

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# EPA Proposes Cleanup for Natural Area at DuPont

## DuPont Facility

East Chicago, Indiana

August 2014

### Public participation

The EPA invites you to comment on the proposed Natural Area cleanup plan between Aug. 13 and Sept. 12. If there is enough interest, EPA will also hold a public meeting to present the proposed plan, answer questions and accept oral comments.

After considering all public comments, EPA will select a final cleanup plan. The Agency will publish a document called a "Final Decision and Response to Comments," which will include a summary of comments and EPA's responses.

To file a written comment or ask for more information, contact:

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You may call the EPA toll-free at 800-621-8431, weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### For more information

You may see site-related documents at the East Chicago Public Library's Pastrick Branch, 1008 W. Chicago Ave., and at the EPA's regional office, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Records Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, or visit [www.epa.gov/Region5/waste/permits/actions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/Region5/waste/permits/actions.htm).

Under a proposed cleanup plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would clean up metal-contaminated soil while ensuring the protection and continued long-term stewardship and conservation of the 172-acre Natural Area in the eastern portion of the DuPont Facility site. DuPont gave the Natural Area to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as a conservation easement. The Nature Conservancy has managed the area since 1999. It is home to many rare, threatened or endangered plant and wildlife species.

DuPont found that releases from its former industrial property had contaminated western portions of the Natural Area. To immediately protect the Natural Area and improve the quality of its unique habitat, the company did an interim cleanup in the fall of 2012. DuPont dug up and removed about 77,000 cubic yards of soil with high concentrations of metals – mostly lead, arsenic and zinc – from 20 acres of the adjacent Buffer Zone and a small portion of the Natural Area, and stockpiled it on their contaminated industrial property.

The 23-acre Buffer Zone, just west of the Natural Area, has been affected by releases from the former industrial portion of the site. DuPont's investigations found that surface soil concentrations of metals such as antimony, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead and zinc were above levels established to protect human health and the environment.

EPA's proposed plan would clean up remaining contamination and deal with the stockpiled soil from the interim cleanup. It would be done under the legal authority of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. RCRA requires public participation in the cleanup process, so EPA has set a public comment period (*see box, left*). This fact sheet provides background on the site and describes the proposed cleanup plan. The full plan is available at the East Chicago Public Library's Pastrick Branch.

### Proposed cleanup plan

High concentrations of metals in Natural Area and Buffer Zone soil may adversely affect animals and birds such as shrews, mice, sparrows, robins and hawks.

However, the work necessary to clean up the contamination could have a significant detrimental effect on rare, threatened or endangered plant and wildlife species, and on habitat restoration being performed by The Nature Conservancy. EPA considered these unacceptable effects in developing a balanced approach to the cleanup.

The proposed cleanup plan consists of:

- Permanent disposal of about 77,000 cubic yards of metal-contaminated soil from the interim cleanup, stored in the onsite solid waste landfill area.

- Proper construction and long-term monitoring of the contaminated soil disposal area.
- Monitoring of the wetland swales.
- Additional measures to protect the Natural Area if monitoring shows continued effects.
- Installation of fencing to separate the Natural Area from the contaminated industrial area.
- Groundwater monitoring for metals.
- An environmental covenant to restrict site activities.
- About \$8 million in financial assurance by DuPont to ensure completion of the cleanup.
- Voluntary funding by DuPont through 2017 for habitat restoration activities by The Nature Conservancy.

### Site history

The DuPont facility is at 5215 Kennedy Ave. The Natural Area and Buffer Zone make up the 195-acre eastern portion of the facility. An industrial area along Gary and Cline Avenues roughly forms the eastern and northern boundary, the Grand Calumet River is the southern boundary and the former DuPont

manufacturing area is the western boundary. The area near the Natural Area and Buffer Zone is mostly industrial with a residential area – East Chicago's Riley Park community – to the northwest.

The Natural Area is an undeveloped tract of original lakeplain/dunes land with alternating dry sand ridges and wet organic swales.

The entire DuPont facility consists of the Natural Area and adjacent Buffer Zone, plus 29 acres leased for active industrial use, 30 acres of solid waste landfill, 155 acres of former industrial property that could be redeveloped and 52 acres of open and/or filled land.

Environmental investigations are nearly complete for the remaining industrial portion of the DuPont facility. DuPont is also evaluating potential redevelopment opportunities for this property. EPA expects to propose an additional cleanup plan for the contaminated industrial area in 2015 and hold a public meeting to present the proposed cleanup/redevelopment plan, answer questions and accept oral or written comments.



*Part of the Natural Area, where a proposed cleanup is planned that should not adversely affect wildlife.*