

R. Mine AREA

JAN

1990

Schwesinger says Upper Ringwood not a dump

By LINDA BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

RINGWOOD — Mayor Ernest Schwesinger, in response to a letter received in the Trends newsroom last week saying that residents of Upper Ringwood are treated unfairly, said the area is "better than it was 10 years ago."

The letter, signed, "a concerned citizen," stated that upper Ringwood is a "dump site," where "garbage upon garbage is brought in by the loads."

Upper Ringwood houses a leaf compost site and the letter addresses that, saying the leaves produce an odor. The letter also says "other communities outside of ours

come in and dump leaves here."

Mayor Schwesinger disputes this, however. "We let Wanaque dump here for about six weeks, but we've stopped that now. Right now, it's just Ringwood's leaves at the compost site. There are fumes that leaves give off when they're not stacked in winddrows or piles. They must be stacked in winddrows," he said.

The mayor added that, as of last week, neither he nor Borough Manager Charles De Deyn had received a copy of the letter. The concerned citizen also writes that garbage dumped in Upper Ringwood was covered by landfill, producing "toxic fumes" that made the air

"unbearable," and caused respiratory problems among residents.

"I don't know anything about toxic fumes," Mayor Schwesinger said. To the letter's claim that "the borough always takes action upon itself and never asks the community, such as the radio station (being built) in the mine area," the mayor replied, "We had three meetings on this subject for the public."

The concerned citizen also wrote about the roads in Upper Ringwood being "nothing but potholes," to which the mayor did agree. "There are some valid points there. The roads need repair. We recently got a grant from the state for

\$350,000 to fix the roads there." He added that surveys would probably be done now and the actual construction work would begin in the spring. "There are drainage problems and most of the roads there are privately-owned, not borough roads."

The letter said that residents of Upper Ringwood are "tired of being used and abused." The mayor sympathized, to some extent. "The roads are terrible and some of these complaints are valid, but there have been millions of dollars pumped into the Upper Ringwood area. It's better than before, and we'll work on it," he said.

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UPPER RINGWOOD

A-Environment

OCT 10 1991

Ringwood refutes charge of Superfund obstruction

By LINDA BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

RINGWOOD — Responding to remarks by a spokeswoman from the federal Environmental Protection Agency alleging that Ringwood is not cooperating with a Superfund cleanup effort, Borough Attorney Richard Clemack said Ringwood "was not charged with doing anything wrong."

Reached at his office Monday, Clemack said he hadn't seen published reports quoting the spokeswoman as saying borough officials have been uncooperative and unwilling to accept responsibility for cleaning up the site in upper Ringwood, in which the Ford Motor Co. dumped waste in the 1970s.

"We have a copy of the complaint (a suit naming Ringwood and

Ford as defendants) and it doesn't allege that Ringwood did anything wrong," he said.

The attorney went on to say Ringwood is only liable because it is the property owner.

"We deny doing anything wrong and the matter has been turned over to our insurance carrier," he said. Mayor Walter Davison was out of town and unavailable for comment.

According to the complaint, the EPA stated that it has not been compensated for \$475,604 related to "preliminary site work, removal action, long-term monitoring, drum removal and other administrative costs. The EPA will continue to incur additional response costs related to the site."

The Superfund site occupies approximately 455 acres in the northeast corner of Passaic County. It is

located approximately one-quarter mile west of Ringwood State Park and a mile northwest of a segment of the Wanaque Reservoir. Ford owned the site from 1964-70 and Ringwood became its owner in 1980.

Ford investigated the site between March of 1984 and April of 1988, under EPA supervision. The EPA issued Ford an administrative order requiring the company undertake a feasibility study "to develop and evaluate remedial alternatives for the site." The study was completed by Woodward-Clyde Consultants and submitted to the EPA in August of 1988.

Among other things, the study concluded that ground water at the site was contaminated with arsenic, lead, cadmium and benzene. In

(Continued On Page 3)

Ringwood claims no wrongdoing

(Continued From Page 1)

1987, Ford was ordered to remove 6,000 cubic yards of paint sludge, to which it complied. The sludge was analyzed and found to contain levels of lead exceeding the applicable maximum concentration limits.

