup plan. The team usually visits the site to see if the cleanup equipment is working properly, take new samples, review monitoring data, and review records of activities during the past five years. They may give you a call or meet with you in person.

Your role: If you know anything about unusual site activities at or around the site, such as trespassing or odors, or have any other concerns, call the Community Involvement Coordinator at once.

Step 3: Announce Findings and Publish Report

The review team uses the information collected to decide if your community and the environment are still protected from the contaminated material left at the site or from the remediation still in progress. When cleanup goals are not being met, or when problems come up, the review team will call the cleanup activities “non-protective.” If a Superfund site is determined to be non-protective, the regions will initiate the necessary actions to ultimately make the site protective. When the team finishes the five-year review, it writes a report about the information that includes background on the site and cleanup activities, describes the review, and explains the results. The review team also writes a summary and announces that the review is finished. They tell your community (via public notices, flyers, etc.) where to find copies of the report and summary—at a central place called the site repository—for anyone to see.

Your role: Read about the site and learn about the cleanup methods being reviewed. Review the report. Ask the Community Involvement Coordinator any questions you have about the site.

What Happens After The Review?

As long as contaminated materials at the site stop people from freely using the land, EPA will do a review every five years. EPA also regularly monitors the site based on an operations and maintenance plan it develops. For example, the site manager may visit the site and read reports about activities at the site. Also, the site workers may visit the site to cut the grass, take samples, or make sure equipment is working. If you see any problems or things that concern you—don’t wait for the five-year review—let EPA know right away.

U. S. EPA
Office of Solid Waste and
Emergency Response
5204P

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