Weekender 11-1-17

Community Group Concerned about Per/Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Contamination of Residential Wells from Wolverine World Wide (WWW) Tannery Dump Sites, Rockford, Michigan

Key Message: Wolverine World Wide (WWW) Tannery has been working under the Michigan Department Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Voluntary Cleanup Program to address releases from their Rockford, MI facility. The community group, Concerned Citizen for Responsible Redevelopment (CCRR), remains concerned about past WWW releases, particularly given recent discovery of PFAS in the area groundwater. EPA is in discussions with MDEQ about the citizens' concerns.

Representatives from the remedial and removal Superfund programs and Office of Regional Council met with CCRR on October 17, 2017 at their request to discuss recently discovered PFAS groundwater contamination at various dump sites in the Rockford, MI. The PFAS contamination has impacted some residential wells at concentrations above the Office of Water Health Advisory and are believed to be from WWW waste disposal at the various dumps. WWW has been providing alternative drinking water to impacted residents. Subsequent to the October 17, 2017, meeting the Region 5 Superfund removal program was approached by local area health departments, the Michigan Governor's office, and the MDEQ about potential federal resources that are available to help respond to the site.

In 2012 EPA agreed that MDEQ could address contamination from the WWW facility as an "other cleanup authority (OCA)" alternative to the Superfund remedial process. An EPA 2102 Preliminary Assessment determined that the site may be eligible for the Superfund National Priorities List. On November 1, 2017, representatives from the Superfund remedial and removal programs, Office of Regional Council, Water Division Drinking Water program discussed with MDEQ the status of the WWW OCA and their plan to evaluate the dump sites. MDEQ discussed the challenges of the situation, however, maintains interest in keeping WWW facility as a OCA state-lead site.