In August of 1988, EPA officials announced that long-term monitoring of the site would be conducted over a 30-year period. They assured residents that "a major source of contamination" was removed and relocated to Michigan. They also said that there was "no immediate threat to the Wanaque Reservoir." Officials of the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission have said they have not found any traces of contamination.

Residents in the area maintained they were worried about the hazardous materials dumped near their homes. One said he wanted the water sampled, "because garbage was dumped over a period of time with no restrictions." Wells and soil there were to be continuously monitored indefinitely. In June of last year, Ford removed additional drums containing liquid waste.

Other upper Ringwood residents expressed concern, saying they feared "pollution and toxic material," with one man exclaiming, "We're a toxic dump site." Borough officials assured residents they would be safe during and after the cleanup.

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P-HAZARDOUS WASTES.

JAN 13 1984

Ringwood to EPA: we have no comment

Comment period on deletion quiet

By MAUREEN WOOP
Staff Writer

Needs to go in P 17

RINGWOOD — The comment period for the proposal of deletion of the Ringwood Mines/Landfill Superfund Site from the National Priorities List (NPL) ended Friday and as of that afternoon, Lance Richman, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) remedial project manager for the Ringwood Mines, said he had received no public comments.

"We have had no comments from the public, zero," said Richman. "I am a little surprised. The last day for comments (was Friday) and we may receive a few postmarked before (Friday), but we will go ahead with the notice of deletion, the final piece of the puzzle."

The NPL is the EPA's list of the most hazardous waste sites, nationwide, eligible for Federal Superfund cleanup funds. The state of

New Jersey is in compliance with the EPA's decision to take it off this list, Richman said. He also said that Ringwood has been informed of the deletion.

The EPA announced at the beginning of December their plans to delete the site from the NPL and asked for public comment on the matter. The EPA said that the mines were no longer considered a risk and could therefore be deleted from the list of highest priority sites.

The mines would still be eligible in the future to be renominated to the list if it was found to pose threat to human health or the environment.

"We sent out the notice to the newspapers so that the people were aware that we were doing this and that if they had any concerns, if they felt strongly about it, they could contact us," Richman said. "They were given an opportunity to com-

(Continued On Page A11)

EPA receives no comment from Ring.

(Continued From Page A1)

ment and we would take those comments into consideration."

Richman said that the EPA will continue to monitor and test the ground water as part of operation maintenance at the mines. The samples will be evaluated with previous data.

The EPA has to go through a seven-step process to delete the mines. The public comment period is part of this process. The next step is for the EPA to develop a responsiveness summary and place it in a docket and local repository. The last step would be to publish the final deletion notice in the Federal Register.

The public comment period began Nov. 29 and was supposed to last 30 days, but was extended to Jan. 7 because the announcement was not published in the Federal Register as quickly as the EPA would have liked, said Richman. An information repository was established at the Ringwood Library to provide detailed information concerning the site.

The proposed deletion of the site had many local environmentalists concerned. They said the site could still pose a threat through contaminated ground water and the mines were not properly cleaned up.

The EPA has said that a long-term monitoring program of the site has been implemented to ensure that it does not threaten human health or the environment. Richman said that the deletion does not mean that the agencies responsible for the cleanup will not be asked to come back in and do any necessary work. The EPA will also be reimbursed for the money spent overseeing the work.

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Ring. mines removed from EPA priority list

John 1-19-94

By MAUREEN WOOP
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is moving ahead with plans to officially delete the Ringwood Mines/Landfill Superfund Site from the National Priorities List (NPL).

Remedial Project Manager for the Ringwood Mines Lance Richman said that the EPA has not received public comment on the issue and will continue the process of deleting the site from the list. Richman said the next step will be to place a notice of deletion in the Federal Register and then the EPA's headquarters will officially take the mines off the list.

"It's one of those things where you have to wonder if it's really cleaned up," said Jeff Tittel, former member of the borough Environmental Commission. "It's met EPA criteria to be taken off the list but you have to wonder about it. To me it's still a Superfund site. I just hope it (contamination) doesn't leech out."

Tittel himself did not respond to the EPA with a written comment on his concerns. Although he is concerned with the site, he did not feel that he had enough expertise in the field to make comments on the situation. He felt that the borough's Environmental Commission, the DEPE, the town and people from the

North Jersey Water Supply Commission should have been the ones to look into the situation and be more involved in it.

