

Former Flying J Refinery Cut Bank, Montana

Fact Sheet, August 2024

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Flying J Refinery is 4 miles east of Cut Bank, Montana and covers about 220 acres. Flying J Petroleums, Inc. (FJP) is the current owner of the former petroleum refinery and gas absorption plant. The refinery portion of the business (the Process Area) operated from 1939 through 1983. The Gas Absorption Plant operated from 1932 to 1987.



REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Laws and Regulations

The Montana Hazardous Waste Act (MHWA) is the Montana equivalent of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). MHWA and RCRA are state and federal laws that govern proper management and disposal of hazardous waste, including permit requirements for certain treatment, storage, and disposal activities. Under certain circumstances, alternate enforcement mechanisms, such as an Order on Consent, may be issued to a facility instead of a hazardous waste permit.

Owners/operators are required to investigate, and cleanup historical releases of hazardous waste and hazardous constituents present on their facility property. In addition, off-site contamination that originates from the facility must also be addressed.

The Flying J Petroleums Order on Consent

An Administrative Order on Consent (MHWCAO-07-01) was issued to Flying J Petroleums Inc. (FJP) for the Former Flying J Refinery in 2008. The Order requires maintenance of two closed surface impoundments. In addition, FJP must conduct facility-wide investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste and/or hazardous constituents that may have been released to environmental media (soil, sediment, groundwater and surface water).



Former Flying J Refinery

HAZARDOUS WASTE SURFACE IMPOUNDMENTS

Two surface impoundments, the Guard Pond and the Surfaerator Pond, were used during refinery operations to treat and dispose of regulated hazardous wastes. These impoundments were used from 1976 to 1983 and then closed when the refining process operations were discontinued.

During closure, oily sludge in the surface impoundments was stabilized and then capped with a vegetative cover. The Montana Department of Human Health and Environmental Sciences (precursor to DEQ) approved final closure of the surface impoundments in 1989. Because the impoundments were closed with wastes in place, FJP must provide post-closure care and maintenance.



Grass Cover on the Surface Impoundments

SITE INVESTIGATION

EPA conducted a RCRA Facility Assessment (RFA) in 1988. The RFA identified potential sources of releases of hazardous waste and hazardous constituents in areas throughout the facility. FJP submitted a Current Conditions Report and RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI) work plan in 2009. The RFI investigation was conducted between 2008 and 2013. Soil and groundwater were collected analyzed to determine the nature and extent of contamination. In addition, a geophysical survey was completed to determine depth to bedrock, bedrock morphology, and saturated conditions within the overlying glacial till. Results of the RFI investigation have been included in an RFI Report, which DEQ approved as final in 2017.



Process Area of the Former Flying J Refinery

FJP will use the results of the RFI investigation to conduct a human health and ecological risk assessment to identify potential health risks humans and other biological organisms. FJP will use the results of the RFI investigation and risk assessments to then evaluate cleanup options in a Corrective Measures Study. DEQ will select a site-wide cleanup remedy based on the results of the Corrective Measures Study and knowledge of the facility.

After public comment on the remedy, Flying J Petroleums will be required to implement the remedy through a Corrective Measures Implementation (CMI) work plan. The work plan will include details for design, construction, maintenance, and monitoring of the cleanup remedy, as well as a schedule for startup and completion of the remedy.



Part of the Refinery wastewater system

CURRENT STATUS

Facility-Wide Investigation and Cleanup

FJP has completed the RFI investigation and is currently working on the human health and ecological risk assessments.

Hazardous Waste Surface Impoundments

FJP must maintain the vegetative cap and fencing around the closed surface impoundments. Groundwater monitoring downgradient of the units is included in the facility-wide investigation.



Old API Separator

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Throughout the cleanup process, the DEQ will keep the public informed through notices of public meetings and public comment periods in area newspapers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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