

Throop livid over release into stream at Marjol cleanup

THROOP — *The contractor overseeing the cleanup at the lead-contaminated Marjol property released an unspecified amount of muddy water into a tributary of the Lackawanna River on Monday evening, despite being told not to do so.*

BY CHARLES SCHILLINGER
STAFF WRITER

Published: Wednesday, July 30, 2008 6:14 AM EDT

THROOP — The contractor overseeing the cleanup at the lead-contaminated Marjol property released an unspecified amount of muddy water into a tributary of the Lackawanna River on Monday evening, despite being told not to do so.

No contaminants were released with the muddy water, said Barbara Forslund, a representative of Advanced GeoServices Corp., a company representing the Marjol property owner, Gould Electronics.

But she acknowledged orders were ignored and muddy water is not allowed to be released into the river as a rule for any construction project.

Borough officials livid over the mistake — and that they weren't notified immediately — are now telling residents to keep their children away from the tributary, Sulfur Creek, and the area where it meets the Lackawanna River.

Excess water

In order to finish construction of a sedimentation basin on the 40-acre site, water from recent storms needed to be pumped out of the basin by the contractor, SCE Environmental Group.

However, when filtering Monday failed to lessen the "turbidity," or how muddy the water was, a representative of Advanced GeoServices told SCE to stop.

But the contractor continued to pump the water for at least 30 minutes after being told to stop, said Ms. Forslund.

She could not say how much water was released, but it was enough that council President Tom Lukasewicz said a borough employee mowing grass on the river noticed it and contacted borough officials.

The state Department of Environmental Protection was aware the contractor would try to filter and pump out water from the basin.

However, Ms. Forslund said, as of Tuesday evening, the agency had not been notified of the breakdown in the chain of command.

Efforts to reach Dickson City-based SCE Environmental Group were unsuccessful Tuesday evening.

Council irate

The discussion between Advanced Geoservices and council members Tuesday grew even more heated when Ms. Forslund said the employee who had disobeyed orders was still working at the site.

Councilmen called for his firing and argued that if employees were unwilling to follow orders before, nothing would stop them in the future. Councilman James Barnick even suggested if mistakes like this continue, the borough would chain the entrance to the property and let "the feds" come and stop them.

Councilman John Musewicz also raised the concern the contractor might have been under pressure to finish the basin soon so it could begin excavation of the contaminated materials. The two-year project calls for lead-contaminated soil and battery casings to be moved to a 10-acre central location on the former Marjol site, where it will all be capped in concrete.

"Safety is the only thing we're concerned about. If this gets down to dollars and cents, we all lose," Mr. Lukasewicz said.

Contact the writer: cshillinger@timeshamrock.com

Copyright © 2008 - The Times-Tribune