Tittel said that any comment he would have written would have had no effect because the EPA wanted the site off the list to show Congress it is making progress. He said that the EPA has been under attack for not cleaning up Superfund sites and that by deleting the mines from its list the EPA can show that it is doing something about the problems.

"They will still need to continue monitoring the site," Tittel said. "It's still an area of great concern for me. There still is the potential for the water to leak out."

Tittel said that he is still concerned with the ground water contamination and whether it has the potential to move in the future. He said that although monitors have been set up in the mines he questions whether the EPA needs to set them down deeper or that the entire shaft in the well is being monitored.

Gail Lubot, a member of the Environmental Commission, said she is also concerned with the contaminated mine water and the safety of the people who live in that area. Lubot said that other residents in the town have expressed the same concerns.

"I hope they are taking into consideration the people in that area," said Lubot. "Is it 100 percent safe? Some people that I have talked to feel that it isn't safe and there is still stuff down in those mines. The question is, is it really safe?"

Lubot said she agreed with Tittel that the ground water still may pose a threat. Her main concern was that the people who live in the mine area are safe and that the EPA would continue to monitor the site.

"The mines must have been on the Superfund list for a reason," Lubot said.

Mayor Giles "Casey" Casaleggio said that he had talked to the borough's engineer about the situation and was told what was happening with the mines and why.

"There didn't seem to be a reason to comment," Casaleggio said. "It seemed like good news, the soil samples had come back negative and maybe the situation was not as bad as we thought."

The mines, by being on the list, were eligible for Federal Superfund cleanup funds, they lose that funding when the site is officially deleted.

Richman said that the mine waters will be monitored to make sure that they are not moving or pose a threat to human life. The next sampling of the groundwater in the mines is set for sometime in February, Richman said. If the water does pose a threat at any time, the EPA said it will address the issue and the site can still be renominated to the list if deemed necessary.

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Trends 4/30/95 A-1

EPA investigating sludge

By NANCY LOUGHLIN
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be investigating a pile of paint sludge in an Upper Ringwood resident's backyard.

"We will be returning to the area in two weeks with an EPA supervisor and the contractor and take a closer look. We'll see that if there is a problem, it is addressed," said Lance Richman, project manager with the EPA.

"We need to determine if it is just a few pieces on the top, or if we need to excavate," Richman said.

Last Wednesday, Richman met with representatives of the borough and the Ringwood Neighborhood Action Association (RNAA) to discuss the status of the Upper Ringwood cleanup.

The meeting was organized after Carl Van Dunk, president of the RNAA, appeared before the borough council at the end of February and announced that sludge still remained in Upper Ringwood despite the extensive cleanups of the late 1980s.

"I've got a piece of the sludge in the back of my truck if you want to see it," Van Dunk said.

After visiting the site, Chris Chapman, borough health officer, contacted Richman at the EPA and informed him of the sludge and organized last week's meeting.

Areas of Upper Ringwood were placed on the EPA's National Priorities List in 1983 after EPA tests found contamination in the form of paint sludge. There are just over 100 sites in New Jersey on the National Priorities List. After an investigation, the EPA ordered the Ford Motor Company to remove the sludge in 1987.

According to the EPA, Ringwood Realty, one of the former property owners, dumped waste for the company from 1967 to 1974 — car parts, solvents and paint sludge on the ground surface and in abandoned mine shafts.

Most of the removal of 7,000 cubic yards of sludge was completed in 1988, however, when construction began for three radio towers off Peters Mine Road in 1989, an EPA monitoring well was uncovered along with more paint sludge including approximately 60 drums of waste.

"We assume they just backed up trucks and let it roll," Richman said. The EPA again ordered a clean up

of the property which was completed in 1990. Since then, the EPA has been engaged in a five-year monitoring of ground water through 18, 30-foot deep monitoring wells every six months.

At the end of the five-year monitoring period, the EPA is required to do a broad review of the cleanup. That review is scheduled to take place this winter. At that time, the EPA can continue to do monitoring up to 30-years; take more aggressive cleanup action, or drop the project entirely.

Richman said that the contamination found by the EPA was "extremely low" and that lead levels in the ground water were well below federal and state safety levels.

"When we first began the cleanup, direct contact with the sludge was of most concern, such as someone ingesting it. So our focus was on getting the stuff out. Most of it was on the surface," Richman said.

