



## Flint Hills' North Pole Refinery Contaminated Site

### Frequently Asked Questions

2/10/2017

#### ***How do the agreement and expanded water system protect the people of North Pole?***

- Residents and businesses can now be assured that both health and economic considerations caused by the impact of sulfolane contamination have been addressed through a permanent, sulfolane-free drinking water solution.
- DEC's first and most important consideration has always been protection of human health. This agreement is a binding commitment to provide sulfolane-free drinking water now and into the future.
- The expanded water system will address homes already impacted and those that may be impacted in the future.
- Water from a public system is regularly tested. While current alternate water systems have provided safe drinking water; piped water is a more convenient solution and removes long-term maintenance issues from property owners.

#### ***What areas/neighborhoods are covered by the expansion?***

- The planned expansion will extend city water to 656 parcels of land, including all properties currently impacted by the sulfolane plume both inside and outside of the City of North Pole, plus the Garden, Riddle Estates, Poodle, Pine Stream, Steelhead, and Sorores subdivisions.
- While the sulfolane plume is not expected to migrate beyond the piped water expansion; if it does, provisions are in place to supply water to additional properties.

#### ***How will the transition from my current water system to the new piped water system proceed?***

- Flint Hills Resources will work with affected property owners to transition to the piped water system. Alternative water systems already in place will continue to be maintained during the transition to a piped water system.

#### ***What are the next steps for North Pole residents participating in the transition?***

- The City of North Pole will contract with qualified third parties for the engineering, procurement and

construction of the piped water system. Right-of-Way acquisition activities will begin in 2017.

#### ***Who will pay for the piped water system and installation?***

- Per this agreement, Flint Hills assumes the majority of the cost for the new piped water system under an interim cost allocation. As a former land owner, the State is funding a portion of the water system expansion via a Settlement Fund. The interim cost allocation may change pending continued litigation with Williams, a former refinery owner.
- Residents and businesses will not be responsible for any costs associated with installation of the system or their home hookup. Also included in the agreement, payments will be provided to assist transitioning of properties currently on alternative water to the piped water system.
- Jeff Cook is Flint Hills' contact for questions regarding the transition: 907-687-8767, cook1@gci.net.
- The safest way to distribute sulfolane-free water is via a piped water system, and the State recommends its use. It should be noted there is no current requirement for properties outside the city boundary to connect to the public system.

#### ***What are the details of the water system expansion?***

- The City of North Pole will own and operate the expanded water system. The City is not annexing any properties in this expansion.
- The City will contract with qualified third parties for the engineering, procurement and construction of the piped water system.
- The new water system is planned to be operational in 2019. Planning stages are underway and construction is anticipated to begin in 2018.
- The safest way to distribute sulfolane-free water is via a piped water system, and the State recommends its use. It should be noted there is no current requirement for properties outside the city boundary to connect to the public system.

### ***How will DEC continue their regulatory oversight of contamination associated with the former North Pole Refinery?***

- DEC continues regulatory oversight on and off the former refinery property. While this agreement focuses on eliminating the exposure pathway, the agreement also includes the following provisions:
  - The 2017 Revised Onsite Cleanup Plan governs monitoring and remedial actions on the former refinery property.
  - The Offsite Potable Water Plan governs continued monitoring of the offsite sulfolane plume.
  - Land use controls on the refinery property restricting property use, groundwater use, and public access continue to be in place to protect the public.

### ***Does the agreement set a cleanup level for sulfolane?***

- While this agreement focuses on protecting human health by eliminating the exposure pathway, it does not set a cleanup level.
- Research at the National Toxicology Program (NTP) continues to address critical unknowns regarding the toxicity of sulfolane, particularly the effects from long-term exposure to sulfolane in drinking water.

### ***What is included in the update to the Onsite Cleanup Plan (2017 Revised Onsite Cleanup Plan)?***

- Land use controls remain in place to protect people on the refinery from exposure to remaining contamination.
- Excavation of contaminated soil governed by the 2014 Onsite Cleanup Plan has been completed. A soil management plan is in place to control exposure to remaining areas of soil contamination on the refinery.
- The onsite groundwater treatment system is being phased out. Although some sulfolane is anticipated to migrate off the refinery property once the system has been shut down, it is not expected to significantly impact the offsite plume.
  - Intensive monitoring will be performed to evaluate the impacts of turning off the system.
- Intensive data reviews will be performed after one year, five years, and ten years of monitoring and will look at contaminant migration and trends.
- DEC regulatory oversight will continue to ensure the provisions of the settlement continue to be met, and Flint Hills is prepared to resume active treatment, if needed.

### ***How does this agreement address pending legal claims?***

- The agreement to install the piped water system resolves claims between the City of North Pole, the State and Flint Hills. However, the parties' claims with Williams remain, with a trial set for May of this year.

### ***How can the public stay involved?***

- **Stay informed:**
  - DEC's Sulfolane Project website will continue to provide current information on the sulfolane project: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/sites/north-pole-refinery>
  - DEC Director of Spill Prevention and Response: Kristin Ryan, 907-269-7604, [kristin.ryan@alaska.gov](mailto:kristin.ryan@alaska.gov)
  - DEC Site Project Manager: Jim Fish, 907-451-2117, [james.fish@alaska.gov](mailto:james.fish@alaska.gov)
  - Flint Hills contact: Jeff Cook 907-687-8767, [cook1@gci.net](mailto:cook1@gci.net)
  - City of North Pole: Bill Butler 907-488-8593, [bill.butler@northpolealaska.org](mailto:bill.butler@northpolealaska.org)
  - Stay informed on DEC's electronic email and mailing lists where new information, newsletters, fact sheets, and announcements are distributed.
- **Attend the Open House and any future meetings**
  - DEC and Flint Hills are holding a joint:

### **Open House** at the **North Pole Plaza Mall**

(note location change from previous notices)  
on **Saturday, February 25, from 2:30-4:30 pm**,  
to provide information to the public and solicit  
comments and questions.

- Information on the piped water system and the sulfolane project will be provided, including fact sheets, maps, plans for both onsite and offsite anticipated work.
- Experts from DEC, Department of Health and Social Services, Flint Hills, and the City of North Pole will be available to answer questions.

For more information on the sulfolane investigation, its history, documents, maps and frequently asked questions, please see DEC's website at

<http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/sites/north-pole-refinery>  
Or call 451-2117

**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Spill Prevention and Response  
Contaminated Sites Program**