

Atlas Plating
2731 Pinewood Avenue
West Palm Beach, Florida
County: Palm Beach
District: Southeast
Site Lead: Waste Cleanup Program
Approved for Cleanup: November 6, 2002
ERIC ID # 3921
HWC # 151

Site Description and History

Atlas Plating is a former electroplating facility located in a mixed light industrial/residential area of West Palm Beach, one block west of US 1, immediately east of the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) between 26th and 27th Streets in Township 43S, Range 43E, Section 09 at 26° 44' 17.7616" N, 80° 03' 29.9055" W. Atlas operated at this site from 1989 to 1994; however, records indicate that the site had been occupied by various plating businesses for approximately 25 years.

In December 1993, the Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD) conducted an inspection and collected soil samples along the FEC right-of-way adjacent to the facility. This, and subsequent inspections, were prompted by complaints by the FEC that liquids were being discharged from the facility onto FEC property. The samples indicated that copper, chromium, lead, and nickel were present in the soil samples above Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (FDER, now DEP) soil cleanup target levels (SCTLs). The FDER Southeast District conducted Hazardous Waste/RCRA inspections in November 1993 and March 1994, which indicated violations of several FDER rules. In February 1996, DEP received another complaint and responded to find the site deserted with several marked and unmarked containers containing corrosive liquids and other materials onsite. Signs of use by transients including discarded drug paraphernalia were noted during the inspection. In June 1997, DEP's Bureau of Emergency Response removed seven drums of hazardous waste from the site.

In September and October 1999, a DEP consultant, Metcalf & Eddy, sampled groundwater and soil at the site. The January 2000 sampling report noted elevated levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, nickel, silver, and cyanide in soil and plating vat sediments along with chromium and nickel concentrations above the DEP's groundwater cleanup target levels (GCTLs) in groundwater samples. In May 2001, the DEP Bureau of Emergency Response removed the remaining vat and installed a chain link fence to restrict site access.

Threat

Both groundwater and soils were contaminated by electroplating wastes, primarily metals, and some cyanide. Accessible soils, presenting a direct exposure or leaching risk have been removed. Since some inaccessible contaminated soils remain onsite, institutional controls will be necessary in the future. A small groundwater plume containing chromium above GCTLs remains as described below.

Response Strategy and Status (September 2018)

The site was accepted for State-Funded Hazardous Waste Cleanup in November 2002. Following a site visit, the DEP contractor, Tetra Tech Foster Wheeler (now Tetra Tech EC, Inc., TTEC), developed a site assessment work plan that identified the recommended soil and groundwater sampling to complete delineation of site related contamination and support selection of a cleanup strategy. The site assessment for this facility is complete. The assessment confirmed the presence of plating metals (arsenic, chromium, copper and nickel) in the soil and groundwater exceeding DEP soil and groundwater cleanup target levels onsite. Offsite soil contamination appears to be restricted to the FEC right-of-way and the adjacent property south of the site. Groundwater sampling has indicated that there is a chromium plume extending from the NW corner of the site, east-southeast towards Pinewood Ave. However, the plume appears to be shrinking. Several onsite soil samples exceeded the leachability SCTL for chromium. Surveys of the surrounding area indicate that there are no consumptive use wells completed in the affected aquifer.

A decision memorandum, selecting soil excavation and disposal of on- and offsite unsaturated soils exceeding the leachability SCTL for chromium (38 mg/kg) was signed on April 12, 2012. TTEC was tasked to prepare a Remedial Action Plan for soil removal with offsite disposal for soils exceeding the leachability SCTL for chromium. Additional soil sampling had been performed in early 2011 and indicated that all the contaminated soil could be disposed of as non- hazardous waste. Also, geotechnical testing was performed to assure that the selected remedial action technology would not impact the structural integrity of the building located immediately north of the site and the building located immediately south of the site. The final Remedial Action Plan was approved on May 2, 2012. Construction was tasked and the contractors mobilized to the site on June 18, 2012 to begin excavation activities. Construction was completed on August 10, 2012, with approximately 1,750 tons of contaminated soil and debris (concrete) removed.

Schedule

The site has been restored and is now in a long-term groundwater monitoring phase. The latest round of groundwater sampling in 2018, indicated that chromium is now below GCTLs; however, a nickel exceedance at the southeast corner of the site is also affecting two offsite properties. Notification to the affected property owners has been made. A representative for the site's real property owner has indicated that they would accept a conditional SRCO if low-level contamination persists. DEP staff and consultants suspect that this nickel plume is a result of the remediation that occurred onsite (mainly the removal of the concrete slab) and should rapidly dissipate. To assist with the plume delineation two new deep wells were installed in 2016, one onsite and one across Pinewood Ave. Both were sampled as part of the September event and were both below the GCTLs for all contaminants. The next round of groundwater monitoring is due in September 2019.