



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is testing long-term monitoring results at Superfund sites the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deleted from the National Priorities List (NPL). Bruin Lagoon Superfund Site, located in Bruin, Pennsylvania, is one of eight sites being reviewed. The OIG obtained ground water samples from the Site and conducted a site inspection.

Background

Bruin Lagoon was added to the Superfund NPL in 1983. The Site was contaminated with inorganic contaminants, metals, oil and grease, volatile and semivolatile organic compounds, and organic and inorganic liquid sludge. The Site was deleted from the NPL on September 18, 1997.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100908-10-P-0217.pdf

EPA Should Improve Oversight of Long-term Monitoring at Bruin Lagoon Superfund Site in Pennsylvania

What We Found

We found that Pennsylvania did not collect ground water samples from the Bruin Lagoon Superfund Site for 6 years, from 2001 to 2007. EPA Region 3 managers told us they made a deliberate, but undocumented, decision to not use oversight authority to require the State to conduct ground water sampling at the Site. Long-term monitoring of the ground water is necessary to ensure that the remedial action remains protective of human health and the environment. In June 2007, Pennsylvania resumed sampling ground water at the Site. The Region's 2009 Five-Year Review, which included these results, indicated that the Site was protective. Nonetheless, gaps in long-term monitoring may result in a failure to detect conditions that show a clean-up remedy is not protecting human health and the environment. In addition, of the 169 chemicals we analyzed, levels for 15 were different from Region 3's historical results. However, the differences were not significant enough to indicate that the remedy was not protective of human health and the environment.

We also found transcription errors in data in the Region's 2004 Five-Year Review that were also carried over into the most recent 2009 Five-Year Review. These errors occurred because the Region does not have quality assurance procedures to check summary data that are generated from laboratory reports. The data errors do not adversely impact the Region's protectiveness determination for the Site, but the Region's lack of internal controls to detect data errors can alter Site protectiveness determinations.

What We Recommend

We recommend that Region 3 improve its oversight, correct data errors in the 2009 Five-Year Review, acknowledge the 2004 errors, and implement quality assurance procedures to ensure the accuracy of data included in Five-Year Review reports and used for Site protectiveness decisionmaking. Region 3 agreed with OIG recommendations and proposed additional acceptable corrective actions.