"We have not found a consistent groundwater plume," he said.

After the monitoring update meetings, attendees visited the sludge site. Approximately 50 feet from a

PLEASE SEE EPA,

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home, mounds of hardened paint sludge poked through the dirt. Resembling volcanic ash highlighted with pink and purple hues, the sludge was spread over 10 cubic feet. Richman picked up a piece of the hardened sludge, broke it open and revealed a pink-ish center with the consistency of chewing gum.

According to Richman, this pile was small in comparison to the other sites which were cleaned up. He said that the cleanup efforts were focused on four specific areas of Upper Ringwood, one of which was a few hundred feet away from this pile.

"It could have been missed because it was covered with dirt. I would find it hard to believe that if we knew it was there that we would not have cleaned it up," Richman said.

He said that this sludge resembled the material removed by Ford's contractors in the late 1980s, although the sludge that was remediated then was "oozier."

Upper Ringwood was removed from the National Priorities List on November 2, 1994. Richman said, however, that removal from the list does not preclude the EPA from ordering Ford to do further clean up work.

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MAY 2 1995

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Mine Area

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Record 5/18/95 NJ 1,12

Upper Ringwood takes stock

By **JAN BARRY**
Staff Writer

Standing amid the Highlands' spring beauty, Carl Van Dunk pokes at orange-tinted rocks in a brook coursing through his Upper Ringwood neighborhood, which is on a hillside above the Wanaque Reservoir.

Van Dunk is worried that the discolored stream bed may be a signal of another health hazard for a residential neighborhood that has hosted abandoned iron mines, a hazardous waste dump, a municipal landfill, high-tension electric towers, the town recycling center, and piles of illegally discarded tires and other trash.

"Right up there, there used to be a community spring," said Van Dunk, indicating a spot just above the brook that runs beside Peters Mine Road. "The whole neighborhood would go there to get beautiful spring water — until things all came apart here."

The 44-year-old borough Department

Fears hazards lurk in landscape

of Public Works employee recalls a childhood when the woodland around his home hosted deer, not dumps.

Between 1967 and 1974, Ford Motor Co. discarded tons of car parts, solvents, and lead-contaminated paint in and around the old mines, which are just over a ridge from Ringwood Manor and the bucolic acres of Ringwood State Park.

A municipal landfill opened in 1972, but was shut by the state in 1976. A Superfund cleanup of hazardous waste in the community, ordered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, officially ended in November.

This spring, Van Dunk, the newly elected president of the Ringwood Neighborhood Action Association, and many of his neighbors have been taking stock of their community, which is virtually sur-

rounded by parklands and reservoir property. They don't like much of what they see.

Amid a forest sheltering homes of about 500 residents are power lines, open mine shafts and sinkholes, pipes venting methane from the landfill, and the residue of years of dumping and neglect by outsiders and residents.

Farther upstream along the Peters Mine Road brook, Jose Ortiz curses a swamp near his house. The swamp is just downstream from the borough recycling center. The brook and standing water are covered by brown scum. Ortiz said the condition of the brook has worsened in the 12 years he has lived near it.

"This all goes into the reservoir," said Ortiz, referring to the sprawling lake a mile south that provides water to much of North Jersey. A reservoir spokesman said periodic tests of the brook have come up clean and that the discoloration appears to come from iron in the rocks.

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MAY 18 1995

RINGWOOD: Neighborhood feels dumped on

m Page NJ-1

Van Dunk and Ortiz wonder why their stream runs orange but others in Ringwood do not.

"It stagnates here," Ortiz said of the swamp. "Mosquitoes come out here, they're so big they got black teeth." Ortiz and several neighbors said they are disturbed by offensive odors of rotting grass and dead leaves that rise in warm weather from the recycling center. "In the summer, you can't sit outside because of the stink," he said. In response to concerns raised

Van Dunk, Ortiz, and their neighbors, the borough Health Department is investigating the discolored brook. The EPA this month is examining patches of paint sludge in a back yard apparently overlooked by Ford's cleanup. And residents throughout the borough are debating an agreement by borough officials to allow a cluster of radio towers to be built in Upper Ringwood.

So much attention has stirred bitterness among people who prefer to enjoy an isolated solitude, but who feel their concerns are ignored. While Ringwooders in other neighborhoods have loudly protested quarrying operations, radio towers, proposed high-density development, and other perceived threats to the environment or their quality of life, Upper Ringwood's Ramapough Mountain Indian community has largely kept its concerns to itself.

