



Maryland Department of the
Environment

FACTS ABOUT: Simkins Industries (Voluntary Cleanup Program)

Site Location

The 65-acre Former Simkins Industries property is located at 201 River Road in Catonsville, Maryland. The property includes land in both Baltimore County and Howard County. The property is currently an inactive facility consisting of the main power plant building, the mill building, the scale house, a former unpermitted dump, and several ancillary buildings. The property is bounded to the north by Patapsco State Park, to the south by Patapsco State Park and Patapsco River Railroad, to the east by residences and Patapsco State Park, and to the west by undeveloped land. The former plant area, which consisted of several structures, is located on the southern portion of the site adjacent to the Patapsco River. The remainder of the site is mostly wooded and contains the remnants of an old mill village. A dump site is located in the northern portion of the site.

Site History

According to historical sources, beginning in 1820, the Thistle Manufacturing Co. operated as a mill that wove cotton fabric for sails. In the 1920s, the mill manufactured fabric for automobile tires. In 1928, the facility was purchased by Bartgis Brothers Company, a paper product manufacturer, that later became New Haven Board and Carton Co. and Simkins Industries, Inc. Paper manufacturing operations consisted of pulping and refining paper fiber from newspapers and other post-consumer paper to the desired consistency, then dewatering and pressing the fibers into sheets that were then dried, finished and stored. Prior to 1971, when the facility connected to the municipal sewage interceptor, wastewater from the facility was discharged to the river. Printing operations reportedly were present from 1919 to 1964.

The unpermitted dump operated from approximately 1952 through the 1980s and reportedly accepted wastes from the on-site activities, as well as industrial waste and municipal waste from nearby citizens.

Paper manufacturing ceased in 2003 after a fire severely damaged the mill. Since 2003, Simkins Industries, Inc. has begun decommissioning the property including removing the 100,000-gallon aboveground storage tank (AST), paper manufacturing equipment, two transformers and razing several of the old mill residences on the property.



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Environmental Investigations

There is a long history of air violations back to 1973 at the property with the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Air and Radiation Management Administration (ARMA) related to visible emissions and operation of fuel burning equipment without adequate dust collectors. The facility was also subject to a Title V, Part 70 Operating permit from 2001 through 2006.

The facility was subject to a NPDES permit under the Water Management Administration (WMA) of MDE from 2003 through its termination at the request of Simkins Industries in 2006. The permit allowed for discharge to outfalls to the Patapsco River that were monitored for pH and flow; no floating solids, visible foam, discharge of any plant wastes, accumulated solids or wastewater with a visible sheen was allowed. In 2004, after the fire, a NPDES Compliance Inspection Report determined that discharge reports for outfalls 3, 4, and 5 were no longer required. In September 2004, a Field Investigation was completed during the removal of the 100,000-gallon AST and the resulting report documented that the mill race had been diverted back to the river and no discharges from the plant. In addition, the Field Inspection Report (FIR) documented a list of ten items, including drums and tanks that needed to be removed from the 100-year flood plain. Follow-up inspections continued until September 2005 when it was documented that all the items noted had been removed and no further inspection would be required until the future use of the property was decided. A June 2006 FIR indicated that the property owner intended to complete removal of all scrap metal (including tanks) by September 2006 and the FIR indicates that a follow-up inspection will be completed once the future use of the facility has been decided.

The Oil Control Program (OCP) of the MDE issued an Oil Operations Permit (#2003-OPT-3464) to Simkins Industries, Inc. for operation at the property. The permit was effective from December 2002 through December 2007 and covered one 100,000-gallon #6 heating oil AST, one 275-gallon waste oil AST, one 500-gallon kerosene AST, one 500-gallon gear oil AST, one 500-gallon hydraulic oil AST, and one 275-gallon hydraulic oil AST.

In August 2003, the OCP received a complaint regarding the facility that resulted in inspections by the Hazardous Waste Program (HWP) and Solid Waste Program (SWP) at MDE. The complaint alleged that dyes were being disposed of in solid waste roll-off boxes, improper storage of drums of dyes and petroleum products in the basement of the plant, and the existence of a closed illegal dump site. The HWP inspected the facility, not including the unpermitted dump, and revealed several ASTs that were either empty or were in the process of being emptied but did not reveal any hazardous waste storage violations. The inspection of the unpermitted dump by the SWP was conducted in September and indicated that there were no signs of active dumping or landfilling, no leachate or seepage, no active runoff and no exposed waste. The Report of Observations



indicates that the maintenance supervisor for the facility indicated that the landfill accepted municipal waste from local citizens as well as industrial waste from the facility.

In June 2008, a Phase I environmental site assessment (ESA) was completed on the property that identified the following recognized environmental conditions (RECs): 1) the former mill, printing, power plant, and landfill operations; 2) presence of chemical storage containers and 55-gallon drums; 3) potential presence of an underground storage tank (UST); former presence of 100,00-gallon petroleum AST; 5) former presence of a hydraulic elevator in the mill building; and 6) debris/nuisance dumping.

In September 2008, a Preliminary Assessment of the property was completed by MDE that recommended further investigation of the property based on the past activities. In January 2011, an update Phase I ESA was completed in support of a potential Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) application.

A Phase II ESA completed in May 2011 included the collection of soil, groundwater, surface water, and soil gas samples from the power plant area, mill building area, landfill area and other areas of the property. The samples identified the presence of lead in the soils near the mill building and power plant building and chlorinated solvents in the soil gas near the power plant building. In January 2012, the ESA was revised to include data collected in September and December 2011 to further delineate the extent of soil impacts near the power plant and mill buildings.

Current Status

On September 4, 2008, Simkins Industries, Inc., the current owner, submitted an application to the VCP as a responsible person seeking a Certificate of Completion (COC) for future industrial use for the property. The VCP has completed two site visits and issued comments on the VCP application package and work plan on December 3, 2008, January 22, 2009, and March 16, 2009. On May 22, 2010, the VCP notified Simkins Industries that the VCP application, title information, property deeds and revised work plan submitted on May 15, 2009 and May 18, 2009 failed to adequately address the previous comments and that the application was incomplete and denied. On August 13, 2009, in response to a request from Simkins Industries, Inc., the Department indicated that the application could not be reinstated or the application fee refunded and reiterated that Simkins Industries could reapply to the VCP and submit an application that meets the existing requirements.

On January 13, 2011, Simkins Industries, Inc. submitted a new application to the VCP seeking a COC for commercial use of the property. Following characterization of the property, the VCP accepted the property for participation in the VCP on April 24, 2012 with a requirement that a proposed Response Action Plan (RAP) be developed for the property to address lead in the soils near the mill building and power plant,



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benzo(a)pyrene in soils near the power plant building, potential unidentified impacts beneath the buildings, and impacts to shallow groundwater at the property. A proposed RAP was submitted on August 20, 2012. The public informational meeting is scheduled for October 30, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at the Catonsville Branch of the Baltimore County Public Library. Comments on the proposed RAP will be accepted until November 5, 2012.



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