



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is testing long-term monitoring results at Superfund sites the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deleted from the National Priorities List. The Wildcat Landfill Superfund Site, located near Dover, Delaware (within EPA Region 3), is one of eight sites being reviewed. In April 2008, the OIG obtained groundwater and surface water samples from the Site and conducted a site inspection.

Background

Wildcat Landfill was added to the Superfund National Priorities List in 1983 and was deleted from the list in 2003. The Site was contaminated from disposal of paint sludge and municipal, industrial, and latex waste. In 2005, the Site was sold to Kent County, Delaware (Site owner), which plans to reuse the Site for public recreation purposes.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100126-10-P-0055.pdf

Changes in Conditions at Wildcat Landfill Superfund Site in Delaware Call for Increased EPA Oversight

What We Found

Our inspection of the Wildcat Landfill Superfund Site, combined with the current owner's plans for the Site, demonstrate that more sampling and EPA oversight are needed to ensure that the Site remains safe for humans and the environment based on planned future use. Our independent sampling results were generally consistent with Region 3's historical results. However, surface waters at the Site have a sheen that resembles petroleum. The clean-up remedy does not address petroleum contamination and Region 3 had not tested for petroleum during its sampling events, but agreed to test for it in September 2009. In December 2009, the Region reported that it had detected petroleum at levels below public health standards and it will continue to monitor petroleum levels at the Site.

OIG's results also disclosed several instances where aluminum, iron, and selenium exceeded ecological protection standards. Further, Region 3's historical samples were not always analyzed according to the required standard, which can prevent detection of contamination that exceeds standards. Region 3 corrected this error in a September 2009 sampling event. It also reported from its September 2009 sampling event that levels of aluminum and selenium were within ecological protection standards, but iron was not.

The Site has not been cleaned up to standards that allow for unrestricted public access. However, the Site's owner plans to create a greenway and to construct a bike path on the landfill, which would open part of the Site to unrestricted access. A local small business owner who purchased an acre of the Site has also inquired about building a storage facility on that acre. Region 3's oversight of the Site reuse plans has been informal and undocumented. The Region is currently aware of the Site owner's plans and agreed to formally document discussions with the Site owner and review reuse plans as they become available.

What We Recommend

We recommend that Region 3 modify its sampling and analysis approach to ensure proper testing of relevant contaminants, address contamination that exceeds ecological or human safety standards, and improve oversight of Site reuse plans. Region 3 agreed with OIG recommendations and has initiated or completed some actions.