



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

DEP has been aware of and addressing the concerns from Bartram's Garden and has been working with responsible party at the property at 51st and Botanic Ave regularly for several months to address the discharge issue.

On April 5, 2024, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) received a complaint regarding discolored liquid running off the property located at 51st and Botanic Ave and onto a public bike path along the Schuylkill River. The site is a former petroleum tank farm that is currently in the Act 2 cleanup program.

The DEP immediately coordinated with the Philadelphia Water Department's Industrial Waste (PWD) section who collected a sample of the material for laboratory analysis on April 5, 2024. DEP subsequently conducted an inspection on April 12, 2024 to evaluate site conditions, and at the time of inspection, there was no active material discharging from the site and no violations were observed.

PWD shared the sample results with DEP on May 1, 2024, and the lab report indicted "green coloration most likely due to presence of a synthetic, non-fluorescent dye." Following receipt of this information, DEP performed a second inspection of the site on May 2, 2024 to attempt to determine the source of the dye and evaluate site conditions. During the May 2, 2024 inspection, it was observed that the responsible party acted by placing berms across a drainage ditch to reduce the potential for the stormwater in the drainage swale from leaving the site, or reaching the Schuylkill River. No violations were observed during the May 2, 2024 inspection either.

Following receipt of the PWD's results, DEP requested the owner of the former petroleum tank farm property (responsible party) to further investigate the source of the discolored discharge. During that investigation, samples collected on the former tank farm property on April 29, 2024 and May 30, 2024 indicated the presence of trivalent and hexavalent chromium. The DEP received and evaluated those test results on June 10, 2024 and reached out to the responsible party to ask them to provide their plans on how they intend on remediating this issue and learned that the responsible party will submit a new notice of intent to remediate that includes chromium in the Act 2 cleanup.

The DEP has not received any additional complaints regarding subsequent discharges from the site since the measures the responsible party took to secure the site.

DEP staff returned to the site on July 17, 2024 in response to recent public concerns to evaluate site conditions and to identify sampling locations located near the public bike path and along the riverbank. DEP plans to collect samples from along the bike path and riverbank as soon as possible to determine the presence or absence of trivalent and hexavalent chromium.

DEP continues to work with the responsible party to address trivalent and hexavalent chromium impacts, along with the previously documented residual petroleum impacts through the Act 2 process.

Visitors walking, running, or riding a bike on the trail through the area are at very low risk for exposure. Exposure to chromium can be reduced by washing hands or exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water to remove soil residue. While long-term chronic exposure to hexavalent chromium can be hazardous, it is unlikely that short term exposure to chromium at low/moderate levels found in the environment will result in severe health effects. DEP continues to communicate with Bartram's Garden to address concerns from visitors and staff to the park.