

Study finds chemical pollution

By Tracey Berry

Herald staff writer

CARPENTERSVILLE — Chemicals found at the Carpentersville Waste Site apparently came from the Cottage Avenue chemical companies.

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency officials released the results Monday of a 2½-year study on the site.

The study revealed chemical contamination was caused primarily by the former waste handling and disposal practices at Cargill, Inc., and McWhorter, Inc., and companies that previ-

ously operated from the industrial park.

"The appearance is that they (chemicals) did come from one or both plants," said IEPA spokesman Stan Black.

"Fifty years ago people didn't have a concept of what was hazardous," added IEPA project manager Sue Doubet.

The study was conducted by John Mathes and Associates Inc. of Columbia, Ill.

Residents' complaints of odor and substances leaking from the site into the Fox River prompted the investigation.

IEPA investigators initially

thought the contamination was caused by an old landfill that was leaking. However, the investigation "found no evidence of widespread, large-scale, uncontrolled hazardous waste disposal at the site."

"We didn't find drums of chemicals at the site," Black said.

Investigators did find ethylbenzene, xylenes, tetrachloroethene, toluene and other volatile organic compounds.



Stan Black

Also discovered at the site were PCBs and lead.

The site, which is on the state's remedial action priority list for clean-up, consists of 62.5 acres along the east bank of the Fox River.

From 1900 to 1940 the area was mined for sand and gravel. During the 1940's and 1950's the site was a municipal dump until its development as an industrial park.

The waste site now houses paint resin manufacturing companies, Cargill and McWhorter and acement company, Tri-County Ready-Mix.

Chemical contaminants were most concentrated around a stormwater retention pond at the McWhorter plant. The pond may have been used previously for waste disposal, according to the report.

"There was one really nasty area around and beneath the McWhorter pond," Doubet said.

Another set of chemical contaminants was discovered downstream from the site. However, IEPA officials believe the source of those chemicals is another site east of the river.

See POLLUTION, Page 2

Pollution

(Continued from Page 1)

In addition to past handling of waste, the chemical contamination may still be going on, said Doubet.

National Pollutants Discharge Elimination System officials will investigate the site further to determine if chemical companies are exceeding waste discharge limits and adding to the contamination.

Copies of the study have been given to Cargill and McWhorter representatives. IEPA officials hope chemical company representatives will shed some light on previous disposal practices that may account for the contamination.

IEPA officials have begun the next phase of the study to deter-

mine if there is a environmental and health hazard at the site.

Leachate from the site is leaking into the Fox River, which supplies the City of Elgin's drinking water.

However, agency officials have not found any immediate risk from the site, explained Doubet.

From the information, John Mathes and Associates Inc., will compile a feasibility study for the site's clean-up.

The IEPA will hold a hearing Dec. 9 to discuss the study results with area residents. Copies of the two-volume report can be reviewed at the Dundee Township Library and the Carpentersville Village Hall.

NW HERALD 11-10-87