



Maryland Department of the
Environment

FACTS ABOUT:

SKIPJACK ENTERPRISES, INC.

Site Location

The Skipjack Enterprises site is located on Route 16, just south of Route 404 in Caroline County, Denton, Maryland. The property is comprised of two parcels of land totaling 2.8 acres.

Most of the site consists of woods, with a building structure covering about one-quarter of the site. The area immediately surrounding the site is residential. An intermittent stream originates on the site and flows under Route 16 eventually joining Watts Creek.

Site History

From approximately 1968 until 1981, Denton Plastics operated a button manufacturing facility at the site. No file information is available to determine site activities from 1981 to 1986.

From December 1986 until April 1991, Mr. Robert Duckworth operated a chemical blending and distribution facility at the site. These operations involved the blending of chemicals to formulate industrial soap products and the manufacture of specialty chemicals. Activities at the site resulted in the release of contaminants into the soil and groundwater.

Environmental Investigations

Due to complaints about the site from local residents and the Caroline County Health Department, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) conducted an investigation of the site and its owner Robert Duckworth in 1991. In July 1991, the Maryland Office of Attorney General, Environmental Crimes Unit, executed a search warrant to gather evidence on the storage and disposal of hazardous waste at the site. Mr. Duckworth was prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office for the abandonment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste in September 1992. Mr. Duckworth was convicted and sentenced to a jail term and a \$20,000 fine.

After the facility was closed, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was contacted and it was determined that the incompatible storage of hazardous substances on-site posed a threat to human health and the environment. An Emergency Removal followed shortly thereafter and approximately 60 55-gallon drums of hazardous material, 33 lab packs, and 64 empty drums were removed from the site. The remaining chemicals were claimed by Mr. Duckworth as usable raw product and were left on-site.



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In March 1993, a Preliminary Assessment was conducted on the site property by MDE's Site Assessment Division. Due to the potential threat of hazardous substances being released, further investigation was recommended. During a 1994 Focused Site Inspection, soil, sediment, surface water and residential well samples were collected on and in the vicinity of the site. Results indicated that low levels of lead and some pesticides were present at the site, but at concentrations below screening benchmark values.

In February 1997, as a result of potentially hazardous substances remaining in storage at the site and the deteriorating condition of the building, MDE requested that EPA assess the site for an Emergency Removal Action under Superfund. Materials stored on-site included acids, caustics, and strong oxidizers. The second removal, completed by June 1997, included the removal of 132 drums, 200 cubic yards of empty 5-gallon containers, and 30 cubic yards of hazardous debris.

MDE collected groundwater samples via direct push technology in 1997, which indicated that chlorinated solvents were present in the parts per million range in the on-site shallow groundwater. Testing of surrounding residential wells, screened in the deeper, confined aquifer, continued to test negative for contamination.

From 2001 to 2007, the MDE's CHS Enforcement Section investigated and provided oversight on soil and groundwater remediation at the Skipjack site, located just west of the area proposed for the Royal Farms development. As part of the investigation, the State completed soil removal and groundwater remediation activities at the cost of approximately \$603,000, including but not limited to: installation of four shallow monitoring wells east and west of Harmony Road to track groundwater contaminant migration; removal of 17 truckloads of lead-contaminated soil and button litter (390 tons); removal of 20 truckloads of petroleum-contaminated soil (496 tons); removal of 2 underground storage tanks, groundwater treatment injections; demolition of the building; and backfilling and grading. Post-treatment groundwater data in 2007 did not show contaminant levels that posed a risk to human health or the environment off-site.

Current Status

In 1993, the site owner died and Caroline County subsequently acquired the tax certificate for the property with plans for public use. The County provided a lien on the property to MDE for the cost of the cleanup and related expenses. In the event the County sells the property, the lien will ensure that MDE will be reimbursed, with the lien capped at 50% of the sale price of the property.

Shallow groundwater is not used for potable purposes, and groundwater use and land use restrictions are in place to prevent future exposure to residual contamination remaining on-site; therefore the remediation is considered complete.



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