



Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge NPL Site Marion, Illinois *Fact Sheet*

The Site

Parts of the Refuge have been an "NPL" site since 1987, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first put the Refuge on their National Priority List (NPL) of contaminated sites. In the NPL listing, the site is called the Sangamo Dump. Investigations and cleanups have been on-going since then. Although commonly referred to as a Superfund Site, this NPL site does not receive funding from the EPA's Superfund.

How Did a Wildlife Refuge Become Contaminated?

During World War II, the part of the Refuge that is now an NPL site (about 20,000 acres of the 43,000-acre Refuge) was used by the War Department as an ordnance manufacturing plant. The Illinois Ordnance Plant (IOP) employed thousands of people during the war years. After the war, the land was transferred to the Department of Interior (DOI).

The Refuge was established by Congress in 1947 with a mission to support wildlife, recreation, agriculture, and industry. Under this mission, DOI leased the former IOP buildings for a variety of industrial uses, including manufacturing of ordnance, explosives, transformers, ink, and metal-plated parts. Prior to modern environmental laws, it was common practice for industrial facilities, including those on the Refuge, to use unlined landfills and dumps to dispose of the waste generated by their operations. As a result, a number of locations within the closed portion of the Refuge became contaminated.

What's Being Done About It?

All work at the Refuge is being done under the law that established the NPL and the Superfund: the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act (CERCLA). The Sangamo Dump and two other PCB dump sites discovered later were designated as the PCB Operable Unit (OU), and were cleaned up for PCBs and associated metals in the 1990s. After the

initial cleanup of PCBs, groundwater contamination from solvents was discovered and investigated. Remedies are currently being evaluated for the groundwater contamination.

Two other OUs were established based on investigations done in the late 1980s: the Metals Areas (MAOU) and the Explosives and Munitions Areas (EMMA OU). These OUs, and the Water Towers (WT OU) were cleaned up in the 1990s.

The Miscellaneous Areas (MISCA) OU was established in the early 1990s, and of the many sites investigated, two required cleanup: Site 14, a former ink manufacturing facility, and Site 36, the Refuge wastewater treatment plant. Cleanup of both these sites is currently planned for 2005.

Potential contamination of Crab Orchard Lake was investigated in the late 1990s as the Lake Monitoring (LM) OU. Monitoring will be continued as part of on-going activities at the various OUs.

During the 1990s, DOI recognized that many of the hundreds of former industrial buildings and activities had not been evaluated, and began an extensive review of historic aerial photographs and thousands of historic documents and maps. Sites were visited for clues of past practices and potential contamination, and many former workers were interviewed. As a result, many more potentially contaminated sites were identified, and they became the Additional and Uncharacterized Sites (AUS) OU. A preliminary investigation of the site was completed in 2001, and the full remedial investigation will be starting soon.

Why Am I Being Contacted Now?

As required by CERCLA, DOI has maintained a Community Relations Plan for the Refuge. The plan is updated periodically. Community interviews to solicit concerns, identify information needs, and to learn how and when citizens would



like to be involved in the process, are part of the updating.

More Information

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is committed to its ongoing public involvement program. If you have questions about the site, please call Dennis Pinigis, the Project Manager, at (618) 998-5912. The following site information repositories are available for public review:

University of Southern Illinois (618) 453-2700
Morris Library, Science Division
555 W. Grand Avenue
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (618) 997-3344
Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge
6987 Headquarters Road
Marion, Illinois 62959