

Public Open House Meeting

to discuss health issues for the

Nocatee-Hull Creosote Site

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What is the purpose of the meeting? The Florida Department of Health (DOH) will hold a public open house and meeting to discuss its work at the Nocatee-Hull Creosote site. The purpose of the meeting is to present and explain to the community the findings of the public health assessment (PHA), and to get community input and questions for further research.

When and where will the meeting take place? The Open House meetings will take place on Tuesday, August 28, 2001. There will be two sessions: one from 1 pm to 3 pm and a repeat session from 6 pm to 8 pm. The meetings will be held at the Ft. Ogden Methodist Church, at 6923 SW River Street, Ft. Ogden.

What is the history of the Nocatee-Hull Creosote site?

The Nocatee-Hull Creosote site is on the west side of Hull Avenue, in Nocatee, about 2 miles south of the intersection of Hull Avenue and U.S. 17 (see the map). From 1913 to 1952, the site was used for treating timbers and railroad ties. Charlotte Harbor & Northern Railway Co. was the original owner. Then the Seaboard Railroad Co. owned it. CSX Transportation (CSXT) is the current owner.

The original site was 22-acres. It is now 98 acres because CSXT bought surrounding property to better control any chemicals moving off-site. CSXT fenced the area to prevent people from coming into contact with contamination.

Sampling revealed elevated levels of creosote components and arsenic in both the **on-site** and **off-site** soil. Grassy fields cover most of the east half of the site, while the west half is mainly trees and heavy vegetation. This keeps down the soil movement and rainwater runoff.

Almost all of the contamination remains on-site. A small **off-site** area of contamination on private property has been fenced off by CSXT, with the owner's permission.

A drainage culvert, which runs from the site under Hull Avenue, carries rainwater runoff from the site to Oak Creek. Some culvert sediments were contaminated. CSXT has installed sediment traps in the culvert to stop contaminants from moving off-site.

Underground water **on-site** was contaminated, but only one **off-site** private well has chemicals above Florida drinking water standards. However, the levels were too low to pose any health risks. Even so, the Florida DEP put a filter on this off-site well.

Did the PHA examine past exposures to contaminants?

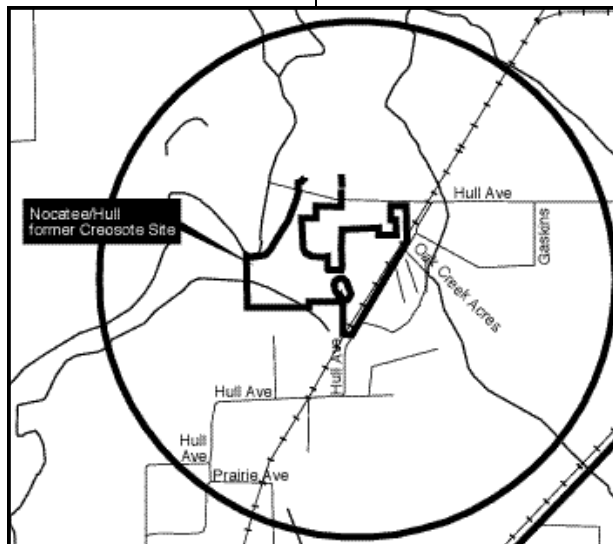
No. Health assessors were unable to know the health risks from past exposure to contaminants. This is because data for the past is unavailable. To determine health risks, health assessors must first know exactly what chemicals were present, in what quantity, and for how long.

What chemicals of concern were found on-site and off-site?

The Florida DOH investigated all chemicals found at the site. Arsenic, benzene, boron, carbazole, dibenzofurans, naphthalene, PAHs, and pentachlorophenol were present in amounts over the screening levels. See the PHA for more information about these chemicals. Upon further investigation, the Florida DOH found that only

arsenic and benzene were present at levels classified as a potential health hazard. Following is a summary of findings concerning the levels of arsenic and benzene found at this site.

Arsenic: Arsenic levels are far lower in off-site wells than in on-site wells. People who drink the shallow on-site ground-



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water for one year or longer could be at a slightly increased risk for developing certain kinds of cancers. The Florida DOH expects no increase of cancer from any levels of arsenic found **off-site**. Dust from on-site soils could contain some arsenic. If so, dust from areas with elevated arsenic levels could have negative health effects. The Florida DOH recommends anyone disturbing the soil use appropriate controls for dust.

Benzene: The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) found elevated levels of benzene in only one private well **off-site**. However, the amounts are very low. The Florida DEP placed a filter on that well. The Florida DOH does not expect any increased health risks to people drinking this water. The period of time when exposure could have occurred is short, at most 13 months, and the levels are very low. People using water with these levels of benzene every day for 30 years would not be expected to have any health effects.

Is the water in off-site wells safe?

The Florida DOH found no chemicals above the primary drinking water standards in other nearby private drinking water wells. The DeSoto County Health Department and CSXT now sample the filtered well and other nearby private wells every 3 months.

Residents were concerned about the odor and taste of their well water. Sampling has shown that no chemicals from the site have been found in any wells (except the one well discussed in the previous question) at levels of health concern. However, the area has high levels of naturally occurring iron, and all wells tested have a high iron content. Because iron can give water a metallic smell and taste, it is the most likely source of taste and smell problems.

What are the findings of the PHA?

The Florida DOH has categorized the Nocatee-Hull Creosote site as currently posing "**No Apparent Health Concern.**" This means that no one currently is known to be coming in contact with contamination associated with the site.

What are the Florida DOH recommendations concerning this site?

The Florida DOH made these recommendations:

1. CSXT should place deed restrictions on the site property until it is completely cleaned up. This will prevent future use of on-site groundwater for drinking, and prevent people from coming into contact with contaminated soil.
2. Anyone disturbing the soil at the site should use measures to control the dust, especially during cleanup.

Open House Meeting

Two repeated sessions:

1PM – 3PM and 6PM – 8PM

at Ft. Ogden Methodist Church

in Ft. Ogden.

**Tuesday,
August 28, 2001**

Where can I get a copy of the PHA?

Copies of the PHA are available in the Arcadia Library and the DeSoto County Health Department in Arcadia. You can also request a copy by calling Beth Copeland toll free during regular work hours at 1-877-798-2772.

Where can I send my public comments?

Take the time to fill out and return the attached form with your written comments **by September 28, 2001**. You also may bring it with you to the Open House Meeting if you prefer. The form is already addressed. Just fold and tape or staple.

For more information on health issues:

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Connie Garrett, Health Assessor
Florida Department of Health
Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #A-08
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1712
850-245-4299 or Toll Free 1-877-798-2772

For more cleanup information:

Bill Denman, EPA Project Manager
61 Forsythe St., SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-562-8939 or Toll Free 1-800-435-9234