



Facts About...

Cambridge Town Gas
(State Master List Site MD-165)

Site Location

The former Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) site is located at 403 Cherry Street in the town of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. The site is comprised of two parcels. The parcel on the western side of Cherry Street is 0.4 acre in size, and the parcel on the eastern side is 0.8 acre.

Site History

Available information indicates that a coal-gas manufacturing plant was built on the site in the early 1860s. The Cambridge MGP produced gas first by coal carbonization and later by the carbureted water gas process until MGP operations ceased in the late 1940s and operations at the facility switched to storage and distribution of propane until the 1960s.

The MGP was owned and operated by the Cambridge Gas Company, which was part of a consolidation of five power companies known as the Eastern Shore Gas and Electric Company from 1919 until 1948. In 1948, the property was purchased by E.C. Burton, Sr., Chief Executive Officer of Cambridge Gas Company. Mr. Burton sold the property back to the Cambridge Gas Company in 1951. The Cambridge Gas Company merged with the Chesapeake Utilities Corporation in 1986. Delmarva Power (Delmarva) purchased the portion of the property east of Cherry Street in 1987. In mid 1998, Delmarva changed its name to Conectiv.

Environmental Investigations

In 1985, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) conducted a Preliminary Assessment (PA) on the site, focusing on the 75,500 cubic foot gas holder located on the western side of Cherry Street. Records indicate that approximately 6 inches of tar-like sludge was identified at the bottom of the gas holder. Without admission to any legal liability, Delmarva had the sludge disposed of as hazardous waste.

In 1990, the Haliburton NUS Corporation conducted a limited investigation of the MGP site based on available historical and regional data. This investigation was performed at the request of the US Environmental Protection Agency and was inconclusive.

In 1994, the adjacent landowner, Todd's Seafood, Inc. had two soil samples collected within 15 feet of the Cambridge Town Gas northern property boundary. Analytical results yielded total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) concentrations of 55,000 mg/kg and lead concentrations of 163 mg/kg. In addition, a laboratory chromatogram reportedly showed evidence of other heavy hydrocarbon compounds in that sample. Following the Todd's Seafood, Inc. report, Delmarva contracted Groundwater and Environmental Services, Inc. to conduct a Phase I Environmental Audit, which was inconclusive.

In 1995, MDE conducted a Site Investigation (SI) of the former MGP. Samples were collected from the on-site soils of both the facility and the Todd's Seafood, Inc. property. In addition, surface water and sediment samples were collected from Cambridge Creek, a Use II Fishery and water recreation area. Results indicated that elevated concentrations of TPH type contaminants were found in on-site soils from both the Todd's Seafood, Inc. and the Delmarva Power properties and from the sediments of Cambridge Creek.



In 1996, as a result of the MDE SI, Delmarva advanced eleven exploratory borings to further determine the presence and distribution of contaminants in the subsurface soils. The results of the drilling operations indicated that significant contamination was present in the tar well area and in the northeastern portion of the facility. The levels of TPH contamination from four of the borings ranged from 20,320 mg/Kg to 58,800 mg/Kg. Delmarva installed an interlocking sheetpiling as a bulkhead keyed in at 25 feet below ground surface to control erosion of the Delmarva shoreline and also reduce the migration of contaminants into Cambridge Creek.

In February 1997, fourteen test pits were excavated by Delmarva to further delineate the contaminated subsurface and the tar well. Composite samples were collected at this time and the results confirmed the presence of high concentrations of TPH and poly aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) coal tar by-products.

In December 1997, Delmarva initiated a removal action on the contaminated property. Approximately 500 tons of hazardous waste concrete, brick, soil and other debris was transported to a hazardous waste landfill in Model City, New York. Additionally, while the removal was taking place, two tar tanks with product were uncovered. A 200 gallon capacity tank contained an estimated 25 gallons of tar product which was removed from the site. The larger tank was removed in June 1998 and contained an estimated 1000 gallons of product which was removed from the site and was sent to a tar recycler. Shortly thereafter, Delmarva Power became known as Conectiv.

In June 2004, Conectiv entered into an Administrative Consent Order with MDE to conduct a Remedial Investigation (RI) and Feasibility Study (FS) to further characterize the vertical and horizontal extent of the coal tar contamination on the former MGP and Todd Seafood properties and Cambridge Creek.

In April 2005, Conectiv completed the RI that identified residual coal tar in several boring on the Todd Seafood property adjacent to the former MGP properties and in Cambridge Creek, a designated Use II shellfish fishery.

In December 2005, Conectiv submitted a draft FS that recommended additional delineation of the known coal tar residue on the former MGP property and the residual coal tar discovered in Cambridge Creek as a result of the RI.

In February 2007, Conectiv completed the FS. The landside remedy recommended in the FS included excavation and off site disposal of the coal tar impacted soil on the Todd's Seafood property, installation of an earthen and vegetative cover along with implementation of institutional controls. The creek side remedy included dredging the impacted Cambridge Creek sediment to the 100 ppm total PAH isopleth. An estimated 4,300 cubic yards of material is expected to be dredged from Cambridge Creek and approximately 2,560 cubic yards of impacted soils on the Todd's Seafood property is expected to be removed and disposed off site.

Current Status

Conectiv and it's contractor, ENSR International, are acquiring permits for the dredging operation that is scheduled to begin in late October 2007.

Contact Person

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