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EPA FINALIZES SEVEN NEW ENGLAND SITES TO THE SUPERFUND LIST

Boston - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today finalized 7 New England sites and 42 sites nationwide for inclusion on the Superfund National Priorities List. The National Priorities List informs the public of hazardous waste sites that warrant further investigation to determine if they pose risks to public health or the environment. The seven New England sites include: 1) the Natick Lab Army Research, Development, and Engineering Center in Natick, Mass.; 2) Hanscom Field/Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Mass.; 3) the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (U.S. Navy) in Kittery, Maine; 4) the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Bedford, Mass.; 5) the South Weymouth Naval Air Station in South Weymouth, Mass.; 6) the Materials Technology Laboratory (U.S. Army) in Watertown, Mass., and 7) the Blackburn and Union Privileges Site, often referred to as the South Street site, in Walpole, Mass.

Today's action brings the number of proposed and final sites nationwide to 1,286. New England now has one proposed and 93 final sites, 15 of them military installations, on the National Priorities List.

The finalized sites will be listed in the Federal Register today. These sites were finalized after a 30-day comment period and review of all comments received.

Military installations finalized on the NPL are subject to all the investigations and cleanup requirements of the Superfund Law. While the EPA will oversee all work, the facilities will not be eligible for Superfund money. The Department of Defense will fund all remedial activities.

The following are brief summaries of the seven sites finalized on the NPL in New England:

Natick Laboratory Army Research, Development, and Engineering Center, commonly known as Natick Labs, covers 74 acres of a peninsula on the eastern shore of Lake Cochituate and is bordered by residences to the north. Established in 1954, laboratory and storage activities have taken place on the grounds as part of research and development in food science and engineering.

Areas of concern include a proposed gymnasium site and the Building T-25 area where several volatile organic compounds (VOCs) have been

detected. Also, soil, ground water, and surface water samples contained elevated levels of VOCs such as tetrachloroethene (PCE), and trichloroethene (TCE), and metals.

Natick Labs has conducted a number of cleanup activities since the discovery of the VOCs at the proposed gym site in late 1989. Additionally, the Army has been working with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection installing ground water monitoring wells to address the PCE/TCE situation. For further information on the Army cleanup activities please call, Harvey Keene, (508) 651-4300.

The Hanscom Field/Hanscom Air Force Base Site occupies approximately 1,120 acres, of which the Air Force occupies 845 acres and Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) 275 acres. The base opened in 1952 and the Air Force generated and disposed of numerous hazardous substances on what is now both the Air Base property (Hanscom Air Force Base) and Massport property (Hanscom Field). Fourteen possible source areas have been identified to date. The following are several of the substances detected at elevated levels: gasoline and jet fuel, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), chlorinated solvents, tetraethyl lead, and aromatic solvents.

The Air Force has conducted numerous cleanup activities on both the Air Force and Massport properties to address areas of contamination. The Air Force has removed drums at two of the source areas and contaminated soils have been removed and placed in a secure landfill. Also the Air Force constructed an extensive groundwater remediation system to remove VOC contaminants from the ground water beneath Massport Civil Air Terminal. For further information on the Air Force cleanup activities, please call Jack Rankin (617) 377-5191.

Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant

The Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) is located on Hartwell Road. The 46-acre plant was constructed in 1952 as a facility for the design, fabrication, and testing of prototype weapons equipment, such as missile guidance and control systems. Waste generation at NWIRP has resulted from laboratory research, electroplating operations, and vehicle and aircraft maintenance. Contaminants found at the site include VOCs, petroleum products, waste paints, solvents, and thinners.

The chief concern at the NWIRP site is the potential threat to area groundwater resources. The Navy has determined that VOCs are widely distributed in groundwater across the site, and is presently designing a short-term remedial measure that will contain groundwater migrating from the northwest area of the site, which has the highest levels of groundwater contamination. The short term measure will abate and prevent existing or potential VOC contamination of drinking water supplies and environmentally sensitive areas.

The contact for NWIRP is Art Mathers, public affairs officer, (215) 595-0613.

South Weymouth Naval Air Station

The South Weymouth Naval Air Station occupies approximately 1,442 acres of land in South Weymouth, and extends into Abington and Rockland. The U.S. Navy acquired the property in 1941, and

originally used it as a support facility for military airships. Activities currently performed at the Naval Air Station include aircraft maintenance, refueling, personnel training and housing, and administrative support services.

