

State to study soil, water at former dump

New Hartford site on inactive hazardous waste list

By MARJ PATRICK
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State environmental officials plan to take soil and water samples on Sept. 10 near an old dump in the town of New Hartford to determine whether hazardous wastes are present.

There are "severely rusted" old 55-gallon steel drums at the site, near Cascade Drive and Valley View Road, which once contained chemical solvents, according to preliminary state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) reports.

This spring, DEC put the former dump, once operated by Stanley Scully, on its inactive hazardous waste disposal site list.

It has a 2a classification, a temporary category indicating DEC does not have enough data "to determine whether it is hazardous or, if so, how hazardous," Gregg Townsend, an assistant sanitary engineer in DEC's Utica office, said yesterday. Townsend is one of several DEC officials who have visited the site in recent months.

He said that on Sept. 10 a DEC team from Albany will sample the soil and the liquids in those old drums. They also will take sediment samples from Sylvan Glen Creek, upstream and downstream, to determine whether the creek has been affected.

The creek flows through the bottom of a ravine. Many of the drums are on the western slope of that ravine, Townsend said.

The creek then continues to the northwest, across Cascade Drive,

where many homes have drinking wells and around three Utica Board of Water Supply reservoirs, called the Southern Reservoirs.

Both Townsend and Russell LoGalbo, the water board's principal engineer, said yesterday that there's no evidence that Sylvan Glen Creek flows into the water board reservoirs.

LoGalbo said the creek goes around the largest of those three storage reservoirs, passing with 20 feet of it, but not into it because the reservoir has a high embankment. That largest reservoir holds 282 million gallons of water from Hinckley Reservoir, which then is pumped to residents in southeastern Utica and portions of the town of New Hartford, he said.

Since about 2 million gallons a day come from that largest reservoir, LoGalbo estimated that it serves about 10,000 people. The two smaller reservoirs are for standby and rarely tapped, he said, adding that the board drew most recently on one of them in 1965.

There is "leachate (or runoff liquid) evident at base of (the) dump, discharging to Sylvan Glen Creek," according to a DEC site report by senior sanitary engineer Darrell Sweredoski, of the Watertown office.

Townsend said he does not believe the Cascade Drive homes are affected by the creek, because their well water source would be underground water and not the creek. Herkimer County Legislator John Brezinski said he has received inquiries from some Cascade Drive residents, even though they aren't constituents, and he's been check-

ing frequently with DEC.

Last week, Townsend said he visited the site with automobile dealers Al and Don Carbone to discuss the problem. DEC believes that the Carbones, through their Don Al Realty Corp., own some of the affected site, according to the Sweredoski report.

Don Carbone said they have only owned land in that area for seven or eight years. If some of the old dump is on their land, the dump was in active use many years before that—in the 1930s to 1950s, according to the DEC site report.

Townsend said it's possible that Scully, who once ran a septic tank cleaning service and who lives nearby on Valley View Road, owns some of the site. Scully said the drums are "not on my land." He also said they've "been there a long time—30 years" and that some of the land was once owned by his father, Austin. He declined to answer further questions about it.

The DEC site report says that Stanley Scully was the owner and operator when the dump was in use, and it refers to it by as the S.O.S. Septic Tank Service site. A DEC memo calls it Scully Dump.

Townsend said the department is more interested right now in determining what was in the drums. After that's known, DEC would "determine whose responsibility it is to clean it up," Townsend said.

Townsend said he doesn't know exactly how many drums are there, in part because they are scattered around an area of one or two acres. He said there could be 20 to 40 drums. The site report says many of them have decomposed.

Don Carbone said yesterday that he hasn't seen the drums because when they were there with Townsend the undergrowth was very heavy. He said he's been assured DEC would schedule its sampling as soon as it could.

The DEC memo, by senior sanitary engineer Tom Morgan of the Watertown office, says, "The dump is strewn with old 55-gallon steel drums, many of which have deteriorated severely. Drums at the bottom of the embankment have washed downstream apparently during spring floodwaters. Many drums were from Dow Chemical. Observed the following names: 'chlorothene' and 'neutri superior solvent.' Although the drums were severely rusted, the bands were still intact. One drum on top of the dump was observed to contain a black viscous goo. There appeared to be an endless supply of drums visible with unknown numbers below ground. The base of the landfill reaches directly into Sylvan Glen Creek."

A Dow Chemical spokesman said that both Chlorothene and NEUTRI are its products. Ken Surprenant said both are "common industrial solvents," both tend to evaporate when exposed to air and neither has been shown to cause cancer. He said the primary use is in metal cleaning during metal manufacturing. However, he said that it's been a frequent industrial practice to use empty drums for waste disposal and consequently, the labels do not necessarily indicate the contents of the drums now.