



ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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EPA Continues Outreach for Private Well Access near Mills Gap Site (Former CTS Plant) in Asheville, N.C.

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(Atlanta, Ga. – September 1, 2009) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will continue the process of obtaining access agreements to private drinking water wells this week near the Mills Gap Site, site of the former CTS plant, in Asheville, N.C. An August 19, 2009 preliminary data sampling result from a private drinking water well located northeast of the plant indicated elevated levels of trichloroethene (TCE). EPA representatives will be going door-to-door to residents in areas within a one-mile radius of the former CTS plant as part of continued requests to gain access to private wells for sampling purposes.

This recent preliminary data result of the private well in the vicinity of Chapel Hill Church Road and Pinner's Cove Road reported TCE levels above the maximum contaminant level for TCE in drinking water and triggered EPA's emergency response program to provide bottled water to affected residents. The affected well was not part of the ongoing Private Well Monitoring Network, in which approximately 50 private wells within a one-mile radius are sampled and results are reported to the community quarterly, because the property-owner had declined EPA's previous offers to sample the well. This well was sampled as part of the ongoing Oaks Subdivision contamination attribution study.

According to a July 27, 2009 Phase I Remedial Investigation conducted for the CTS Corporation by MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., under the supervision of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources (NC DENR), a sample taken from a groundwater monitoring well (not a drinking water source) on Mills Gap Road indicated significantly elevated levels of TCE in groundwater east of the Mills Gap Site. The July sampling results from the Private Well Monitoring Network did not indicate any new detections of TCE or other CTS-related contaminants in private drinking water wells. Those results will be mailed to residents shortly.

EPA will be asking residents within a one-mile radius of the former CTS plant for access to their private wells so that they may be sampled. If any resident within a one-mile radius of the site has not granted access for well sampling, but would like to, please contact EPA at (800) 241-1754. This well sampling will be conducted as a separate function from the ongoing quarterly Private Well Monitoring Network that is conducted by EPA. Well sampling data is necessary to assess the safety of the community's private well drinking water source and to gain further site assessment data as part of EPA's and NC DENR's ongoing study of groundwater contamination in the area near the former CTS plant.

The Mills Gap Site is located off of Mills Gap Road, approximately one mile east of Skyland, in Buncombe County, N.C. and consists of approximately nine acres of maintained grounds containing a large, single-story building. From 1959 to 1986, CTS operated an electroplating facility at the site. The chemical compound TCE was employed by CTS to clean and/or degrease metal objects prior to electroplating. In 1987, Mills Gap Road Associates (MGRA) purchased the site and is the current owner.

CTS and MGRA, under agreement with EPA, are currently addressing TCE-source contamination in the area above the aquifer saturated with groundwater with a Soil Vapor Extraction system. The system was completed in July 2006 and has removed more than 6,000 pounds of contaminants. EPA is also conducting an investigation at the Mills Gap Site and in the surrounding community to determine if the site qualifies for cleanup under EPA's National Priorities List, a list of EPA national priority sites with hazardous contamination. This includes an ongoing attribution study at the Oaks Subdivision to determine the source of groundwater contamination there.

For more information on the site, visit www.epaosc.net/MillsGap.