But overlooked paint sludge, a discolored brook, and construction of radio towers on a borough-owned site on Peters Mine Road have prompted a community effort to protest being treated as dumping ground.

"How come all these things come over to us?" Ortiz asked the borough Council at a recent meeting attended by about 60 Upper Ringwood residents to protest the radio towers and other issues.

The council's senior member, Walter Davison, serving his 16th year, said the crowd raised issues they were not even aware of. If they are not going to tell us they have problems, how would we know?" Davison said the borough in recent years has addressed housing and unemployment woes in Upper



JAMES ANNESS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Carl Van Dunk looking into a culvert at a polluted stream, where he used to drink water when he was a child.

Ringwood by gaining federal grants for job training and housing rehabilitation. Other borough officials said they have been working to address the community's health and quality-of-life concerns.

While venting their anger at what others have deposited in the neighborhood, Upper Ringwood residents also are cleaning up their own mess. Last month, community volunteers dragged hundreds of old tires out of roadside ditches

and wooded banks and piled them up for recycling.

"We can protest all we want," said Van Dunk. "But the bottom line is if we want people to stop dumping on our neighborhood, we have to stop doing it to ourselves."

Roger DeGroat of Peters Mine Road is upset that all the trees were removed from the radio tower site adjacent to Ringwood State Park.

"I used to walk up there every

day. It was nice. Now it's marked 'no trespassing.' The next thing, they'll take that mountain next," said DeGroat, pointing at a wooded peak behind his house, which a quarry operator has proposed to blast into gravel. The mountain is owned by the borough.

"If they start blasting up here — the houses are over mine shafts," said Van Dunk. "It's got the people up here terrified, just the thought of it."

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A20 — Suburban Trends Wed., May 24, 1995

LOCAL NEWS

Ringwood crackdown on illegal dumping nets two violators.

By **NANCY LOUGHLIN**
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — Two anonymous residents are reaping the rewards of the borough's crackdown on illegal dumping.

With the help of local informants, police have nabbed two dumpers,

one Boonton resident for dumping glass in Upper Ringwood and a Wanaque resident for abandoning tires behind the Grand Union shopping center on Skyline Drive.

Both alleged dumpers were busted thanks to two residents who spotted them in the act and immediately called the police with license plate

numbers and vehicle descriptions.

On May 8, at approximately 10:17 a.m., police received a call that someone dumped tires in the rear lot of the Fieldstone Plaza on Skyline Drive. After an investigation, police charged Carolyn Crolle, 18, of Haskell, with illegal dumping. Ptl. Paul Rothlauf was the arresting

officer.

"She came in voluntarily and she was cooperative," Det. Bernard Lombardo said.

"Apparently she heard on the grapevine that if you have something to dump, you should bring it to Ringwood," Lombardo said.

And Crolle paid the price with a

conviction in municipal court and a fine of \$230.

On May 16, at 11:45 a.m., police received a phone call that a man was dumping broken glass at the intersection of Peters Mine and Millertown Roads.

According to Chief Armando Di Muzio, a witness identified the vehicle and the license plate number. Sgt. Richard Manchur responded and located the vehicle at a Peters Mine Road residence where several men were doing construction work. After an investigation, Robert Spinella, 34, went with police to the dump site and cleaned up three garbage cans worth of broken glass. Di Muzio estimated that it was approximately 90 gallons. Spinella was charged with violations of the state dumping statute and will be in court today. If he is convicted, the caller will receive a reward of up to \$300.

The borough began the reward

system this month after a cleanup effort in Upper Ringwood collected 4,000 illegally dumped tires from roadside ditches. Borough Manager Kathleen Cenicola is offering the reward.

"The municipality wants to send a clear message that if you illegally dump in Ringwood, you will pay a heavy fine," Mike Hirschman, recycling coordinator, said.

Depending on the offense, the dumper can be charged for violations of the borough dumping ordinance or even under state statutes regulating disposal of hazardous waste. The penalties and fines include up to six months in jail, up to a \$2,500 fine, up to 90 days community service, loss of a drivers license for up to one year and forfeiture of a vehicle used in illegal dumping.

