

Petroleum cleanup at former Cobblestone Service Station, Highway 61 in Grand Marais

This Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) fact sheet provides an update on petroleum contamination cleanup and mitigation activities at 211 West Highway 61 in the city of Grand Marais. This site is currently occupied by commercial businesses. The location of the site is shown below.



Site history

In 1996, a petroleum release was reported to the MPCA from petroleum underground storage tanks associated with the former Cobblestone Service Station (CS Service) in operation from the 1940s to 1996. The tanks have since been removed. Since the release was first reported to the MPCA, an investigation has been completed that included the installation of numerous soil borings and monitoring wells at the site in order to define the extent and magnitude of the release, monitor the plume, and to determine risks from existing contamination to nearby properties, water supply wells, surface water, and underground utilities. Groundwater and soil vapor monitoring continue at the site.

Petroleum product currently remains in soils at the site, underneath Highway 61 and extending onto properties located to the north and south of the Highway.

Remaining risks

Remaining petroleum-contaminated soils will continue to pose a risk if left on site. The excavation of petroleum-contaminated soils is needed to prevent petroleum contamination from entering Lake Superior above acceptable levels, and to mitigate the potential risk of petroleum vapors intruding into nearby buildings.

Next steps

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will conduct the excavation of petroleum-impacted soils on behalf of the MPCA in accordance with an Interagency Agreement. This work will be completed in conjunction with the planned MnDOT Highway 61 reconstruction project in the spring/summer of 2021.

The following work will be completed:

- Temporary re-routing of utilities in the excavation area.
- Excavation and disposal of petroleum-impacted soil from the former gas station property located on the north side of Highway 61 to the Harbor Inn property located on the south side of Highway 61.
- Site restoration activities, which will include road and parking lot repaving as well as green space restoration.
- Continue monitoring the surrounding area until the MPCA determines closure of the site is possible.

What you should expect

- During excavation activities, it is possible you will smell petroleum vapors. The MPCA will work with contractors and consultants to monitor site conditions to ensure there are no health risks to neighborhood residents.
- Contractors, work crews, and heavy machinery will be on site several days until the project is complete.
- Road congestion and traffic rerouting may occur during soil excavation in the Highway 61 right of way.

For more information

For more information about remediation activities at the site, contact MPCA Project Manager Kate Lewison (phone 507-206-2615, email katherine.lewison@state.mn.us).