

Throop officials demand cleanup at Marjol site; oil contamination means more work

BY MEGAN REITER (STAFF WRITER)
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BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER The excavation and lead cleanup at the former Marjol site in Throop is on schedule for a November finish, but oil has also been found there.



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Recent rain has left pools of water at the Throop site.

THROOP - Borough officials and residents are calling for a final cleanup at the former Marjol site, but they'll likely have to wait a little longer, since the property was found to be contaminated with oil as well, said an Environmental Protection Agency official.

Meanwhile, air-monitor reports of lead dust levels at the site and its perimeter conducted between May 22 and June 9 came in below detection limits, said Michael R. Baltrusaitis, health and community liaison for Cocciardi and Associates Inc.

"From the beginning (of the excavation) to this point in time, it appears that nothing is out of the ordinary," borough council President Thomas Lukasewicz said after Monday's council work session.

Maureen Essentier, EPA environmental engineer, spoke about the discovery of weathered fuel and motor oil at the Marjol property, which is owned by Gould Electronics.

"It appears that people were dumping oil in the area of the plant," she said.

The Marjol site was once home to a plant that reclaimed lead from car batteries. The plant closed in 1982, but the battery landfill was contaminated with lead that posed significant health risks to neighbors.

The second excavation at the site began March 25. The contaminated materials, including battery casings and soil, will be capped by concrete.

Barbara Forslund of Advanced GeoServices, the project coordinator for Gould, said the cleanup is on schedule. According to a report Ms. Essentier handed out at the work session, the construction of the cap is scheduled for July and August. Mr. Lukasewicz said the oil cannot be addressed until the lead cleanup is complete, which is scheduled for November. The final decision on how to address the oil contamination has not been determined, he said.

Councilman Joseph Barone asked why contaminants are being left on the site instead of being removed. He lamented the millions of dollars he said the borough was losing by being unable to develop the land.

Containing and capping the type of contamination at the site is the normal plan of action, Ms. Essenther said. She added that to remove the lead-contaminated material, a much larger excavation would be required.

The answer didn't seem to satisfy Mr. Barone, who said money "is all that counts to you people."

Council Vice President Jim Barnick and Mr. Barone implored the agency representatives in the audience to finish with the cleanup.

"Do it and do it right - or get out of the town," Mr. Barone said.

The state Department of Health is offering a free lead blood screening from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 23 at the Throop Municipal Building. The screening is open to children 10 months to 7 years old, and pregnant women.

Contact the writer: mreiter@timeshamrock.com