The fines paid by the dumper are kicked back to the borough and will be funding the reward system.

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Trends 6-14-85 A-1, A-19

EPA to remove waste

By NANCY LOUGHLIN
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that a pile of lead-contaminated paint sludge in an Upper Ringwood homeowner's backyard will be removed by the end of July.

"This is certainly good news, but it's just the tip of the iceberg," Carl Van Dunk, president of the Ringwood Neighborhood Action Association (RNAA), said.

Before the cleanup can begin, the EPA is awaiting the results of a characterization report on the sludge.

"Once we know exactly what's in it, we can make arrangements for removal and disposal," Lance Richman, EPA project manager, said.

Richman explained that there are numerous disposal facilities across the country with varying levels of technology for the lining of the landfills, monitoring procedures and capping restrictions.

"Some of these facilities are extremely high-tech. The characterization report will dictate which facility we will go to," Richman said.

In early May, the EPA visited the backyard for a second time with

representatives of the Ford Motor Company's removal contractors and took sludge samples.

Richman said he anticipates the cleanup operation to last about a day or two and that it will have minimal impact on the yard.

"Once we get a cleanup crew in there we'll know if we can just pick it up off the ground with just manpower or if we need to use a backhoe," Richman said.

Van Dunk sparked the action on the toxic waste when he appeared before the borough council early in the year, claiming to have a chunk of the sludge in his truck as he listed numerous concerns of the Upper Ringwood community.

The cleanup of the lead-contaminated paint sludge, which was dumped by the Ford Motor Company between 1967 and 1974, was believed to have been completed in 1990 when approximately 60 drums of waste were unearthed off Peters Mine Road. But Van Dunk's complaint initiated a late-April visit by the EPA.

At that time, Richman acknowledged that the approximately 10 feet of sludge was identical to the waste Ford was forced to remove in the

PLEASE SEE WASTE,
PAGE A-19

WASTE

FROM PAGE 1

1980s when Upper Ringwood was placed on the Superfund National Priorities List. Upper Ringwood was removed from that list in Nov. of 1994. However, the EPA is continuing to monitor the area and will be issuing an extensive five-year report of the entire history of the cleanup in the next six to eight months.

Richman has assured that no significant groundwater contamination has been found and lead levels are well below state and federal safety levels. The sludge is dangerous, he said, mainly if it is ingested.

As to why this patch of sludge was missed in the initial cleanup operation, Richman hypothesized that it was most likely covered with dirt.

Chris Chapman, borough health officer, said he may consider holding a town meeting to inform residents of the impending cleanup's details and to answer any questions they may have.

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Trends 8/23/95

A-2

Paint sludge cleanup stalled

By NANCY LOUGHLIN
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — Although the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) anticipated the removal of paint sludge from an Upper Ringwood resident's backyard would be finished by the end of July, this was not the case.

According to Lance Richman, project manager for the EPA, the agency is still waiting for the characterization report on the sludge. Richman said that once the exact contents of the sludge are known, arrangements can be made for removal and disposal. He explained that there are numerous disposal facilities across the country with varying levels of technology for the lining of the landfills, monitoring procedures and capping restrictions.

"We should have had this report by now and I am slightly perturbed with this delay. But we are slated to do this job this summer and we will most likely get it done in August," Richman said.

"It isn't that there is the lack of desire to do it. The timing is just off," Richman said.

The approximately 10-foot-long pile of paint sludge, Richman said, was missed by the cleanup efforts of the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Ford Motor Company was forced by the EPA to clean up all the waste the company dumped in Upper Ringwood almost 20 years before.

According to Richman, the lead-contaminated sludge is considered dangerous, predominately if eaten. There has been no significant groundwater contamination found and lead levels are well below federal and state safety levels, he said.

Upper Ringwood was removed from the Superfund National Priorities List in November 1994 and the EPA will be issuing an extensive five-year monitoring report of the area in the next six to eight months.

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Water

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Memo 6/24/98 A-1

Water not a hazard

By MICHAEL ALLEGRA
Staff Writer

RINGWOOD — Recent EPA lab results found that the oozing, orange water at the old Ford Superfund site is indeed safe. This report coincides with prior borough reports that the groundwater, discovered earlier this year, contains no appreciable hazard to the towns's water supply.

