



Politics

[Opposition to Felon Voting Rights Thawing, Kentucky Lawmaker Says](#)



Local News

[Reproductive Rights Rally Planned for Frankfort](#)



Education

[Resettling Agencies Say Extra Funds Improve Partnership with JCPS](#)

Environment

5:19 PM MON AUGUST 19, 2013

Residential Cleanup Near Black Leaf Site is Underway

By [ERICA PETERSON](#) (/PEOPLE/ERICA-PETERSON)

Cleanup has begun at 44 houses near the former [Black Leaf Chemical Plant](#) (<http://wfpl.org/term/black-leaf-chemical>) in Louisville.

On Wilson Avenue, heavy machinery digs up dirt in the backyard of a home. Crews hired by the state and federal governments are removing the soil in 44 backyards that have showed high levels of heavy metals and pesticides. These houses abut the former Black Leaf



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wfpl/files/201308/blackleaf.JPG>

<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wfpl/files/201308/blackleaf.JPG>

Chemical plant, and regulators believe that's where most of this contamination came from.

But about 42 percent of the known contamination will be cleaned up, because 33 homeowners haven't given permission, or haven't responded to letters from regulators. EPA On-Scene Coordinator Art Smith says any runoff from untreated sites should be minimal. And though the Black Leaf site itself is still contaminated...the agency has installed storm water control measures, like erosion control fabric and rock dams, on the site in anticipation of the cleanup.

"All of which is designed to allow for this to take place without recontamination," Smith said. "And all the tests we've done so far on the site seem to indicate that so far we're effectively trapping any sediment or particles that would be carrying contaminants from leaving the site."

Denise Dickerson is skeptical. Her yard is on the list to be remediated. But she says removing her dirt and replacing it amounts to putting a band-aid on the problem, as long as her house is still directly next to the Black Leaf site.

"The real way to solve the problem is really what you're going to do with Black Leaf," she said. "The chemicals that are buried so deep under the ground, either you're going to leave those there or you dig them up and take them somewhere and get rid of it. Either way, I'm exposed. My whole family is exposed. So I want something done about it. I really do."

State and federal regulators are in discussions with the companies who have owned the Black Leaf site over the years, trying to reach a deal to make the companies pay for the full-scale site cleanup.

For more WFPL coverage of Black Leaf, [click here. \(http://wfpl.org/term/black-leaf-chemical\)](http://wfpl.org/term/black-leaf-chemical)

TAGS: [smokestack \(/term/smokestack\)](/term/smokestack) [Black Leaf Chemical \(/term/black-leaf-chemical\)](/term/black-leaf-chemical)

Related Content:



Environment

[Medical Testing on Black Leaf Residents Will Continue Into Next Week](#) (/post/medical-testing-black-leaf-residents-will-)



Environment

[Researchers Hope to Conduct Medical Tests on Black Leaf Residents](#) (/post/researchers-hope-conduct-)

0 comments



Leave a message...

Best ▾ Community

Share

No one has commented yet.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site