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INTERNET NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, "SHIPYARD SUPERFUND CLEANUP PLAN OK'D" NSY
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News

News Menu

Friday, August 31, 2001

[E-mail This Article](#)

Fosters Home

N.H. State/Local

Shipyard Superfund cleanup plan OK'd

ME State/Local

Landfill capping to take three years

Lakes Region

Back Issues

Sports

Shipyard to help commemorate Portsmouth Peace Treaty signing

Business

Obituaries

By JENNIFER L. SAUNDERS

Commentary

Democrat Staff Writer

Today in History

Entertainment

KITTERY, Maine — After years of research and meetings with the Navy, environmental groups and area residents, the Environmental Protection Agency has approved a plan for a 25-acre Superfund site at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Showcase

TV Listings

Movie Listings

"The United States Environmental Protection Agency — New England Region and the United States Navy, in consultation with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, have agreed on the remediation plan for the Jamaica Island Landfill," Shipyard Public Affairs Officer Alan M. Robinson said in a written statement released Thursday afternoon.

Calendar

Nightlife

Special Sections

Autos

Online 2000

The decision, which was made in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act more commonly known as Superfund, requires the construction of a multilayer hazardous waste landfill cover over the site.

Homes

Dining

Health

Vital Statistics

Robinson said the decision "is the culmination of years of scientific study, regulator involvement and public participation."

Police Logs

Indictments

Licenses

The legal document formalizing the decision was recently signed by Shipyard Commander Capt. Vernon T. Williams and Patricia L. Meaney, director of the Office of Site Remediation and Restoration for the EPA New England Region.

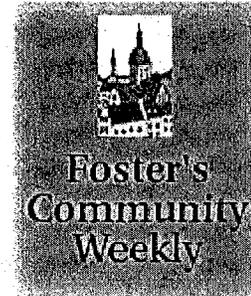
Divorces

Community Info

Comm Weekly

School Lunches

"The Record of Decision, as it is commonly referred, requires the Navy to install a hazardous waste cover on the landfill, prevent disturbance of the cover and restrict



Submit Forms the landfill, prevent disturbance of the cover and restrict the area's future land use, and prevent the drinking of groundwater from the area," Robinson said.

Subscribe

Engagement

Wedding

Services

Classified

Lotteries

Local Links

Biz Guide

Search

Site Info

Site Index

About Us

Feedback

In addition, shoreline erosion controls will be constructed, he said.

The issue of shoreline erosion was of key concern during the public comment portion of the remediation process in February. At a public hearing held at the Courtyard Marriott in Portsmouth, area residents from Kittery to Kensington, N.H., turned out to voice their opinions and concerns related to the plan.

Of the 15 or more people who spoke at the public hearing in February, the general sentiment was one concern that the approximately \$10 million plan to cap the landfill would not adequately address issues of potential contamination of the Piscataqua River from toxins seeping out of the site.

The Jamaica Island Landfill is located on a former tidal mudflat that was used between 1945 and 1978 for the disposal of a variety of industrial wastes — some of which were later determined to be hazardous.

Earlier in the remediation process, the Navy was considering an option that would include capping the site to keep water from filtering into it and at the same time installing a barrier along the perimeter to keep contaminants from leaking out.

Two months before the public hearing, in December 2000, the Navy and Environmental Protection Agency agreed to split the site into two separate phases. The Navy and EPA said there was no immediate risk to human health or environmental safety if the landfill was capped in the current Superfund process and the issue of potential seepage into the river was addressed at a later date.

Among those who spoke out in February was Johanna Lyons, the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League's representative to the Shipyard Restoration Advisory Board.

"After careful and thorough review of the data supporting the Navy's proposed plan, our view is that the cap alone is an unfit option, that a barrier is necessary to address tidal migration of toxins from the landfill, that serious unanswered questions about threats to human health and the ecosystem remain, and that the Navy needs to take immediate steps to put adequate protection in place," Lyons said at the meeting.

Because the landfill was constructed in a mudflat, the league has maintained, it is unique among Superfund sites.

Noting the landfill is subject to both groundwater flows and saltwater tidal flushings, Lyons said the cap will prevent precipitation from infiltrating the site and divert surface water drainage within the boundaries of the cap, but will do nothing to stop water that might enter the site from tidal migration.

The Seacoast Anti-Pollution League did indicate it would support moving forward with the plan if the Navy endorsed a contingency plan including a tidal barrier around the landfill and began testing the area surrounding the landfill for toxins and carcinogens.

As approved by the EPA and the Navy, the Record of Decision requires the construction of shoreline erosion controls and periodic assessment of the long-term effectiveness of the remedy through sampling of the groundwater and regular inspections of the cover and shoreline erosion controls.

Construction of the cover is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2002 and is expected to take three years to complete. The cover is being designed such that when completed, the area will be usable for recreational purposes and parking.

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