

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## **RCRA Showcase Pilot Region III**

### **A New Industrial Park: The Second Generation of Prosperity US Steel, Fairless Works Fairless Hills, PA**

Located on the west bank of the Delaware River, approximately 20 miles northeast of Philadelphia, PA, US Steel's Fairless Works has been in operation since the early 1950s. Fairless Works consists of approximately 2500 acres, on which were a coke production plant, steel iron making operations, finishing and forging operations, a power house, and a chemical plant. The site still has an operating finishing facility, i.e., the sheet and tin mill, but the rest of the facility closed down between 1982 and 1991 with a loss of 5000 jobs to the community. In 1993, EPA and US Steel entered into a Consent Order for clean-up of the Fairless Works site. The Consent Order incorporated the entire 2500-acre facility. The 68 areas identified for further investigation include former production and disposal areas.

In 1998, the facility expressed interest in obtaining a release from liability which is available for remediation performed under the Pennsylvania Act 2 Land Recycling Program. The release from liability will aide in redevelopment of the property. The redevelopment plan is designed to revitalize the Levittown area, which experienced the loss of over 5000 jobs in the 1980s and 1990s. US Steel is bringing in diverse business interests, from tire recycling to specialty metals to clean-burning power generation, in order to reinvigorate the area.

US Steel has converted over 300 acres of uncontaminated areas to parcels for lease. They are marketing the 5-20 acre parcels to heavy industry, as their location near interstate highways and the on-site deep water port on the Delaware River is conducive to industrial operations. On the financial side, the US Steel property is within a "Keystone Opportunity Zone," with tax breaks for industry located or re-locating there. To date, 32 companies have already relocated to the site and brought in 1,600 new jobs to the economically depressed area. The project has the potential of bringing in up to 80 new industrial enterprises, creating employment opportunities for more than 5000 persons and long-term total investment exceeding 1.5 billion dollars.

In order to expedite the clean-up and redevelopment of the site, EPA, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and US Steel have formed a team to proceed with the environmental investigations. The team is first focusing its efforts on parcels of the property which have been identified for lease. Currently this involves a 45-acre parcel leased to Dominion Energy, which plans to build a 1600 megawatt clean-burning power generating station. A soils investigation has been completed and the data is under review by EPA and PADEP. In addition, a prospective tenant is interested in a parcel near the deep water port, which will be vital to the business which is expected to involve shipping 750,000 tons of material into and out of the location. Some historic soil sampling has occurred in the area which EPA, PADEP and US Steel will review. A soils investigation will be undertaken in the near future to fill in the data gaps.

EPA, PADEP and US Steel coordinate the clean-up efforts with redevelopment goals. Knowing the

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RCRA corrective action obligations must be met, the team is using the flexibility provided in the RCRA Clean-up Reforms to advance both environmental and business objectives. EPA and PADEP view the flexibility of their respective programs as an advantage, an opportunity to accomplish environmental progress without falling back into the time-consuming, process-driven, traditional ways which can stifle creative solutions. Frequent conference calls and meetings foster communication and faster environmental results that focus on mutual priorities. These efforts will continue as US Steel pursues the redevelopment of the USX Industrial Park in conjunction with meeting environmental responsibilities.

### **Next Steps**

In November 2000, US Steel finished sampling the perimeter groundwater monitoring wells to determine the current conditions of the groundwater. The data will be available in mid 2001, when EPA will be evaluating the Environmental Indicators for the site.

Soil sampling at the Dominion Energy parcel is complete and the data is under final review by EPA and PADEP with decisions expected shortly.

Soil sampling at the parcel for the prospective tenant will be undertaken in the near future to fill in data gaps in the existing information.

Review of historic groundwater analysis and additional groundwater monitoring in the interior of the site is a longer term goal, with EPA and US Steel currently discussing the workplans.

EPA will report on the overall progress of this pilot at least semi-annually.

### **Community Interaction**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expressed concerns to EPA and US Steel on the potential exposure to wildfowl to oil on the surface of the wastewater treatment plant lagoons. To discourage wildfowl from entering the area, propane cannons were installed and continue to operate. In addition, netting over the lagoons and draining of some the water from the lagoons has proved successful in keeping the wildlife away from the area. These measures were included as requirements in the Order as Interim measures until final remediation is accomplished. Quarterly reports on the success of the measures is sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as EPA.

US Steel has published the appropriate NIR (Notice of Intent to Remediate) and gave the public 30 days to submit comments to the plan to lease the parcel to Dominion Energy. No comments were received. The site has applied for and received a non-use aquifer designation from the Act 2 Program. This was also published with an opportunity for public comment.

### **More Information**

An informational repository containing documents related to cleanup of the US Steel Fairless Works

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facility is maintained at:

EPA Region 3  
1650 Arch Street  
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For more information about the US Steel Fairless Works site, please contact:

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