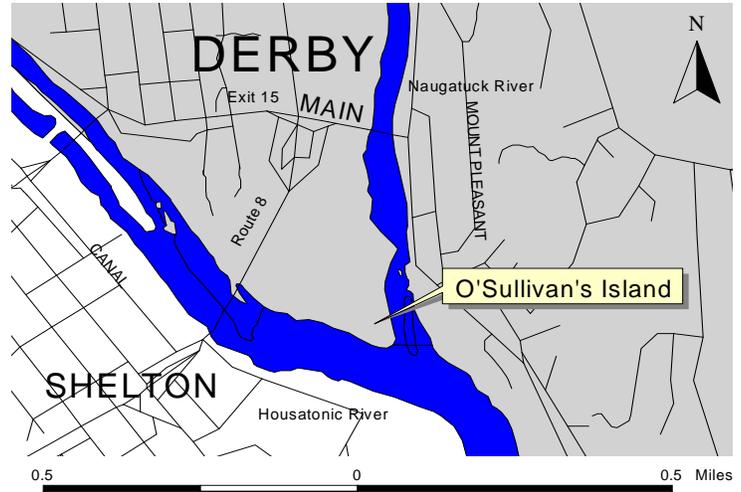


O'Sullivan's Island

June 1999

Derby, CT

This fact sheet was developed by the CT Department of Public Health, Naugatuck Valley Health District and the Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Pilot to provide information and answer questions about the O'Sullivan's Island Brownfields site in Derby. If you have further questions, please contact any of the agencies listed at



Background

O'Sullivan's Island is a peninsula located at the junction of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers in Derby, CT. This Brownfields site is being investigated for environmental contamination. Brownfields are former industrial or commercial properties that sit idle because of real or perceived environmental contamination. Future plans for the site include a community park and marina.

A section of this Island has been used for Fire Department Practice training since 1950. From approximately 1970 to 1976, the site was a source of sand and gravel. From 1970 to 1983 the site was used to dredge material for use as cover material at the Derby Landfill. After the dredging ended, several 55 gallon drums were identified in the river bank. Nine hundred drums were eventually removed. Some of the drums were leaking unknown liquids. A more recent investigation has found a number of different contaminants in certain areas on the site. Of most concern are PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), toluene and xylene.

Why is Site Access being Restricted?

Contaminants recently found on the site were measured above levels of health concern. The Naugatuck Valley Health District, in consultation with the CT DPH and other agencies, has advised that the site be closed to public access. This action has been taken to prevent potential exposures to people who may visit the site.

What Hazards Were Found on the Site?

A number of different chemical hazards were found. The contaminants of greatest concern are PCBs, toluene and xylene.

- PCBs are a family of chemicals once valued for their insulating and nonflammable properties. Exposure to PCBs over a long time has been shown to cause increases in blood fats, effects on the liver and kidneys and a rash similar to acne. It is also a suspected carcinogen.

- Toluene is a solvent used in producing gasoline, paints and other products. Long-term exposures at high levels may cause central nervous system symptoms such as fatigue, memory loss and dizziness. Repeated exposures may affect the kidneys.
- Xylene is also a solvent, and is used in the printing, rubber and leather industries. High levels of exposure for long periods may cause headaches, lack of muscle coordination and dizziness. High levels for short periods may cause irritation of the skin, eyes, nose and throat.

These health effects only occur at high levels and are not expected at this site.

I Have Visited The Site to Fish or Hike. Have I Been Exposed? Will I Get Sick?

Exposures to hazards occur when people ingest (eat), breathe (inhale) or have direct skin contact with the substance or waste material. At the O’Sullivan Island’s site, the most likely way in which people could be exposed is through direct contact with contaminated soil. This may have occurred if someone disturbed contaminated soil by digging or some other way.

If someone was exposed, any adverse health effects vary according to:

- ⇒ How long you were exposed
- ⇒ How much contamination you were exposed to
- ⇒ How you were exposed (skin contact ingestion, inhalation)

It is unlikely that anyone visiting the site has been exposed to hazards at levels that would cause health problems. If you have further questions, please contact your health provider and/or the local

What are Future Plans for the Site?

The Naugatuck Brownfields Pilot Program, in coordination with the CT Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. EPA, are further investigating contamination at O’Sullivan’s Island. A plan will be developed on how to clean up the contaminated soil. The CT DPH is further reviewing the results of the most recent investigation to evaluate potential health issues. In the meantime, measures have been taken to prevent access to the site.

The longer term plans will include clean-up of the site to safe levels, and re-use of the site as a community park and marina.

Who Can I Contact For More Information?



For Health Questions:

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For Site Questions:

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