



Will take decades to clean



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TOMS RIVER - It will take at least 20 to 30 more years to clean up a plume of groundwater contamination emanating from the former Ciba-Geigy Corp. site, an official with site owner BASF said.

Stephen K. Havlik, the senior remediation project manager for BASF, said 20 years of pumping up and then treating groundwater has reduced the footprint of the pollution plume by about 40 percent.

"We're talking about a 40-year time period," Havlik said of the length of the groundwater clean-up at the former plant site. German firm BASF acquired the property in 2009.

The 1,350-acre property is located off Route 37 near the Garden State Parkway.

REICH FARM: Notorious Toms River Superfund site gets 5 more years of water testing

POLLUTED SITES: Toxic Waste: New Jersey's 10 most polluted sites

More than 10 billion gallons of polluted groundwater has been extracted from the ground, treated to remove contaminants, and then recharged onto the ground in the property's northeast corner, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA has been overseeing cleanup at the Ciba site since the 1,350-acre property was placed on the federal Superfund list in 1982. Ciba is one of two Superfund sites in Toms River; the other is Reich Farm, located off Route 9 in the Pleasant Plains section of town.

Ciba-Geigy, initially called Toms River Chemical Co., made millions of pounds of industrial dyes and resins on its property from 1952 until all manufacturing operations ceased in 1996.

Once Ocean County's largest employer, the company would eventually become known as a notorious polluter.

In 1992, two former Ciba executives and the corporation pleaded guilty to illegally dumping pollutants into two landfills on the company's property, and agreed to pay fines. All industrial



Most of the buildings that housed Ciba's dye-making operations have been razed. The sprawling property — larger than the city of Hoboken — is mostly vacant, except for two to three employees who oversee the mostly automated cleanup of groundwater contamination.

WATER TESTING: Should water testing end at Reich Farm Superfund site?

Cleanup of toxic soil and the removal of thousands of waste-filled drums was finished in 2010, and BASF finished construction of a more efficient groundwater treatment system in 2013, and began operating it in 2014.

About 1.2 million gallons of polluted groundwater is pulled out of the ground for treatment daily by 27 wells. Watch the video above to see the groundwater treatment system in action.

Ciba spent more than \$300 million to treat groundwater and clean up toxic waste on its property, and spent millions more to settle three lawsuits related to toxic waste on its land and the polluted groundwater that it caused.

More than 40,000 drums of waste were removed from the site, and about 350,000 cubic yards of tainted soil were treated.

A 1999 state and federal study determined that some Toms River residents had been exposed to chemical pollutants from the site that had leached into private wells and the public drinking water system decades ago.

DEATH AT SITE: Woman dies at NJ Superfund site

LIPARI LANDFILL: Toxic NJ: Lipari Landfill

The same study determined that the site no longer posed an environmental threat because polluted wells have been sealed and groundwater treatment is in place. About 200 homes are located north of the property, and another 250 to the south. The West Dover Elementary School is adjacent to the site.

Havlik of BASF said the company will likely ask that the western portion of the property, about 480 acres, be removed from the Superfund designation.

That area "has not been found to have any disposal or industrial-related activity," Havlik said. The area could eventually be developed for commercial use, he said. Another portion of



prevent housing, schools or day care centers from being built there, he said.

BURNT FLY BOG: Toxic NJ: Burnt Fly Bog

LONE PINE: Toxic NJ: Lone Pine Landfill

BASF will hold onto about 300 acres of land "in perpetuity," Havlik said. That area will include the major disposal sites on the land.

Havlik said BASF hopes the former Ciba property can be used for environmental education, with visits by school children who would learn the site's long history of contamination, along with the clean-up efforts.

Special grasses have been planted on a portion of the property to try to lure the grasshopper sparrows, small songbirds that are a threatened species.

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