

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

 **TO:** AIRPORT CIRCLE FILE
FROM: LYNN CHAMBERS
SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS REGARDING CONTAMINATION
DATE: MARCH 30, 2017

Cassandra Johnson (Office of Community Engagement), Willie McKercher (GARD), and I met with Mr. and Mrs. Smith in the afternoon of March 2, 2017 at their home located at 116 Airport circle in Grenada, MS. The investigation was due to a complaint by Mrs. Smith originally received by EPA on February 16, 2017 regarding her concerns about the unexplained death of her dog, concerns regarding her drinking water, the potential from contamination Luvata and Bowater facilities in the groundwater, and buried sewer lines on her property.

We met with Ms. Smith at approximately 12:30 p.m. and we were later joined by her husband. Ms. Smith indicated her dog died a few weeks before that and she believes it happened after the dog drinking rainwater from a sunken hole in her yard. She suspects the sink hole in her yard to be from the former sewer line from the old military base. Then, she discussed the concerns listed above.

Old sewer pipes from military base

Ms. Smith indicated that she understood the City had a contract to remove all the old sewer lines from the old military base. Her understanding was the World War II barracks of the former military base were located in close proximity to her home and somehow the city had the funding to hire a contractor to remove those sewer lines. She had a number of concerns regarding the old sewer lines: potential contamination moving through the old sewer lines, sewer lines still existing on her property, and sink holes due to the old sewer lines.

We inspected her backyard thoroughly. We did find one area that I would define as a sunken hole. It appeared to be the base of an old tree stump that had been burned out or a settling around an old septic tank based on the size of the depression. She nor her husband were aware of a septic tank on the property, but they indicated it was a possibility.

We did find a sewer manhole on her property behind her shed. Upon opening the manhole, no odors were detected. The sewer manhole contained two clay tile pipes intersecting into a "Y" into one pipe with the one pipe exiting her property to the north. Visual observations around the approximate run of the pipes did not detect any evidence of soil caving along the piping run. Based on our observations, this sewer line appeared

to be in operation, not abandoned. However, Mrs. & Mr. Smith indicated the new sewer line runs along the midline of Airport Circle Road in front of their home. They were unable to locate the sewer cleanout for their house. We assume it may be located under the house as the house has a crawl space foundation.

I spoke with Richard Ball in our Superfund/FUDs group about these concerns involving the old sewer pipes before we met with Ms. Smith. He indicated the ACOE would not do anything regarding yard damage due to old sewer piping from the military base. They have no record of contamination associated with these sewer lines, so unfortunately this is a burden of each property owner. We indicated to her that it normally becomes the property owner's responsibility, but that is a matter she needed to discuss with the city.

Drinking water concerns

Mrs. Smith indicated that the water department has collected/analyzed her drinking water and the results came back below health department standards, but she believes it is due to the filtration system she added to her house (she now wants the city to test her drinking water before the filtration system).

Ms. Smith does have a huge suspended solids issue in her drinking water as Mr. Smith removed the filter from their filtration system and a large amount of suspended solids were apparent. But all her piping appears to be original to the house (house was built in the 1940's) and Willie found what appears to be a water line leak from their side of the water meter. The Smiths indicated that to their knowledge the piping for their house has never been replaced. They installed the water filtration system because of the color/solids issues.

She did have a mason jar with water in it which had some type of biological growth. The Smith's indicated they had put tap water in the jar a few weeks ago and that was the outcome. They offered the water for sampling, but we indicated it would not be suitable for analyses since we could not verify it was a clean jar, sealed appropriately, had a chain of custody, etc.

As for the drinking water concerns, we indicated since the health department had collected a sample from the home and the water entering their home met drinking water standards, there was no action warranted for our further investigation.

Ms. Smith did confirm they use pesticides/fertilizer in the garden which is not blocked off from the dogs, but she doesn't believe that has anything to do with the death of her dog.

Concerns regarding potential contamination in standing water on her property

The Smiths definitely have standing water issues at their home, but these issues appear to be due to no sloping on the property and potentially an abandoned septic tank in the middle of her property. It appears they used to have drainage areas on both sides of her yard, but over time, the drainage areas have not been maintained and filled up with dirt and debris. The suspected septic tank area has become a burn pile which she indicates continues to sink, so they continue to pile debris in this area.

As indicated above, the whole yard is flat with very little, if any, change in elevation. A vegetable garden is in the middle of the backyard and it is not isolated from the rest of the yard. She indicated the vegetables don't grow well due to the standing water. Ms. Smith did confirm they use pesticides/fertilizer in the garden which is not blocked off from the dogs, but she doesn't believe that has anything to do with the death of her dog.

She said she has had 3 healthy dogs die in the past several years and she believes it is due to them drinking the standing water. We asked about their water source which she indicated is usually a baby pool near the front of the house, but the dogs drink out of the standing water puddles all the time. Even though we had significant concerns regarding validity of sampling the standing water, we went ahead and collected samples from the standing water. Laboratory analysis for VOCs came back none detect.

