

Early, Marti (DEC)

From: Early, Marti (DEC) [marti.early@alaska.gov]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 4:58 PM
To: DEC-Sulfolane@list.state.ak.us
Subject: Sulfolane update #16
Attachments: GARDENING RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 05 14 10.pdf

Dear concerned citizen,

Many of you came to the open house last week in the North Pole Mall, where members of the Technical Project Team guiding the sulfolane investigation were available to talk to community members one-on-one. We expect to have another open house this summer, in either July or August.

The Technical Project Team held its second meeting on May 6. The team is composed of representatives of the Alaska departments of Environmental Conservation and Health and Social Services, Flint Hills, Williams, the City of North Pole, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A number of highly qualified scientists provide additional technical support to the TPT. The notes on the May 6th meeting will be posted on the website as soon as they are available.

A major topic of discussion was the Project Team's plans to collaborate on a pilot study of garden crops this summer using selected gardens in North Pole where well water has been affected by sulfolane. If you grow vegetables and/or fruits and want to be part of this study, please fill out the attached questionnaire and send it to the address given. You can also contact Nim Ha directly by phone (269-8028 in Anchorage) or e-mail (nim.ha@alaska.gov) if you're interested in participating or have any questions about the gardening study. **Please help us spread the word about volunteering for this important study!**

We don't yet know if it is safe to eat crops from these gardens. We do have some information in the fact sheet, "Community Health Concerns About Sulfolane," discussed in previous emails and available on our website at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/csp/sites/north-pole-refinery/docs/DHSSCommunityConcern-fs-4-22-10.pdf>. The pilot study will provide some answers for local gardeners later in the summer. We will also keep you informed via this email list. The Technical Project Team is planning a more in-depth, controlled study of sulfolane uptake in garden plants, however results from this study will not be available until after this growing season.

"Is the plume growing enough to reach my house?"

We heard that question several times at the Open House. The fact that Flint Hills continues to find some sulfolane in a few residential wells around the edges of the plume does not indicate that the plume is moving or growing. It only means that the exact edges of the plume have not yet been found. Current sample results at the farthest part of the plume are either not detecting any sulfolane or finding it at low levels, below 25 parts per billion. These concentrations are much less than those found on and near the refinery. Twenty-five parts per billion (25 ppb) is the recommended limit for sulfolane in drinking water to be protective of the most sensitive humans, infants. (The federal agency recommending 25 ppb also recommended higher limits for children and adults). Like a plume of smoke from a smokestack, the sulfolane groundwater plume has a source, which is on the refinery property, where the concentrations are highest. Like thick smoke tapering off, the concentrations at the edges of the sulfolane plume are very low.

The DEC website on this issue, www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/csp/sites/npolerefinery/, has been updated with new maps. You may find these maps very helpful in seeing where sulfolane has and has not been found. The map presents several ranges of sulfolane found in private wells. Flint Hills has not been testing homes connected to city water because that system is tested weekly. The city's treatment system removes the traces of sulfolane which show up in tests of raw water. The water going to consumers does not have any sulfolane in it.

For more information email me, or call ADEC in Fairbanks at 907-451-2143. If you'd like to call me in Juneau, my number is 907-465-5206.

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www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/csp/sites/npolerefinery/

For more information:

--On contaminated sites, contact DEC: Marti Early, 907-465-5206, marti.early@alaska.gov or Ann Farris, 907-451-2104, ann.farris@alaska.gov

--On health related information, contact the Alaska Division of Public Health, Nim Ha, 907-269-8028, nim.ha@alaska.gov

--On public water supplies, contact DEC, Cindy Christian, 907-451-2222, cindy.christian@alaska.gov

--On water testing or other refinery issues, contact Jeff Cook, Flint Hills Resources, 907-488-5104, jeff.cook@fhr.com

Subscribed as: marti.early@alaska.gov ; <http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/DEC-Sulfolane/jl.htm>