

# Former Houston Wood Preserving Works Site



## HISTORY

The Southern Pacific Transportation Company (Southern Pacific) conducted wood treating operations at the property located at 4910 Liberty Road in Houston, known as the Houston Wood Preserving Works (HWPW), from 1911 to 1984. Union Pacific Railroad (Union Pacific) acquired the property through its merger with Southern Pacific in 1997.

Southern Pacific began cleanup efforts under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) cleanup program, which were supervised by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Following the merger, Union Pacific continued the cleanup work that Southern Pacific began. The work is still performed under the authority of a federal RCRA permit, which dictates how investigations and cleanup activities are conducted at the site. The permit requires Union Pacific to adhere to all applicable environmental laws and regulations and coordinate all investigations and cleanup activities with the TCEQ. All work at the site has been reviewed, approved and conducted under TCEQ's oversight.

## WORK ACCOMPLISHED AT THE SITE

Scientists, engineers and other experts have conducted environmental studies, assessments and cleanup work at this location for 30 years, with input and supervision from state and federal regulatory authorities. Work has focused on determining if there are potential exposure pathways to people near the site. Test results do not show impacted soil or groundwater exposure to residents.

Here is what the environmental work has accomplished:

- Union Pacific conducted the TCEQ-approved soil remediation at the site in 2016, including soil excavation and consolidation to prevent exposure. Soil samples near the residential properties do not show impacts above TCEQ risk-based levels.
- Off-site groundwater tests do not indicate the potential for vapor intrusion.
- Property owners identified within the groundwater plume area were notified of groundwater impacts, consistent with TCEQ requirements and informed there is no exposure risk because all residential properties in the area receive drinking water from the City of Houston.

- A combination of water-well surveys and public meetings have identified no groundwater wells for domestic use in the area. The City of Houston Health Department recently re-tested the drinking water in the area and notified the public that the drinking water is safe.
- A creosote recovery program has been implemented to remove creosote from groundwater.

The work accomplished at the site is described in more detail in the environmental reports and RCRA Permit Renewal Application submitted to the TCEQ, available for public review upon request through the TCEQ, at the public repository located at the Tuttle Public Library located at 702 Kress Street, Houston, Texas 77020.

## CURRENT SITE STATUS

Union Pacific continues to work cooperatively with all governmental authorities and in full compliance with all legal requirements applicable to site activities, including timely responses to TCEQ requests for additional work, testing and modification of plans to address concerns. Union Pacific will continue to work with the regulatory officials to ensure that its work at the site is in full compliance with all state and federal laws. Union Pacific is collecting additional soil, groundwater and soil gas data requested by the TCEQ. Additional efforts are included below.

- Union Pacific will continue groundwater monitoring at the site under TCEQ oversight to update existing data and monitor the stability of the historic plume.
- Union Pacific will continue performing routine inspections of the remediated areas to ensure the protective barriers are in place.
- Union Pacific will continue to recover creosote from impacted groundwater where technically feasible. Testing outside of the site found creosote located typically deeper than 25 feet below ground surface and as deep as 65 feet below ground surface. The depth combined with the difficult nature of creosote make complete removal infeasible.
- In conjunction with the TCEQ, Union Pacific will continue to evaluate options for response actions for the off-site groundwater plume.
- A revised Remedial Action Plan will be submitted to the TCEQ after these additional investigations are complete, which will be available for public review.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND UPDATES

Union Pacific and TCEQ have regularly reached out to people in the area to provide information regarding site progress and activities. Union Pacific welcomes input from the public and will continue to provide updates regarding site activities.

- Since the early stages of the regulatory process, TCEQ has conducted public meetings to inform the public about the EPA's RCRA permit process, how the site will be addressed and to answer any questions.
- Union Pacific also conducted community meetings and public presentations to inform and update residents about the site, in addition to making site representatives available to address questions or concerns.
- The company also sent a series of letters to known property owners in the area to provide formal notification of available data that had been collected, the status of site activities, and information on how to contact the appropriate TCEQ and Union Pacific representatives with any questions or concerns about the site.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information and updates regarding site activities will be posted at [www.hwpwinfo.com](http://www.hwpwinfo.com). The website is currently under construction and expected to be available in the near future. In the interim, inquiries regarding the site can be directed to the following Union Pacific representatives.

**Public Affairs and Community:** Richard Zientek, (281) 350-7178 or [richardzientek@up.com](mailto:richardzientek@up.com)

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