

# ***Mill View/Millville Community Update***

June 2005

North Port St. Joe, Gulf County, Florida

## **Florida DOH Analysis of Soil/Groundwater Tests for the Mill View Community and St. Joe Paper Mill *Now Available***

### **The History of Mill View/Millville**

In 1938, the St. Joe Paper Company began making paper in Port St. Joe, which is located in Gulf County. East of the mill, the company filled in wetlands with paper mill waste during the 1940s and '50s. The fill site later became part of the 100-acre Mill View subdivision ("Millville"). The former mill site is now split into two properties. The northern portion is owned by the St. Joe Company and the southern portion is owned by Stone Container Corporation.

### **Why the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Gets Involved**

Working with the county health department, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) reviews test results of soil, water and air to determine if there are any public health risks at hazardous waste sites. A small team of six is tasked with this effort. We review information gathered by both the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) provides funding for this program.

### **What DOH Looks For During the Review**

DOH looks at sample results to see what levels of chemicals are at a site in the soil, water or air. From those levels, we determine if nearby residents are likely to get sick. The analysis considers how someone is exposed, how long they are exposed and to how much chemical they are exposed.

Chemicals must be present in certain amounts to cause illness. To determine when there is enough chemical present that is likely to cause health risks, DOH uses ATSDR guidelines

The ATSDR sets the guidelines at levels many times lower than the amount known to cause illness. The process provides a large margin of safety for the public. These guidelines were used to evaluate the Mill View and St. Joe Paper Mill samples.

### **What DOH has Done So Far at Mill View and St. Joe Paper Mill**

- Evaluated soil and water data gathered by the Florida DEP, U.S. E.P.A., and Dr. George C. Flowers, a contractor for the Levins and Papantanio law firm. The report looks at four chemicals found in Mill View that were at levels above ATSDR guidelines: arsenic, lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and vanadium.
- Held two public meetings in February 2002.
- Issued two health consultation reports; one to analyze five metals found in the Mill View soil and one to review mill waste found in Mill View soil and groundwater.
- Drafted a public health assessment report on the St. Joe Paper Mill and worked with DEP to address site issues.

***Florida Department of Health and the Gulf County Health Department  
and City Commissioner Rachel Crews  
will hold a public meeting***

***June 21, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.***

***At the Washington Improvement Group (WIG) Gymnasium Building  
401 Peters Street, North Port St. Joe***

***Come hear Department of Health findings, give your input and ask questions***

## Mill View Health Consultation Report Findings

- The levels of chemicals measured in the soil, surface water, sediments and groundwater in Mill View are categorized as a “no apparent public health hazard.”
- Arsenic was present in Mill View soil in amounts slightly higher than the ATSDR guidelines. However, the amount is still well below the amount likely to cause illness.
- Levels of sodium in shallow groundwater under Mill View are slightly above drinking water standards. However, this groundwater is not a source of drinking water. Use of shallow groundwater to irrigate lawn and gardens is not likely to cause illness.
- Lack of air monitoring data prevents DOH from determining the health risk from past exposures from the former St. Joe Paper Mill and other nearby industrial sources.
- As a precaution, Mill View residents should follow safe gardening steps (see below).
- Some Mill View houses built on mill waste are settling. As a result, the structure of homes becomes damaged. This kind of damage allows insects, birds, and rodents to enter homes easily. These animals can carry disease. Pipes in some of the homes for water, wastewater, and natural gas have also broken.
- In 2002, the estimated diabetes rate in Gulf County was higher than the state rate. From 1981-1999, the total age-adjusted cancer rate for Gulf County was lower than the state rate.

## Mill View Health Consultation Report Recommendations

- Mill View residents in houses with cracking walls and foundations should use flexible connections for water, wastewater, and gas. Residents in such houses should also repair openings. This will keep insects, birds, and rodents from entering the house.
- Mill View residents should continue to use municipal water for drinking and other household uses. They should not use shallow groundwater as a drinking water source.
- People who are not feeling well should see their doctors. This is especially important for people who lived near the former St. Joe Paper Mill during operation. It is also important for those possibly exposed to airborne contaminants from other nearby industrial sources.

Mill View residents should use the safe gardening steps given below. Following them will reduce the chance of exposure to chemicals in the soil. The steps include:

- Using clean soil and compost
- Adjusting soil phosphate and pH levels
- Keeping dust down
- Avoiding smoking, eating and drinking while gardening
- Limiting carrots and other root crops
- Washing leafy vegetables before eating
- Leaving gardening shoes outside
- Washing hands and gardening clothes

## St. Joe Paper Mill Draft Health Assessment Report Findings

**Although there are currently no completed exposure pathways, if land use changed to allow residential or recreational development without remediation, the site would pose a Public Health Hazard due to contaminants in the soil and groundwater.** However, Florida DOH found that the DEP required Brownfield remediation, deed restrictions, and engineering controls should prevent future exposures to soil and shallow groundwater.

## St. Joe Paper Mill Draft Health Assessment Report Recommendations

DOH recommends the St. Joe Company:

- Characterize the extent of contamination in sediments near the dock and throughout St. Joe Bay.

DOH recommends the Stone Container Corporation:

- Restrict access to impoundment materials on the northern part of the site until they adequately characterize the chemical contents.

DOH recommends both the St. Joe Company and the Stone Container Corporation:

- Check for the presence of buried items on the northern and southern parts of the site using geophysical surveys.
- Assure that no structures are erected over buried materials. These materials may compact or decay and cause structural failure in these buildings. Such failures affect gas, sewer or potable water lines.
- Define on-site shallow groundwater contamination plumes and fully characterize the plume contaminants.

DOH also recommends:

- Ill people should see their doctors. This is especially important for workers or others who may have been exposed to contaminants from the former St. Joe paper mill and other nearby industrial sources.

**What DOH Does:**

- ✓ *We focus on health.*
- ✓ *We conduct health consultations to answer a specific question about a site.*
- ✓ *We conduct public health assessments. These reports look at all the information we can find about a site.*
- ✓ *We inform and educate communities and local doctors about a site.*

**For more information: Call DOH toll-free during regular business hours at (877) 798-2772. Ask to speak to Connie Garrett or Lu Grimm.**

*The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) funds 100% of Florida DOH activities at hazardous waste sites, including the cost of this document, approximately 9 cents per copy.*

***Please send any comments on the attached sheet.***

**Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Community Environmental Health  
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***For more information on DOH activities at hazardous waste sites in Florida, or to see a copy of the health reports, please go to:***

**[www.myfloridaeh.com/community/SUPERFUND/index.html](http://www.myfloridaeh.com/community/SUPERFUND/index.html)**

