

**Celanese Fiber Company, Amcelle Plant  
Cumberland, Maryland  
(MD-031)**

**Site Location**

The Celanese Fiber Company, Amcelle Plant (Celanese) property is situated on the northwest bank of the Potomac River approximately five miles west of Cumberland on Maryland Route 220. The site is bordered by McMullen Highway (Route 220) on the west, the Haystack Mountain range to the north and a flood control levee along the Potomac River to the southeast. The original 250-acre, relatively flat site was bisected by a Baltimore & Ohio Railroad right of way. The area north of the railroad tracks contained 19 production and manufacturing buildings, the area south of the railroad tracks consisted of a hazardous waste storage, a wastewater treatment facility, an emergency overflow lagoon and an approximate five-acre landfill.

Since the early 1990s, much of the Celanese property has been sold. Celanese currently owns approximately 19-acres of the original 250-acres, including the area of the landfill.

**Site History**

The Celanese facility operated from 1924 until 1983. Acetate and triacetate fibers were produced and sent to another facility to be woven into arnel yarn, a fiber utilized in the manufacture of polyester clothing. The following materials have been classified as Designated Hazardous Substances (DHS) and were used at the facility: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos (in fiber form), chromates (contained in Irridite solution), hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, pesticides, and caustics with pH values <4.0 or >10.0. The facility operated its own wastewater treatment plant under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit # MD 0000663 and State Discharge Permit # 79-DP-0037. The facility also maintained Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Permit # MDD003077294, Air Emissions permit # 01-78-3-0010, Maryland Boilers Operating Permits #'s A00013-00053 through 00056 and A00013-00110, Maryland Tank Farm Operator Permit # A00013-0044, and Maryland Process Operator Permit # A00013-0036.

During the period of operation between 1924 and 1979, on-site land filling occurred on the eastern edge of the property adjacent to the Potomac River. The approximate five-acre landfill received approximately 11 tons of known wastes, including; solvents, acids, polymers, and yarn lubricants. Unknown amounts of boiler ash and general trash were also disposed into the landfill.

Discovery of the site and listing on the State Master List in November 1979 occurred as a result of the Celanese facility's response to a Congressional Waste Disposal Site Survey (the Eckhart List) regarding the use and waste handling practices of DHS at the site. Since that time, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland Department of Environment's (MDE) Hazardous Waste Program Regulations/Permitting Division have been the lead agencies overseeing the activities involving the on-site landfill.

**Environmental Investigations and Actions**

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1800 Washington Boulevard, • Suite 625 • Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1719

410-537-3437 • 800-633-6101 x3437 • <http://www.mde.state.md.us>

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## Waste Management Administration • Environmental Restoration & Redevelopment Program

In 1980, 29 groundwater-monitoring wells were installed around the landfill and the active wastewater treatment facility. Initially, samples were collected on a monthly basis. By 1981, eleven wells were sampled semiannually as approved by DHMH.

In December 1981, Ecology and Environment, Inc. completed a Preliminary Assessment under contract with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that confirmed the closing of the dump area was near completion and verified the periodic groundwater monitoring for detection of contaminant migration from the landfill.

In December 1984, the NUS Corporation completed a Site Inspection under contract with EPA that focused on the groundwater at the site. Samples were collected from 11 of the 29 monitoring wells and an on-site emergency lagoon. Analysis of the samples revealed organic and inorganic contamination above EPA benchmark concentrations. However, since the groundwater at the site is not utilized and an ongoing groundwater-monitoring plan overseen by DHMH was in place, the EPA designated the site as "No Further Remedial Action Planned" on December 1, 1984.

In February 1988, MDE HSWMA personnel conducted an inspection of the site in response to allegations of suspected hazardous substances located on the site. The inspection revealed little Controlled Hazardous Substances (CHS) on-site, but the report cited very poor housekeeping conditions, spilled oil, oil saturated soil, empty containers and tanks (from one-gallon containers to 500-gallon tanks) around the site. The facility was required to have all wastes removed from the property by March 31, 1988.

On June 7, 1988, HSWMA personnel visited the site and confirmed that all hazardous waste and waste oils were removed from the property. Pursuant to CHS permit # A-231, routine groundwater monitoring has taken place since 1980. Currently, Celanese, with MDE's Hazardous Waste Program Regulations/Permitting Division oversight, is operating a groundwater pump and treat system that discharges to the adjacent sewage treatment plant.

### Current Status

This site is on the State Master List that identifies potential hazardous waste sites in Maryland. The Master List includes sites currently identified by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System. EPA has given the site a designation of No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP). The information contained in the fact sheet presents a summary of past investigations and site conditions currently known to MDE.

### Facility Contacts

Contact Name	Contact Organization	Contact Telephone #
Art O'Connell	Maryland Department of the Environment Brownfields Assessment/State Superfund Division	(410) 631-3493
Richard Johnson	Hazardous Waste Enforcement Division	(410) 343-1673