In March, Jeff Tittle, founder of the environmental group, Skylands CLEAN, discovered the site and contacted a daily newspaper reporter, subsequently leading him on a walking tour of the area. The discolored water, Tittle noted, was in close proximity to a brook that leads directly into the Wanaque Reservoir.

The resulting newspaper articles,

in conjunction with an anonymous flyer falsely stating that there was unsafe levels of lead in the drinking water, prompted panic and lots of finger pointing within the borough.

The flyer, which cited Skylands CLEAN as a source, created a mini-hysteria in the northern Ringwood area. According to Mayor Ted Taukus, some residents, so concerned by the drinking water scare, got blood tests to see if they had lead poisoning. CLEAN denied any involvement with the flyer.

But while the truth about the unauthorized flyer quickly quelled residents' fears about lead, concerns about the Superfund discovery lin-

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EPA

FROM PAGE A1

gered until test results could be established.

The Superfund site, a 500-acre tract of land and a former Ford Motor Company dumping ground, is located in a mining area near Peters Mine Road. Declared a Superfund site in 1988, Ford was forced to clean up the chemicals that were dumped there. Although the EPA declared the area as clean in 1994, environmentalists have been watching the site closely for any lingering signs of contamination.

When the borough became aware of Tittle's discovery, Borough Manager Kathleen Cenicola declared a Hazardous Material Emergency. The area was surrounded by booms used to absorb and contain the questionable water and numerous samples were taken. By the end of March, tests conducted by the Water Supply Commission noted that there were only traces of benzene slightly above allowable state levels in the groundwater.

According to Water Supply Com-

mission Spokesman Phil White, samples taken closer to the reservoir showed no traces of benzene or any other contaminant.

Surface water tests analyzed by Aqua Pro-Tech, an independent laboratory in Fairfield, released their findings in April. According to the study, despite the disturbing orange color, the samples passed many of the tests for drinking water. Only minerals such as cadmium and chromium, which can be found naturally in the environment, slightly exceeded drinking water standards.

And, following on the heels of these tests, the EPA has determined that there was nothing particularly harmful in the Superfund water samples either. According to the EPA report, only levels of iron and manganese slightly exceed drinking water standards. Monica Matzke, the EPA project manager, additionally noted that the orange color of the groundwater is a byproduct of iron bacteria growth.

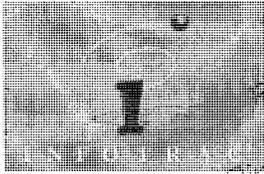
In last week's council work session, Cenicola announced the EPA's findings.

"Although the water isn't potable," Cenicola said, "it's safe."

REFERENCE

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The Record (Bergen County, NJ), March 25, 1998 pL1

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**BACTERIA POSSIBLE CAUSE OF FOUL
 OOZE; MAY FEED ON IRON, EPA SAYS.**
 (NEWS) *Jan Barry.*

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By JAN BARRY, Staff Writer

RINGWOOD - The foul mess oozing out of a former Superfund site into a brook that flows into the Wanaque Reservoir might be a natural phenomenon caused by bacteria that feed on iron, federal environmental protection officials say.

Iron bacteria is just one possible explanation, Monica Matzke, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official, said Tuesday. It was suggested by an agency hydrologist, she added.

Matzke inspected the Peters Mine area on Monday with other toxic waste cleanup specialists, the borough health officer, and a representative of the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission, which operates the reservoir that serves 2 million state residents.

The mine and surrounding area in the wooded mountains at the north end of the reservoir were used as a dump between 1967 and 1974 by the Ford Motor Company for car parts, solvents, paint sludge, and other debris from its Mahwah manufacturing plant. In 1988, the EPA declared a 500-acre tract off Peters Mine Road a Superfund cleanup site. It was declassified as cleaned up in 1994, after Ford contractors removed tons of hazardous materials.

Whether toxic chemicals are in the brew bubbling into a brook near the mine can only be determined by laboratory tests of water samples, said Matzke, the EPA's project manager for the former dump site, which a contractor for Ford continues to monitor.

FEB 14 2003

The municipal system, about a half-mile from the dump site, was recently rated unacceptable by the DEP in part for not providing annual reports on tests for these contaminants.

Borough officials maintain that the tests were performed but the results weren't sent to the DEP. They insist that the water supplied to about 3,000 homes and businesses is safe to drink.

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