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## EPA to provide information on next phase of LCP site cleanup

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A plan is coming together to clean groundwater contaminated by Mercury under the LCP Chemicals site in Brunswick, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants feedback before taking the next steps.

The EPA recently announced an interim early action cleanup plan for the federal Superfund environmental cleanup site on Ross Road that will address contamination beneath the former chlor-alkali cell building on the 813-acre site.

Roughly 670 acres of the entire site is made up of tidal marshlands. The rest is upland.



The EPA is hosting two informal drop-in sessions — from 2 to 6 p.m. on July 16 and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on July 17, both at the Brunswick-Glynn County Library, 208 Gloucester St. — to provide information to the public about the proposed plans.

A more formal public meeting to present details of the plan will be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. July 18 at Zion Rock Baptist Church, 3200 Gordon St., in Brunswick.

A 30-day public comment period began July 5 and will continue through Aug. 5.

The preferred proposed plan includes a chemical sequestration process in which a chemical treatment is injected into the ground to address the mercury deposited there; adding to, grading and sloping the top layer of clean soil to direct runoff and minimize water infiltration; and restricting use of the land to limit

unplanned human disturbances.

Rachael Thompson, executive director of the Glynn Environmental Coalition, an organization tasked with promoting community involvement and understanding about the cleanup efforts, said the process essentially coats mercury beads in the groundwater with a chemical compound that includes sulfur.

“Once it’s covered, it’s impenetrable and the mercury won’t leach out anymore,” Thompson said.

Sulfur already occurs commonly in marsh environments, so the preferred method for mitigating the mercury makes sense, she said.

The estimated cost for the proposed remedy is \$4.7 million.

The site was once home to an oil refinery, a power plant and more recently a chlorine factory, all which leached chemicals like mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, into the ground, creeks and surrounding marsh.



The EPA added the property to its National Priorities List in 1996, placing it among the nation’s highest priorities for cleanup of hazardous substances.

A second option for the cleanup includes a biological treatment, which Thompson said has not been used often and still would require more research to ensure it would be safe and work. The coalition is less enthused about this option because of unanswered questions and potential delays, Thompson said.

“It’s understudied and hasn’t been used in other parts of the world,” she said. “It could make things take a lot longer, and generally we don’t support that.”

The EPA broke the LCP site into three portions called operable units. Operable Unit 3, the upland portion of the site, was addressed by removing contaminated soil, the EPA said.

Work to address contamination at operable Unit 1, the marshland surrounding the factory, was completed in December 2023, the EPA said.

The mercury in groundwater plan being presented this month addresses contamination at Operable Unit 2.

“We are enthusiastic they are addressing the mercury in the groundwater because over the life of the site, hundreds of thousands of pounds of mercury were released,” Thompson said.

That is why she is encouraging anyone who is interested to submit public comments. The coalition has requested an extension to submit comments, but as of now, Aug. 5 is the deadline she said.

Comments can be submitted in person at the July 18 meeting, by email by sending written responses to pope.robert@epa.gov with “LCP Chemicals OU2” included in the subject and title of the document submitted, or by sending a letter to U.S. EPA Region 4, Attn: Rob Pope, 61 Forsyth St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Thompson said public feedback is important in the decision-making process, especially for a piece of the cleanup puzzle that is as meaningful as this one is to the LCP project.

“This is probably one of the most important decisions the EPA will make at this site,” she said.

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