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Montco site added to Superfund list

By Tom Avril

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A 35-acre Montgomery County site, long contaminated with residue from the nearby manufacture of asbestos, is being added to the national Superfund cleanup list, federal officials announced yesterday.

The parcel, in Ambler, Whitpain, and Upper Dublin, was used for the disposal of asbestos-containing material from the early 1900s until the late 1980s, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Superfund designation, which was proposed in September and formally takes place today, makes the site eligible for a special pool of federal cleanup dollars. No estimate of cleanup costs has been made yet for the tract, named the BoRit site because part of it was apparently once owned by a member of the Rittenhouse family, according to residents and the EPA.

Superfund cleanups typically run into the many millions of dollars. Asbestos, when inhaled, can cause a rare form of lung cancer, and the EPA said the site posed a potential risk. But it has said airborne levels of the contaminant are well within acceptable limits.

Sharon McCormick, cofounder of the BoRit Community Advisory Group, which had been pushing for the Superfund listing, said she was pleased by the move.

"We need a bigger pot of money," she said. "That's why we wanted to get it there."

McCormick said she spoke on her own behalf and not for the group.

The site includes a waste pile, a pond, and a park.

The portion that contains the waste pile is owned by a development company called Kane Core, according to Ambler officials. The park portion is owned by Whitpain Township and the pond by the Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve.

The telephone number at Kane Core has been disconnected, as has the home telephone for David F. Kane, a company official. Mark Marino, who joined Kane in proposing to build a condominium building on the site five years ago before withdrawing the plan, said he was no longer involved with the company and had no comment.

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