We did not visually observe anything that would lead us to believe potential contamination existed in or around the Smith property.

Groundwater contamination from Luvata and Bowater

I reviewed the complete file for the Luvata facility and attached a map of the facility. It has had eight (8) different groundwater sampling events with each event verifying groundwater contamination has not migrated beyond the footprint of the Luvata building. They did have dewatering wells within 1 foot of the former degreaser vault that had hits of TCE, but after the vault was removed (2002), those wells were decommissioned and the area within the building was covered with a concrete slab. A deed restriction has been in effect since 2008 on the former vault area to prevent exposure with annual maintenance/inspection of the slab.

I also reviewed the Bowater MDEQ files. We have conducted numerous compliance inspections and no significant violations have been detected. We have not done any contaminant investigation at Bowater since we have not had any violations or evidence that would cause us to believe there has been a release.

The Smith's did complain about significant odors late at night in their backyard. They believe these odors are due to either Bowater or Luvata. Mr. Smith works at Luvata and has been an employee with Luvata for 10 years. He indicated he has cause for concern

because Luvata at one time provided bottled water for the employees in lieu of the water at the facility. A review of the Luvata property and water wells in the area did not find a private water well for Luvata. We indicated to the Smiths that it appears the city provides the same water to Luvata that the residents receive. The city water results over the last several years have not detected any concern with drinking water concentrations.

Based on our inspection and reviews of the various files associated with the community concerns, we have been unable to substantiate the concerns regarding contamination that the community and the Smiths have voiced. They do appear to have issues with standing water in and around the Airport Circle area, but many of those issues appear to be due to lack of sloping on properties and un-kept drainage ditches (filled with leaves and tall grass).

We will continue to coordinate with the Airport Circle community if they contact us. Please note: after review of our August 2016 meeting and sign-in cards, we did not have anyone request to be added to our mailing lists for updates regarding the Grenada area, nor did we have any attendees complete the sign-in cards we requested to be completed. Willie McKercher met individually with several persons immediately after the August 23, 2016 meeting and provided them with his business cards so he could coordinate inspections of the suspected dump sites. He did not receive any correspondence after the meeting to enable us to follow-up with their concerns regarding illegal dumping.

