
Koppers Site Update: Sample Results, Possible Reuse

Former Koppers Wood-Treating Site

Carbondale, Illinois

April 2013

For more information

If you need more information, have questions or would like to be added to the mailing list about the Koppers site, attend the **May 22 meeting** or contact these team members:

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Information repository and website:

A file containing official documents about the Koppers site is available for your review at the Carbondale Public Library, 405 W. Main St., or see www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/rcra/koppers/.

Soil samples that were collected and tested last summer and fall from a neighborhood in northeast Carbondale showed the area was not contaminated with dioxin from the adjacent Former Koppers Wood-Treating site. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had required Beazer East Inc. to test the neighborhood soil. The company is legally responsible for cleanup of the Koppers site at 1555 N. Marion St. The tests were to determine whether contamination had spread from the old wood-treating facility to the area south of its property boundary. A **public meeting** to discuss the site will be held May 22 (*see back page for details*).

Sampling detected low levels of dioxin in the soil but not in any pattern attributed to the wood-treating site. This finding was consistent with previous tests of neighborhood soil for wood-treating chemicals completed by U.S. EPA and the city of Carbondale. Beazer also sampled soil to the west and north of the Koppers property as well as on the site itself.

Most of the dioxin levels found in the neighborhood were below U.S. EPA guidelines for residential areas requiring cleanup. The dioxin amounts were consistent with “background” levels found in many soil samples from urban areas around the country. Dioxins are commonly associated with combustion such as forest fires, wood burning, domestic heaters, energy production and vehicle exhaust. The single largest emission source of dioxins in the U.S. is uncontrolled combustion of waste, especially the backyard barrel burning of garbage.

Potential redevelopment

A company is interested in constructing a solar farm to generate electrical power on part of the Koppers property, which is adjacent to an Ameren substation. The energy produced would connect to the local grid and *Continued on back page ...*



*Photo shows an example of the type of solar panels that could be constructed at the site if a renewable energy project is developed.
Photo courtesy of Brightfields LLC Inc.*

Public meeting May 22, 2013

U.S. EPA will host a public meeting on May 22, 2013, at the Carbondale Civic Center, 200 S. Illinois Ave., from 7 - 8:30 p.m., to discuss the Koppers site.

From 7 - 7:15 p.m., the public can visit information stations and have informal discussions with U.S. EPA officials and site owners. Starting at 7:15 p.m., there will be presentations on these topics followed by a question and answer period:

- Neighborhood test results for dioxin (U.S. EPA).
- Fish consumption advisory in Crab Orchard Creek (Illinois EPA).
- Redevelopment for solar farm (Beazer East Inc. and Renova Partnership/Brightfields).

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produce 20 megawatts of green energy. Plans are not final, but if the project goes forward, the redevelopment could create a number of temporary construction jobs and a solar energy training program. Additionally, the city of Carbondale is evaluating the opportunity to use the south end of the site to connect sections of existing and proposed bike paths.

Crab Orchard Creek fish advisory

During the summer of 2008, Beazer collected edible-sized fish from several locations in Crab Orchard Creek (COC), and crayfish from Glade Creek. A laboratory tested the samples for dioxins, arsenic and other pollutants. The state of Illinois decided people should limit the amount of catfish they eat from COC in Jackson County. IEPA already had established a statewide fish advisory due to mercury for largemouth bass, crappie and carp. Mercury levels are elevated in several Illinois waterways, including all the tributaries to the Big Muddy River. The mercury is not associated with the Koppers site. Like many states in the Midwest and East, Illinois enacts this type of advisory as a protective measure.

The state fish consumption advisory for COC recommends people should not eat more than one 8-ounce meal per week of catfish (which is about the size of three and a half fast-food fish filet sandwiches) due to the levels of dioxin. It should be noted the creek does not produce many edible-size fish, and it is unlikely a catfish meal per week could be caught from the creek near the Koppers site on a regular basis. See the state website at

www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/factsheets/fishadv.htm. The state will re-evaluate periodically to determine when the fish consumption advisory can be lifted.

Revised health risk assessment

This year, Beazer and U.S. EPA will complete additional risk assessments using the latest data to guide decisions about more cleanup that may be needed on the property and how the site can be safely reused. A risk assessment estimates the chances for negative health effects occurring from exposure to chemical contamination.

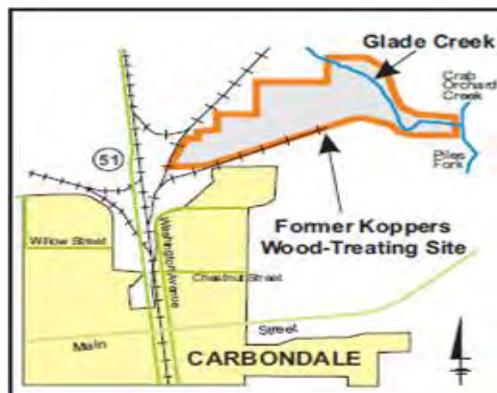
About the Koppers site

The Former Koppers Wood-Treating plant operated from 1902 until 1991 treating wood products with chemicals to prevent decay. Beazer became the owner of the facility in the early 1990s and is responsible for the environmental issues on and around the location.

In 2004, EPA used its authority under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to issue a set of cleanup actions to be completed by Beazer. From 2004 to 2010, Beazer completed several cleanup tasks in and around the site:

- Relocated a stretch of Glade Creek contaminated with creosote (located in the eastern part of the site).
- Excavated creosote-laden sediment from the eastern end of the property to more than 4,000 feet downstream to Piles Fork Creek.
- Installed two buried trench systems and a recovery well to remove underground creosote for recycling.
- Built an engineered landfill to safely and permanently dispose of soil and other materials from the site.
- Covered 38 acres of the former process area with clean soil to isolate contamination. A portion of the cover included a layer of durable plastic sheeting.

To date, more than 23,400 gallons of creosote have been removed from the ground at the Koppers site.



The former Koppers Wood-Treating site is located in the northeast end of Carbondale in Jackson County, IL.