

Franklin Glass Site/Butler

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is investigating a site in the Kaufman Drive area of Butler where the Franklin Glass production facility was located decades ago. DEP is investigating the presence of arsenic in the soil that is above Pennsylvania's residential standard for arsenic contamination. There are residences and Father Marinaro Park (a recreational complex) within the site area.

Glass making at the site began in 1896 when Standard Glass began operations on the site. Franklin Glass then purchased the plant and operated on the site from the 1930s through the mid- to late-1960s. Arsenic was widely used throughout the glass production industry as an agent to remove bubbles and color and would have been part of the waste materials generated by the glass making process. There were no waste disposal regulations at that time and disposing waste materials or sludge into lagoons was a common practice in the glass industry during that period.

Aerial photographs indicate there were two lagoons and another waste area in addition to the Franklin Glass production facility that covered about 38 acres along Coal Run. Housing and Father Marinaro Park were built on some of the former industrial property.

DEP began its investigation in April 2009, collecting soil samples from 12 locations that confirmed arsenic levels above the state standard. On May 6, DEP held a news conference and public availability session to bring this issue to the public's attention and to provide information on how residents and others using the athletic facilities could minimize their risk of exposure. DEP is taking additional soil samples to better understand arsenic levels

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is also participating in the investigation and plans to conduct a health risk assessment study based on the results of DEP sampling. The majority of the area is served by a public water system, so there is no concern with contamination of drinking water wells. The major concern is arsenic in the soil that might become ingested when disturbed and swallowed. Exposure to arsenic has been linked to respiratory and skin irritation and a potential increase in the risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

DEP and its contractor are developing a comprehensive sampling plan for the site with the primary focus at this time being the residential area and Father Marinaro Park. Information gathered through sampling will help the department determine the best methods to address the contamination. The DEP investigation is being carried out through the Hazardous Site Cleanup Fund, which enables DEP to address contaminated sites while pursuing responsible parties to reimburse any or all of the costs.

To provide current information to residents in a convenient manner, DEP has established a public document file repository at the Butler Area Public Library, 218 North McKean Street, Butler. This document repository will provide access to

investigation files and records that will be updated on a regular basis. The files are available at the Butler Area Public Library Reference Desk. For information, contact Reference Services Librarian Cheryl King Walsh at 724-287-1715 extension 716, or via email at baplreference@bcfls.org.

In addition, DEP has placed information about the Franklin Glass site on the DEP Web site. To view the information, go to www.depweb.state.pa.us. Along the left side of the page, click on "Northwest", then "Community Involvement", and "Franklin Glass Site".

The documents also are available for public review at the DEP Northwest Regional Office Records Center, 230 Chestnut Street, Meadville. Citizens who would like to review the information at the DEP Northwest Regional Office should call Linda Conaway, 814-332-6340, to schedule an appointment.

DEP has selected staff to serve as contacts regarding this site. DEP Environmental Protection Specialist Chris Saber and DEP Environmental Group Manager Gary Mechtly will be working closely with the community on this issue. Chris and Gary can be reached at 814-332-6648 or 814-332-6945. They can also be reached at csaber@state.pa.us or gmechtly@state.pa.us.