

City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

PRESS RELEASE

Contamination Concerns at Byford Junkyard

Wrangell, AK – Preliminary analyses of soil samples collected at the former Byford Junkyard located at approximately 4-mile Zimovia Highway show high levels of lead and other metals that could pose a risk to human health. The property, Lot Y2, Tract Y, USS 2321, was previously used for historic salvage operations and is now owned by the City and Borough of Wrangell.

In late summer of 2014, at the request of the City and Borough, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed a Targeted Brownfield Assessment of the site in order to develop a cleanup plan to enable reuse of the property. The high concentrations of lead, documented in both surface and subsurface soils, are well in excess of the 400 parts per million the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) deems safe for human health.

To protect Wrangell residents, the City and Borough of Wrangell is posting signs advising the public of the potential health risks and prohibiting access to the site. Based on the preliminary results of sample analyses, concentrations measured on properties adjacent to the junkyard do not pose a risk to human health. However, The City and Borough of Wrangell would like to caution residents who might clam on the beach in front of the Byford property as shellfish harvested in this area could be contaminated with lead and other metals transported by water runoff from the Byford property. The data is currently being evaluated by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to determine whether the levels of metals in shellfish pose a risk to human health.

Lead is a heavy but soft, malleable metal and has extensive uses. While certain uses of lead are banned, lead is still found in many materials and products including lead-acid batteries and paints. Exposure to high lead levels can affect nearly every system in the body, with children being the most vulnerable to the adverse effects.

Oversight for this investigation is provided by DEC's Contaminated Sites Program and the EPA Region 10 Office of Environmental Cleanup. EPA, with support from the City and Borough of Wrangell and DEC, is currently developing a cleanup action plan to conduct a cleanup of the most contaminated areas on the property.

For further information, please contact the City at (907) 874-2381 or DEC at (907) 465-5390.

Sentinel	Please publish June 4 & June 11, 2015
KSTK	Please announce 5/29 thru 6/12/2015
City Hall Lobby:	Posted 5/29/2015, until further notice
Post Office:	Posted 5/29/2015, until further notice
City & Borough Website:	Posted 5/29/2015, until further notice

Posted this 29th day of May, 2015