Sewer manhole - 1



Google Earth





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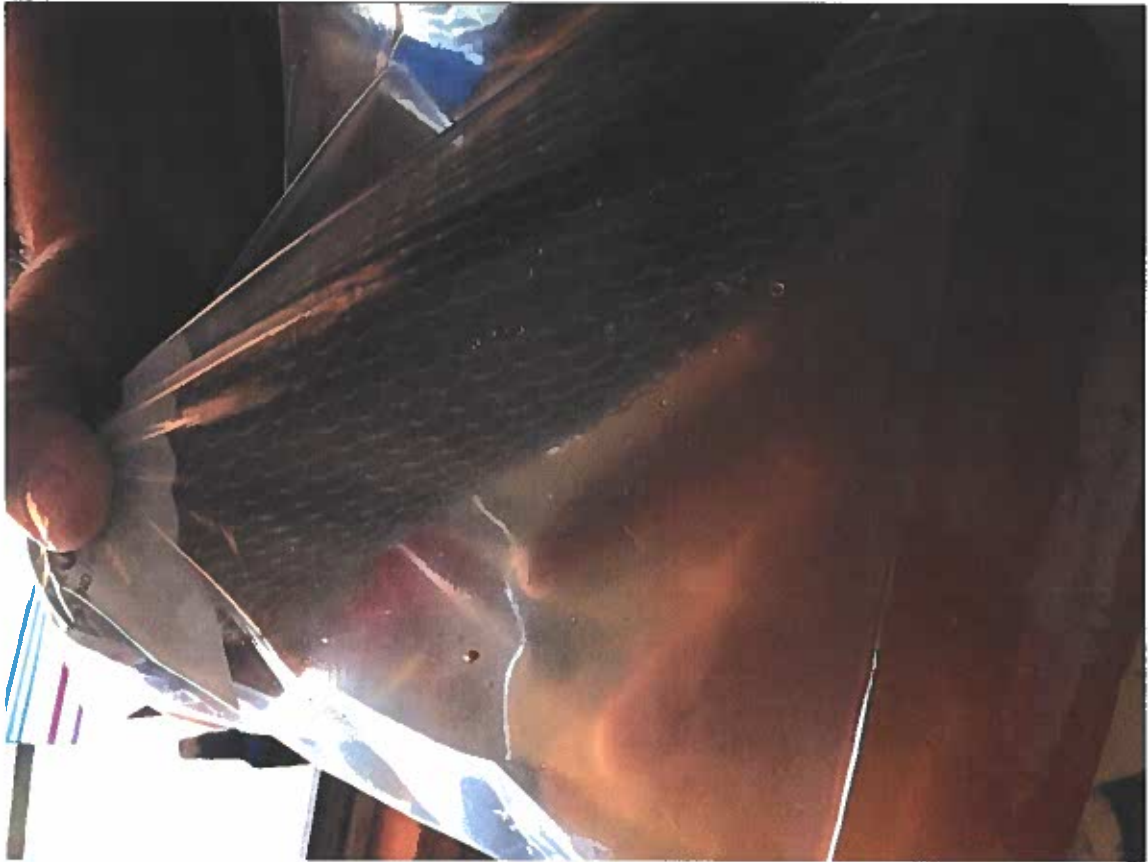
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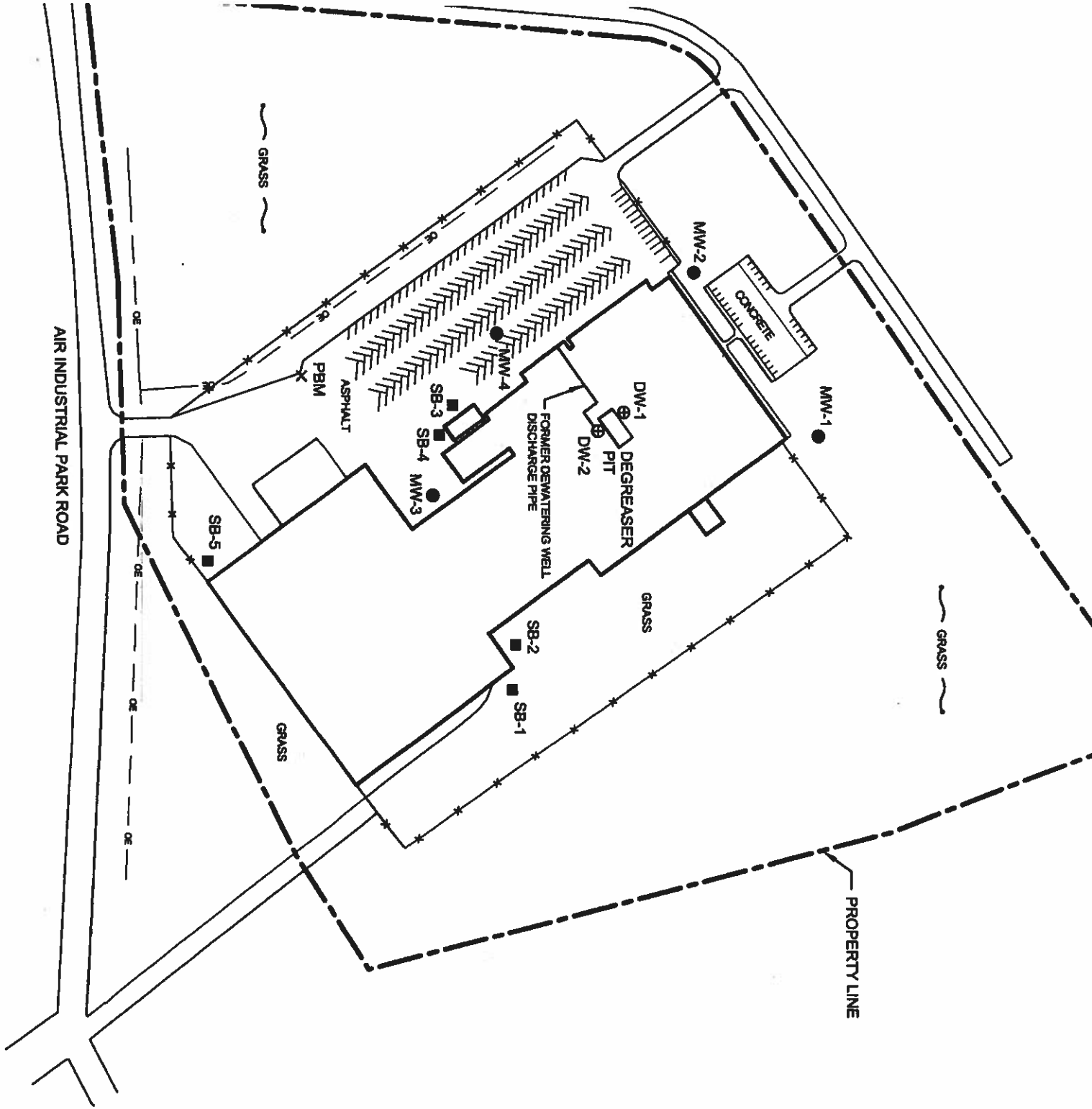


former
drained
ditch

2- standing water holes







NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- SB-5 SOIL BORING LOCATION
- × PBM PROJECT BENCHMARK
- MW-1 MONITORING WELL LOC.
- ⊕ DW-1 DEGREASER PIT DEWAT
- CHAIN LINK FENCE
- OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL
- SOIL BORING LOCATION
- PROJECT BENCHMARK
- MONITORING WELL LOC.
- DEGREASER PIT DEWAT
- CHAIN LINK FENCE