Hazardous wastes were reportedly disposed of in three on-site landfills. Other potential on-site sources of contamination include the Firefighting Training Area, storage tanks for waste oil, oily wastes and fuels, and the sewage treatment plant.

The potential threat to groundwater resources is the primary concern at the Naval Air Station. Roughly 74,000 people receive drinking water from wells within four miles of the site, and there are recreational fisheries and wetlands along the Old Swamp River and French Stream/Indian Head River watersheds. At this time, drinking water in the area does not appear to have been affected by the Naval Air Station Site.

The contact for the Naval Air Station is JOC Paul Engstrom, public affairs officer, (617) 786-2607.

Materials Technology Laboratory (U.S. Army)

The U.S. Army Materials Technology Laboratory (MTL), commonly known as the Watertown Arsenal, occupies 47.5 acres in Watertown, on the north bank of the Charles River. The active installation encompasses 36.5 acres, while the remaining 11 acres were eased to the State in 1920. Currently, the laboratory researches, develops, processes, and manufactures superior materials for incorporation into Army systems.

The Army has documented soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment contamination at MTL and the adjacent Charles River which is attributable, in part, to past waste handling practices at MTL. Contaminants include VOCs and semi-VOCs (SVOCs), PCBs, and inorganic elements.

Contamination at the site and in the Charles River, if not addressed, may pose certain risks. These potential risks may affect on-site residents, on-site workers, or recreational users of the Charles River and park. The current condition of the Charles River environment may also present a risk to the fish and other aquatic organisms. At this time, drinking water in the area does not appear to be affected by the site.

The contact for MTL is Chuck Paone the public affairs officer at (617) 923-5278.

Blackburn and Union Privileges site

The Blackburn and Union Privileges Site approximately 30 acres in a primarily residential area near South Street in Walpole. The mill established on the Union Privilege produced snuff, iron, nails, cotton, and wool, and also functioned as a tannery. A dam on Blackburn Privilege generated power for the production of machinery, cotton, yarn, batting, and lamp wicking. The site's proposed addition to the National Priorities List is based primarily on the potential threat posed by heavy metals, VOCs and SVOCs, in addition to asbestos.

In 1988, EPA ordered the owners of the property to assess the extent of contamination, and prepare a comprehensive response plan to abate the threat posed by asbestos and other hazardous materials at the site. During this procedure, the contractor detected elevated concentrations of asbestos, lead, arsenic, nickel, VOCs and SVOCs were detected in soils, sediments, and ground water. In 1992, the EPA ordered Shaffer Realty and W.R. Grace to furnish a detailed removal action plan and, when approved, to implement the plan.

The removal action plan to address the asbestos contamination was implemented in July to December 1992 with additional work performed in May of 1993. This plan included diverting a portion of the Neponset River temporarily and installing an aluminum plate corrugated pipe to prevent the river from coming in contact with asbestos contaminated soil. All asbestos-contaminated site soils were consolidated, placed on geotextile fabric which covers 1 foot of clean imported fill above the aluminum corrugated pipe, and covered by 2 feet of imported sand and 1/2 foot of imported topsoil.

The chief concern at the Blackburn and Union Privileges Site is the threat to area groundwater resources. Most of the residents in Walpole receive water from municipal wells with the closest well located less than a mile from the site. Drinking water in the area does not appear to be affected by the site at this time.

The EPA or the responsible parties together with EPA oversight need to conduct a long-term investigation into the exact nature and extent of hazardous waste contamination.

Massachusetts now has 30 final Superfund sites.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (U.S. Navy)

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard was established in 1800 on Seavey Island in the Piscataqua River. In the past, the shipyard was used for the construction of wooden ships, then submarines for WWII, and now overhauling modern submarines. Thirteen source areas in which hazardous wastes have been stored, deposited, spilled, and/or treated exist at the shipyard. These areas are currently being studied under the Shipyard's EPA Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) Permit which falls under the rules of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). With the NPL placement, this RCRA program will now be phased into the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Among the contaminants found at the site are VOCs and heavy metals (chromium, lead, cadmium). Resources potentially threatened by past waste handling practices at the Shipyard include tidal wetlands bordering Seavey Island; groundwater on Seavey Island; and the Piscataqua River. The contact for Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is Mary Anne Mascianica, public affairs officer, (207) 438-1260.

Maine has a total of 10 final Superfund sites.

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