

DEQ Selects Cleanup Plan at Eugene Rail Yard Site



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

What's happening?

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has issued a Record of Decision for parts of Union Pacific Railroad's Eugene Rail Yard at 341 Bethel Drive. The cleanup plan selected in the Record of Decision will protect workers from contamination at the rail yard and require regular monitoring of groundwater and groundwater use in parts of the nearby River Road and Trainsong neighborhoods

Public involvement

DEQ accepted comments from the public on its recommendation from May 15 through June 30, 2017. DEQ also hosted a public meeting on May 22, 2017 at Kelly Middle School to present the recommended remedial action. The selected action is detailed in DEQ's Record of Decision, which is available at DEQ's website (see link below).

Background

DEQ began investigating possible contamination at the rail yard in the early 1990s. Investigators found that the groundwater at the site was contaminated by solvents used at the former locomotive maintenance facility. The solvents leaked into the groundwater and the contamination spread off site, beneath parts of the Trainsong and River Road neighborhoods.



The historic Locomotive Maintenance Facility and Roundhouse.

DEQ and Southern Pacific Railroad (which was later purchased by Union Pacific) conducted the investigation in the 1990s and 2000s. The investigation included taking numerous samples at irrigation wells in nearby the River Road and Trainsong neighborhoods and comprehensive sampling at the rail yard.



UPRR Eugene Yard Study Area.

Cleanup Program

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DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.

Cleanup Actions Previously Completed

In 2005 and 2006, Union Pacific implemented an aggressive groundwater treatment action near the former railroad roundhouse, which is where the solvents were believed to have been spilled. It also installed a groundwater treatment "curtain" between the roundhouse and the Trainsong neighborhood to help cut off and treat contaminated soil at the rail yard, that is contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons and metals as well as solvents. The groundwater cleanup has helped reduce the levels of solvent chemicals in groundwater under the rail yard, as well as beneath the adjacent neighborhoods.

Risk Assessments and Feasibility Study

Since 2002, Union Pacific and DEQ have studied potential risks to human health and the environment from the site. This included evaluating risks to workers on the rail yard site, and also risks to nearby residents from site contamination. The risk assessments found that workers could be exposed to unsafe levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and metals in the soil and groundwater on parts of the rail yard. It also found that some residents in the Trainsong and River Road neighborhoods could be exposed to unsafe levels of solvent chemicals if they used well water for their domestic water supply instead using of city/EWEB water.

However, DEQ has concluded that using backyard irrigation wells in the Trainsong and River Road neighborhoods is safe because solvent levels in the groundwater in those areas

have consistently been below levels developed by DEQ to protect human health.



The Locomotive Maintenance Facility today

The Feasibility Study and DEQ's Staff Report evaluated cleanup options to protect workers from exposure to contaminated soil and groundwater on site, and to protect nearby residents from the low levels of solvents in well water near the rail yard.

What is included?

DEQ's selected remedial action includes using site controls such as health and safety plans and contaminated media management plans to protect workers on site from contamination and safely manage any contaminated soil or groundwater if on-site excavation is required. Groundwater use will continue to be tracked. Follow-up actions will be put in place if residents are found to be using well water for drinking or washing (i.e. not just outdoor uses). The proposed remedy also requires that the rail yard will remain in industrial/commercial use and not be used for residential purposes.

Details regarding DEQ's Record of Decision can be found online at:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/Webdocs/Forms/Output/FPController.ashx?SourceIdType=11&SourceId=312&Screen=Load>

What's next?

DEQ will require Union Pacific Railroad to implement the remedial activities in the Record of Decision. The recommended remedial action consists of the following elements:

- Limiting land use to industrial/commercial only (onsite)
- Groundwater monitoring on the rail yard and in Trainsong and River Road for at least five years
- Water well use review (annually)
- Conduct a review of the remedial action protectiveness in five years.
- Update the Communications Plan

For more information, please contact:

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Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.