

EPA Looking for Pollution Source in Underground Water

Wedron Groundwater Contamination Site

Wedron, Illinois

October 2012

You're invited

U.S. EPA staff will be hosting an informal open house where you can come and ask questions and discuss the Wedron groundwater investigation and cleanup.

Wednesday, Oct. 3

5 - 7 p.m.

Dayton Township Hall

3312 E. 18th Road

Ottawa

For more information

For questions, comments or for more information about the Wedron groundwater investigation, you can contact:

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www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/wedron/index.html

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois EPA have been working at a Wedron, Illinois, location to determine which private drinking water wells have been affected by pollution. The agencies are also investigating potential sources of the groundwater contamination. "Groundwater" is an environmental term for underground supplies of fresh water.

Beginning in December 2011, U.S. EPA collected groundwater samples from 22 residential wells and one commercial well in the LaSalle County town. These samples were tested for the presence of a family of chemicals called volatile organic compounds or VOCs, semi-volatile organic compounds and metals. To date, there are five homes in Wedron that were found with benzene levels above or near the drinking water standard. These homes have been supplied bottled water for the time being.

This July, U.S. EPA and IEPA collected soil samples from 18 locations in Wedron using a special drilling rig called a geoprobe that can collect samples beneath the surface. The results of the soil sampling also showed elevated levels of the VOCs benzene, chloroform, ethylbenzene, and xylenes. This investigation also identified several potential sources of the groundwater and soil contamination. In addition, U.S. EPA conducted an investigation this August at the former Hoxsey gas station to determine if underground tanks or piping are still present. The owner of the property has agreed to conduct an excavation to determine if any underground storage tanks remain on the parcel.



A U.S. EPA employee uses special equipment to check for the presence of underground storage tanks and pipes. U.S. EPA and Illinois EPA are searching for the source of pollution that has contaminated some drinking water wells in the LaSalle County town of Wedron.

Also this July, U.S. EPA, Illinois EPA and the Illinois Fire Marshal's office oversaw the excavation and removal of an underground tank that was uncovered during a rail expansion along the Illinois Railway tracks bordering N. 2153 Road (LaSalle County 11). Illinois Railway hired a contractor to remove the liquid in the tank, clean the tank and remove the affected soil.

History

In April 1982, Illinois EPA began a groundwater investigation in Wedron after the Illinois Department of Public Health received complaints from several residents of gasoline-type odors in their private well water. Illinois EPA collected groundwater samples from several private wells in April 1982, June 1983 and August 1983 and confirmed the presence of chemicals found in gasoline. At that time, a new deeper well was drilled to provide clean drinking water to the affected homes. In addition, an investigation of several potential sources of contamination was completed, but no source was found.

In 2011, residents again reported gasoline odors from their water. As a result, the Illinois Department of Public Health collected groundwater samples in October 2011 and found two homes with benzene levels above the health standard. In November 2011, the LaSalle County Health Department told these residents to no longer drink or use their well water. Illinois EPA then contacted U.S. EPA, which began the current investigation.

Next steps

While U.S. EPA and IEPA continue their source investigation, the agencies are looking at funding options to provide water treatment units or an alternative water supply to affected residents.

The investigation conducted this July by the two agencies has identified several potential sources of soil and groundwater contamination. U.S. EPA and IEPA staff will meet with the property owners to determine what further investigation work will be conducted and what cleanup action will be necessary at those locations.

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WEDRON GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION SITE: EPA Looking for Pollution Source in Underground Water

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