

Woolfolk Chemical NPL July 9, 2007

In April 2007, a resident of unincorporated Fort Valley, Peach County contacted the Woolfolk Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) RPM concerning familial cancer and kidney disease. The request was sent to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) who contacted the Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH), in May 2007, to investigate whether an excess number of cancer and kidney disease existed near the site. The resident documented seven family members who died of cancer and/or kidney disease. He felt that family members who lived near the site had higher rates of cancer and kidney disease than relatives who live elsewhere in Georgia. He also had concerns involving groundwater. In response, GDPH reviewed Woolfolk Chemical Works, Inc. site information and Peach County environmental health outcome data (HOD) to investigate and respond to the resident's concerns. GDPH concluded that although a higher number of cancer cases do exist for Peach County, this rate can be attributed to higher lung cancer rates (which can be correlated with smoking). In addition, high risk groups for kidney disease include people who have diabetes, hypertension and family history of kidney disease. Although the site is contaminated with chemicals known or suggested to cause cancer and/or kidney (renal) effects, other factors can be attributed to both of these conditions.

The city of Fort Valley is located approximately 100 miles South of Atlanta in central Georgia. It was established in 1856 and is the county seat of Peach County. Fort Valley is Georgia's largest peach producing area and is home to the Blue Bird Corporation, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of school and transit buses. Fort Valley has a current estimated population of 9,000 residents. It is also interesting to note that in a town of about 9,000 residents there are two kidney dialysis centers.

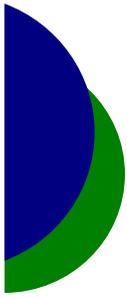
Woolfolk Chemical Works, Inc. is located in downtown Fort Valley. Since the mid-1980's, this site has been investigated by EPA regarding the release or potential release of hazardous substances. The site was added to the NPL list in 1990. This site has contaminated the city with lead, arsenic, cadmium, tetrachloroethylene (PCE),

and other contaminants. The area is also a known source of groundwater contamination. Corrective actions and remediation activities at this site are ongoing. The town has a community group, the Woolfolk Alliance, which is very active in issues concerning the site since the late 1990s.

GDPH reviewed the Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) 2006 Hazardous Site Inventory and the Woolfolk site is a Class IV (highest clean-up priority) site. Since 1998 there has been quarterly monitoring of all active municipal water supply wells in the public water supply.

ATSDR has numerous case studies documenting the strong association between lead and/or cadmium exposure and kidney (renal) effects. In the literature, there is some evidence using animal studies that high levels of tetrachloroethylene (PCE) resulted in the development of liver and kidney cancers. However this chemical has not been shown to cause cancer in people, although it may be reasonably anticipated to cause cancer.

The resident was contacted on May 21, 2007 by telephone to discuss his health concerns. His family has lived in the area for the last three generations. He stated that he lives approximately two miles from the Woolfolk site and claims the area has been exposed to lead, mercury, vinyl chloride and arsenic from the site. He also claims that Bay Creek, a nearby lake, has been contaminated by the City of Fort Valley and Woolfolk dumping. He says there has been an unusual odor associated with the lake for the past 20 years. The resident has been on municipal water and bottled water and only uses his private well for bathing and outdoor watering purposes. He claims that 2 other residences also use water from this well for non-drinking water purposes. He states that this well is usually serviced once a year, and was bored three years ago, replacing a previous well. He also states that he is involved with the local community group – The Woolfolk Alliance. On May 25, 2007, an introductory letter was mailed to the resident along with two brochures – *Cancer and the Environment* and *Water Well Quality*. In July 2007, he



CHEMICAL HAZARDS PROGRAM
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Atlanta, GA



was mailed a letter that contained information about kidney disease.

The Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry (GCCR) is a population-based registry that collects, maintains, and analyzes cancer incidence data in Georgia. On June 4, 2007, GDPH consulted with the GCCR to determine if elevated cancer levels existed in Peach County. GCCR verified that there are elevated numbers of lung cancer cases (which can be correlated to smoking); however the rates are not statistically significant. On June 19, 2007, the GCCR mailed to the resident an analysis of cancer data in Peach County and its two zip codes. In addition, the analysis specifically looked at stomach, kidney, and renal pelvis cancer and concluded that there were not an elevated number of cases.

The National Kidney Foundation states that kidney disease affects more than 20 million Americans. It is the ninth leading cause of death in America. Kidney disease is caused mostly by diabetes and high blood pressure (responsible for up to two-thirds of the cases). Kidney disease can also cause high blood pressure. Persons most at risk to kidney disease include those with diabetes, hypertension, African Americans, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, seniors and those with a family history of the disease. There are more than 100 disorders, diseases, and conditions that can lead to progressive destruction of the kidneys.

Conclusions

Previously, there has been sufficient environmental data documented for a completed exposure pathway; however exposure to contaminated groundwater is not occurring, and is not likely to occur in the future. Data is available for all environmental media to which humans are being exposed.

The two published health consultations by ATSDR have concluded that there is **no apparent health hazard** from groundwater exposure due to the monitoring of the city municipal water supply that all residents receive. The concerned resident does not drink water from his private well and is knowledgeable about previous and current groundwater contamination related to the Woolfolk site.

Residents have continuously been advised not to use their wells for drinking water purposes. The municipal water supply is safe for people to drink and is monitored closely.