United States Environmental Protection Agency

Former Koppers Plant Newsletter

Former Koppers Wood-Treating Site

Carbondale, Illinois April 2014

SUMMARY: The former Koppers Wood-Treating Plant operated for about 90 years until it closed in 1991. While it operated, wood-preserving chemicals were released into the environment placing the Koppers Site, alongside thousands of other industrial Sites across the country, in the clean-up program commonly referred to as "Corrective Action" (under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act). EPA encourages redevelopment of the non-operational properties in its various industrial clean-up programs.

Beazer East, Inc., the property owner, would like to work with Brightfields Development LLC which is seeking to build a solar energy farm on about 73 acres of the 222 acre property. Prior to the start of construction, Brightfields will need to obtain all required authorizations including permits and approvals from EPA and the City of Carbondale. Along with the proposed redevelopment of the solar facility, Beazer would like to place most of the remaining property under an open space easement with the City of Carbondale. EPA could allow the Koppers Site to be re-used in limited ways provided that all re-use rules are followed, the Site and the remedies are maintained, and the contaminants that are being managed in-place are not disturbed. Regardless of any potential future re-use, the owner maintains responsibility for the property under EPA oversight into the future. A Beazer caretaker will continue to perform routine maintenance duties, removals, and inspections.

Beazer has completed several clean-up measures at Koppers. Certain contaminated materials were removed from the site and others have been isolated and are being managed in-place. This is a typical clean-up strategy used at remedial sites across the country. Additional risk assessments using the latest data will be completed to guide decisions about further clean-up.

Koppers Clean-up History

The former Koppers plant operated from 1902 until 1991, treating wood products like railroad ties and utility poles with chemicals to prevent decay. Beazer became the owner of the facility in 1988 and is responsible for addressing the environmental issues on and around the property. In 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected a clean-up strategy of off-site disposal, and isolating and managing wastes on-site. This strategy is used at remedial sites across the country as the most effective way to address environmental concerns. Most former industrial sites have residual contamination which is why they can only be re-used for industrial/commercial purposes while keeping exposures controlled.

For more information:

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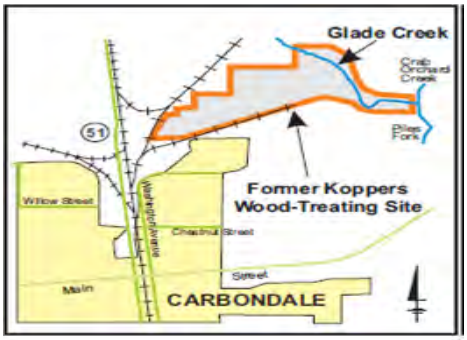
Information Repository and Website:
A file containing official documents about the Koppers site is available at the Carbondale Public Library,
405 W. Main St.
or visit:
www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/rcra/koppers/



The former Koppers Wood-Treating Site in northeastern Carbondale. Sampling in the nearby residential area in 2005, 2006 and 2012 by EPA, Beazer, and the City of Carbondale found no Koppers' site-related contamination.

General Site Re-use Criteria

- No housing, churches or daycare.
- No well construction or use of groundwater for drinking, cooking, bathing, etc.
- Groundwater must be monitored
- No excavation in specified areas without proper controls
- No disturbance of soil covers or CAMU (Corrective Action Management Unit)
- Any erosion or degradation of remedies must be repaired
- Local land-use approvals and restrictions apply
- Future development must include proper controls

Potential Koppers Site Re-Use Options

- Limited commercial
- Limited industrial
- Limited storage
- Renewable energy

Koppers Site Remediation

In the case of a former industrial site such as Koppers, the level of clean-up depends upon how a site will be reused. Remediation at the Site is subject to regulatory requirements, and includes:

- Isolation of contaminated material
- Restricting future use to non-residential purposes
- Permanent monitoring of groundwater
- Permanent inspection and maintenance of the soil covers, the CAMU, and the overall property condition

CAMU: The Corrective Action Management Unit (CAMU) encapsulates dug up soil, creek bed materials, waste piles, and some demolition debris.

The CAMU is monitored by a remote system which alerts the caretaker of excess leachate (liquid) pools in the collection system.

Remedies included relocating a stretch of Glade Creek, excavating sediment from a downstream stretch and Construction of Creosote Recovery Trenches (photo circa *2005)*

Soil Remediation: Surface soils stained with creosote from prior wood-treating were placed in the CAMU. In addition, 37 acres of contaminated soil areas are isolated and held in place beneath low-permeability covers with at least one foot of soil, and grass or roadway surfaces. Much of the covered areas have an additional engineered layer. Soil covers are a standard remedy at contaminated sites as they prevent people and wildlife from coming into contact with the contamination.

37 acres of soil cover protect people from contacting contamination. If the solar energy farm project goes forward, the upper vegetative layer of the cover would be replaced by additional cover made of geotextile and gravel. The solar panels would not penetrate the cover but be placed on top of the gravel and anchored in place with weights. In the far northern end of the site which was outside the wood-treatment operations area, a pole-mounted solar panel system is proposed.

Other Monitoring and Removal

Groundwater inspection wells are placed around the site. Groundwater is tested in a laboratory twice a year to confirm that contaminated groundwater stays within the property boundaries.

Subsurface creosote is collected from an engineered, buried trench near Glade Creek and from a recovery well in the former wood-treatment area. The creosote is sent off-site for disposal or if there is a market, for recycling.