



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2019

State of Illinois Announces Plan to Perform Assessment of the New Jersey Zinc/Mobil Chemical NPL Site near DePue

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The State of Illinois has given notice that the document titled “Assessment Plan for The Former New Jersey Zinc/Mobil Chemical National Priorities List Site” is available for public comment for a 30-day period.

The New Jersey Zinc/Mobil Chemical National Priorities List (NPL) Site (the Site) includes a former primary and secondary zinc-smelting facility, sulfuric acid plant, lithopone paint pigment plant, and diammonium phosphate (DAP) fertilizer plant. The facility was located in the Village of DePue and operated from 1903 to 1989. Operations included zinc smelting, phosphoric and sulfuric acid production, manufacture of zinc dust, and recovery and refinement of other metals. Waste disposal and other activities at the Site released hazardous substances to the environment, including to Lake DePue and to the Village of DePue, including residential properties. By 1992, most of the buildings associated with the industrial operations had been demolished.

As a result of the contamination on the plant property and surrounding areas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed the Site on the NPL in 1999. EPA noted that the Site had several contaminant sources, including a residue pile, a waste pile, lagoons, cooling ponds, and gypsum stack ponds, which contained elevated levels of metals, including zinc, lead, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, and copper. EPA also noted that there was contamination in residential soils, adjacent wetlands, and in Lake DePue. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) is the lead agency for the cleanup of the Site.

In 2015, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (collectively, the Trustees) prepared a Preassessment Screen Determination (PAS) in accordance with the Department of Interior’s Natural Resource Damage Assessment regulations, 43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 11. The Trustees determined that criteria specified in 43 CFR Part 11 had been met and that an assessment of natural resource damages was warranted.

The Trustees have prepared the Assessment Plan to ensure that the assessment proceeds in an organized, systematic and cost-effective manner. The Assessment Plan is a work plan used to guide Trustee actions to perform a Natural Resource Damage Assessment. The goal of the plan is to present a proposed approach and methods for identifying natural resource injuries and determining the value of the injuries that have resulted from the hazardous substances released from the Site.

The Trustees based this AP on their knowledge of the Site, their natural resource interests, and on the extensive Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study dataset.

Interested members of the public are invited to provide comments on the Assessment Plan. For a copy of the document, check the IDNR website at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/programs/NRDA/Pages/WhatsNew.aspx> or the Selby Township Library District, 101 Depot St., DePue, IL 61322-0049.

Comments on the AP may be sent to:

Beth Whetsell
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
217-557-7816
Beth.Whetsell@illinois.gov