

Community Update

March 2008

Former Wingate Incinerator and Landfill

Florida Department of Health and US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Disease and Symptom Prevalence Health Survey Report

About the Florida DOH and ATSDR

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) reviews the public health threat at hazardous waste sites. Florida DOH looks at Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the US Environmental Protection Agency air, soil, and water test results. Florida DOH also looks at diseases and health symptoms in nearby neighborhoods. The Florida DOH works closely with county health departments. The US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) provides financial and technical support to Florida DOH.

Site Background

From 1954 to 1978, the City of Ft. Lauderdale burned (incinerated) municipal solid waste (garbage) at the Wingate Road Municipal Incinerator and Landfill. The site is at 1300 Northwest 31st Avenue. In 2001, the City tore down the buildings and covered the landfill.

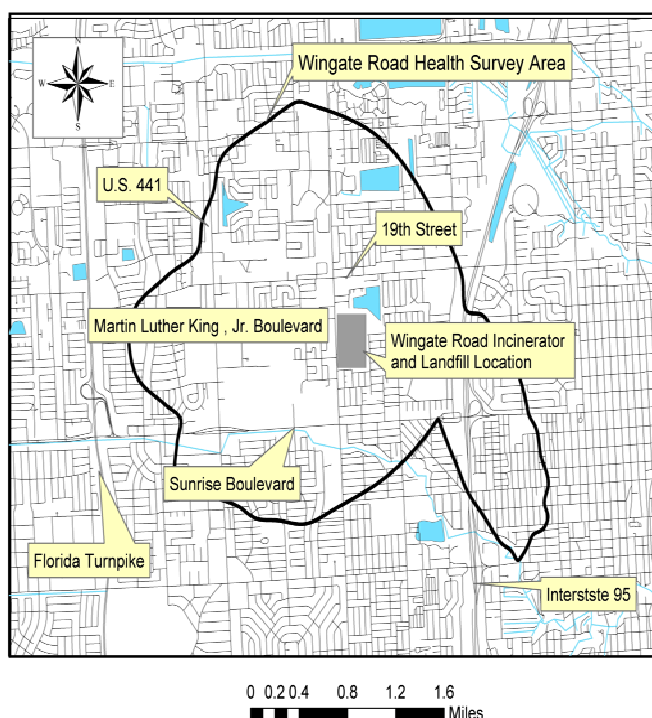
Nearby residents were concerned that air pollution (ash) from the incinerator made them ill. However, little air testing data exists. Therefore, it is hard to estimate the public health threat.

Health Survey

Congressman Alcee Hastings, Legal Aid Services of Broward County, and community leaders helped get federal funding for a health survey. To help answer questions people had about the site and their health, a team of scientific experts planned the survey. They also sought advice from both the community and the City.

Between August and December 2003, the Broward County Health Department (CHD) called 1,765 nearby residents. Participants responded to questions about 30 diseases and symptoms linked with exposure to arsenic and dioxins (two chemicals found in incinerator ash). The survey included questions about:

- Warts on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and torso
- Weakness, tiredness or low red blood cell counts (anemia)
- Burning, prickling, itching, or tingling sensation in hands and feet
- Skin, liver, bladder, kidney, or lung cancer
- Extremely severe acne
- Sudden onset/short-lived seizures
- Diabetes



Study Area

The study area included people living where the incinerator ash likely fell. (See map)

The Florida DOH and ATSDR looked for patterns of diseases and symptoms:

- Before and after 1978, when the incinerator closed.
- In areas close and away from the incinerator.
- In people eating fish from a lake next to the site.

Results

- Florida DOH found few links between the reported diseases/symptoms and the former Wingate incinerator and landfill.
- The study found that a healthy diet (to reduce cholesterol and avoid anemia) is more important to health than environmental exposures. The study also found smoking increases the risk of bronchitis far more than the risk from environmental exposures.
- Too few people reported eating fish from the lake next to the site to make a judgment if their health was affected.
- The survey was limited by the number of participants, inability to include people who moved away, inability to verify reported diseases and symptoms, and imprecise exposure estimates.

Health Survey Report Conclusions

The survey did not find a consistent pattern of symptoms or illnesses related to the former Wingate Incinerator and Landfill.

The ability of the survey to find such a pattern was, however, limited.

Recommendations

- Make sure nearby residents know to limit eating fish from nearby Rock Pit Lake.
- Promote healthy lifestyles such as eating a healthy diet and not smoking. Increase awareness of asthma, anemia, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, and abnormal heart beat.

Additional Information

For a copy of the full 100-page report:

- Visit our website at: <http://www.myfloridaeh.com/community/superfund/pha.htm>. Click on the letter “W,” scroll down to Wingate and click on “Wingate Final Report,” or
- Call the Broward County Health Department at (954) 467-4806, or
- Call the Florida DOH toll free at: 877-798-2772.

For site cleanup information, call the US Environmental Protection Agency toll free at 800-435-9233.

For future site land use information, call the City of Fort Lauderdale at (954) 828-8000.

Repeated and careful reviews by independent scientific experts contributed to a three year delay in finalizing the report.

These reviews, however, helped insure the report is both accurate and complete.