

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Fly Ash-Tainted Soil Removal Proposed in Cleanup Plan

Northern Indiana Public Service Co. Site
Chesterton, Indiana

July 2011

Comments welcome

Interested people are invited to submit comments on the proposed NIPSCO cleanup plan during the **Public Comment Period**

July 14, 2011 – August 28, 2011.

A **Public Meeting** to discuss the work is also planned Thursday, July 28, 2011, at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Visitor Center, 1215 N. State Road 49, Porter, Indiana from 6pm – 8pm.

For more information

The following EPA team members can be contacted for questions, comments or more information about the NIPSCO and lakeshore environmental situation:

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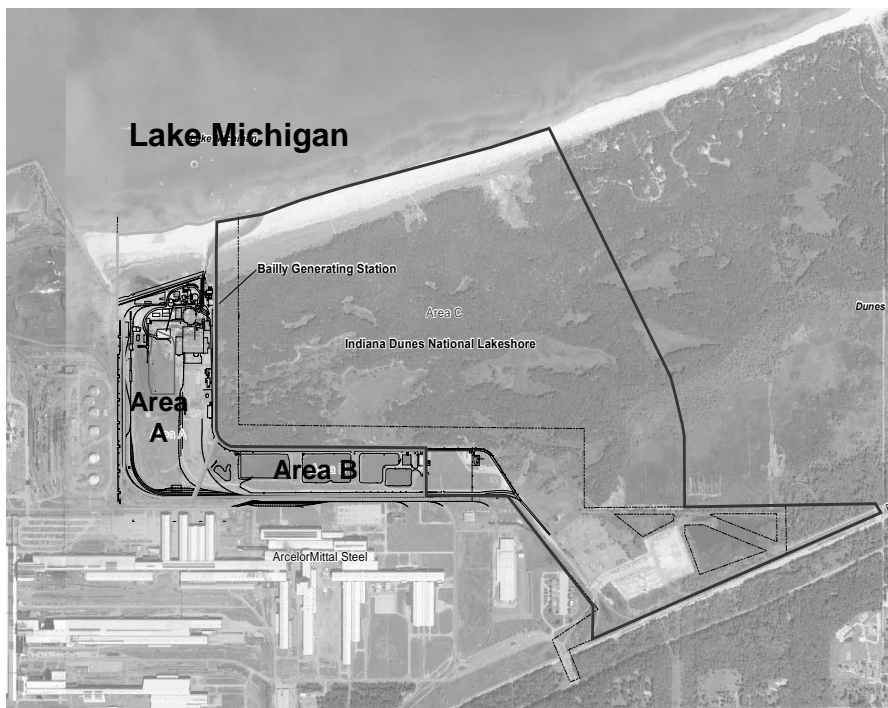
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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to dig up and remove soil contaminated with fly ash on portions of a generating station located on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. An ongoing environmental investigation at Northern Indiana Public Service Co.'s Bailly Generating Station has been concluded for the operating sections of the facility. The power plant borders the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Under a 2005 legal order between NIPSCO and EPA, the utility was required to investigate whether contamination from the Bailly site is affecting soil, underground water supplies (called "ground water") or Lake Michigan itself. This fact sheet is an update on the conclusions of that work and the proposed cleanup plan for certain parts of the site.

EPA will not make its proposed cleanup plan final until after it reviews comments received from the public at a meeting and public comment period (*see left-hand box for ways you can participate in the decision-making process*). The Agency may modify the proposed cleanup plan based on new information or public comments so your opinion is important. This fact sheet summarizes complete details about the site contained in a document called "the statement of basis." That report is available online or at the document repositories (*see Page 2*).

In an effort to streamline the investigation and cleanup process, at this time



Aerial photo shows the outlines of the NIPSCO facility and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Areas A and B are ready to be cleaned up, while the adjacent dunes and former landfills continue to be studied.

EPA is only proposing a plan for the operational portions of the facility. Former landfill locations and adjacent Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IDNL) remain under investigation to ensure the sensitive park habitat is properly protected.

EPA's cleanup plan and site background

EPA is currently proposing cleanup for the on-site portions of the facility that are involved in the industrial processes that generate electricity. The operational areas that have been assessed are referred to as Areas A and B (*see map Page 1*). At a later time, EPA will propose a cleanup plan for the former landfills and IDNL.

The Bailly facility (*see map Page 1*) covers 320 acres in an L-shaped property bordered to the north by the lake and to the northeast by the national lakeshore. The plant is coal-fired and supplies electricity to the northern half of Indiana. Some on-site sections have already been cleaned up by NIPSCO including contaminated soil at seven locations where, for instance, old tanks had leaked.

EPA's proposed cleanup plan for the remaining contamination involves soil excavation where the facility formerly stored fly ash directly on the ground. Fly ash is a coal combustion byproduct. The waste contained metals that soaked into the soil and ground water of the facility. Removing the contaminated soil will remove the source of metals found in the underground water. Earth excavated in this project will be backfilled with clean soil. EPA is proposing this plan after thorough investigation. As mentioned above, more cleanup details can be found in EPA's statement of basis. The statement of basis is a summary of the investigations, risk assessments and cleanup plans considered.

Cleanup details

As mentioned, seven areas of soil contamination located within the operational or industrial portion of the facility have already been cleaned up. This occurred during the

environmental investigation. As areas of obvious contamination were identified, they were surveyed with sampling and then cleaned up by the excavation method. Where appropriate, infrastructure upgrades were made to ensure contamination does not happen again. Over 24,000 ft³ of contaminated soil was removed.

The remaining contamination area was not handled so simply due to its size and because the investigation required determining how much soil to excavate. Therefore, EPA is proposing this cleanup plan and opening a public comment period.

Although there was no human health risk associated with these fly ash areas, EPA decided to clean up the remaining contamination to protect the ground water aquifer and Lake Michigan. An aquifer is an underground layer of rock and other material containing drinking water. As such, any soil capable of filtering or releasing contamination into the ground water will be removed.

The other component of the proposed cleanup plan ensures any future use of the facility is safe. NIPSCO will be required to file appropriate land-use restrictions with the local government to document the industrial nature of the land.

Next steps

As mentioned earlier, EPA officials say controlling the source of the ground water contamination by removing the tainted soil will protect the underground water supplies and Lake Michigan in the future. EPA urges interested people to read the statement of basis document and provide any comments you may have on the proposed cleanup plan during the public participation period.

Protecting the lakeshore while ensuring reliable electrical power to the area will require the cooperation of all stakeholders. EPA looks forward to your input and serving the Northwest Indiana community.

View the documents

To read the files about the NIPSCO site, an official document repository has been set up at the Portage Public Library, 2665 Irving St.

Information can also be found on EPA's website for the NIPSCO Bailly Generating Station:

www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/sites/nipsco/index.html