UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

RESPONSE UPDATE

Eden North Carolina Coal Ash Spill

Eden, Rockingham County, NC

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This site information update summarizes the response, ongoing activities, and next steps.

Contact Information

Angela Miller, EPA
Region 4
Community Involvement Coordinator
(678) 575-8132

Trish Taylor, EPA
Region 3
Community Involvement Coordinator
(215) 814-5539

Media representatives should contact

James Pinkney, EPA Public Affairs Specialist
(404) 562-9183

Dawn Harris-Young, EPA
Public Affairs Specialist
(404) 562-8421

For additional information regarding this Site please visit:

http://epa.gov/region4/duke-energy/index.html

http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/dan-river-spill

www.epi.publichealth.nc.gov

www.vdh.state.va.us

www.deq.virginia.gov

www.fws.gov/contaminants

www.epa.gov/coalashrule

http://www.duke-energy.com/Dan-River/

Risk Screening

The coal ash was analyzed by EPA to ensure that we fully understand its chemical makeup. EPA used these results to make sure we're looking for these contaminants in sediment and surface water samples. Once surface water and sediment data are analyzed for these contaminants, the results are compared to EPA's screening levels to evaluate potential impacts to human health and the environment.

Potential Impacts to Human Health

To find out if there are potential impacts to human health, sediment data is being compared to human health risk based screening levels based on a potential recreational exposure. The drinking water samples from the water treatment facilities are being compared to Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) and other health based levels. EPA's drinking water samples have shown no impacts to the local drinking water. There have also been no human health screening levels exceeded in the surface water or sediment samples.

As a precautionary measure, EPA recommends that people avoid direct contact with the coal ash, including contact with submerged or floating ash. If you make direct contact with coal ash, wash it off with soap and water. While coal ash in this situation is wet and unlikely to become airborne, in instances where coal ash is dry, it can become airborne and pose a potential health hazard if inhaled over a long period of time.

Potential Impacts to Aquatic Life

To find out if there are potential impacts to aquatic life, EPA is comparing surface water and sediment data to ecological risk based screening levels. There have been some exceedances of ecological screening levels in sediment and surface water samples. Exceedance of a screening level indicates that continual monitoring sampling and analyses may be necessary. A spill to a river ecosystem can impact aquatic life and animals in different ways. Coal ash can cover the habitat where animals live, or contaminants can potentially cause harm directly to aquatic life. The physical damage to the ecosystem is determined by the EPA, who are visually assessing the river and determining and verifying where the ash may have deposited. The assessment also involves the EPA looking at the concentrations of contaminants that dissolve in the river water. Dissolved concentrations in surface water help identify possible impacts to aquatic life. EPA plans to continue monitoring both sediment and surface water concentrations for potential impacts to aquatic life.

Ongoing Activities

Removal operations by Duke Energy with oversight by EPA, have begun to address the material located at the outfall of the storm water management drain as it empties into the Dan River. Duke has installed a filter skirt around an ash pile and will remove the material from the shoreline with a vacuum truck. EPA is monitoring the potential impact that the melting snow had on the river, and will take necessary measures if there are any significant impacts to ongoing operations. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) has collected fish from the Dan River and is currently analyzing them for ash related contaminants. Those results will be reviewed by Virginia Department of Health (VADH) when available.

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources (NCDENR DWR) and the Division of Energy, Mines and Land Resources have evaluated the second storm water management drain line (36") that runs under the Primary Ash Pond. This line was sealed with a concrete plug and the discharged was stopped. NCDENR DWR is also investigating a third storm water discharge to the Dan River upstream from the ash release.

Next Steps

EPA will work with the State of North Carolina and Commonwealth of Virginia in evaluating long term cleanup options for the Dan River.