LAC DU FLAMBEAU BAND
OF LAKE SUPERIOR
CHIPPEWA INDIANS

TRIBAL NATURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

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Fish Culture - Fisheries Management - Wildlife Management - Water Resources - Environmental Protection - Conservation Law - Energy - Air Quality

May 14, 2014

Gary Victorine
Chief, RCRA Branch
U.S. EPA
77 West Jackson Blvd. (LR-8J)
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Mr. Victorine,

The Lac du Flambeau Tribe is respectfully requesting continued assistance for significant petroleum groundwater contamination within the Lac du Flambeau reservation. The undefined contamination is a risk to groundwater, drinking water, Haskell Lake, and subsistence resource use.

During TBA sampling for an unrelated site, petroleum sheen and strong odor was observed from groundwater collected at depth adjacent to Haskell Lake. Assistance was requested from EPA in November of 2011. EPA LUST staff reviewed files and conducted a site visit in January 2012. In December 2013, the petroleum contamination was analytically confirmed from two VAS sampling points. The benzene concentrations from the two borings were 9,100 ppb and 1,200 ppb. Also present were other VOCs and PAHs. The source is uncertain, although EPA LUST assistance has identified a closed WDNR LUST site as a likely source. The Tribal Natural Resource Department participated in the WDNR Northern Region Closure Meeting (in person) with EPA LUST Staff (via conference line) to discuss the contamination and possibility of reopening a closed site. The Tribal Natural Resource Department has continued to work with WDNR staff. No WDNR action has taken place, and none appears apparent in the foreseeable future.

The contamination field identified in 2011 and analytically confirmed in December 2013 is undefined, adjacent to a lake, upgradient from private wells, and within a lake-wetlands complex supporting subsistence and cultural resource use. The private wells downgradient from the undefined plume are screened at depths similar to the groundwater contamination and within the shallow sole source aquifer.

The Tribe appreciates the assistance offered to date and requests continued EPA assistance to delineate the significant undefined contamination and assess potential receptors.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Wawronowicz

Larry Wawronowicz
Tribal Natural Resource Director