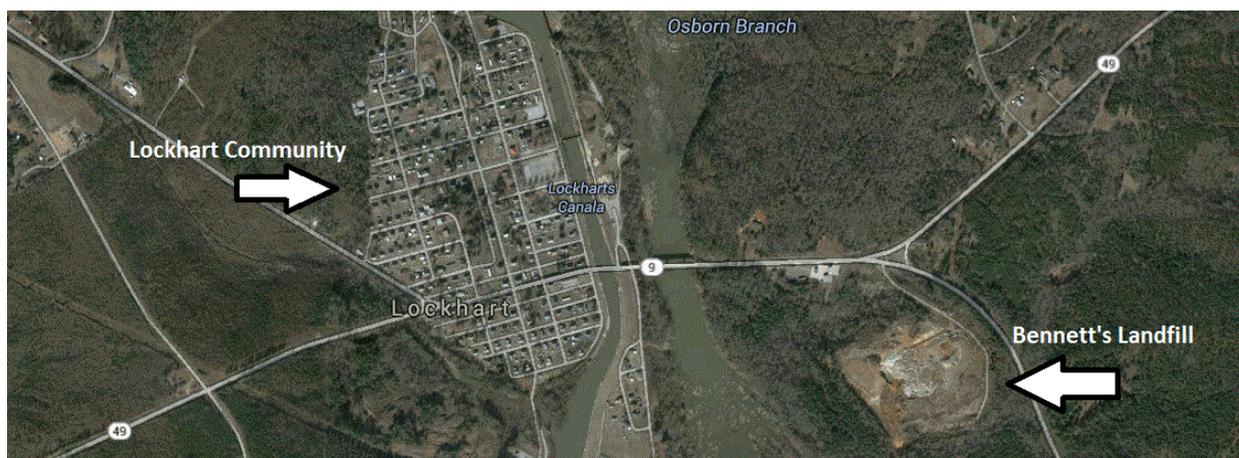




Lockhart Community Update

March 6, 2015

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is providing periodic updates to keep the Lockhart community informed on the fire at Bennett's Landfill and its smoke.



Bennett's Landfill

Bennett's Landfill, located at 4399 Pinckney Road in Chester County, was a landfill permitted by DHEC to accept construction and demolition debris. Through various inspections of the site, DHEC learned that the landfill was not being operated in accordance with its permit and state regulations. In April 2014, DHEC ordered the landfill to close if it did not correct specific violations.

On November 2, 2014, fire fighters from Chester County and DHEC emergency personnel responded to a fire at the landfill. On November 3, 2014, staff from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) arrived at the landfill following a request from DHEC. After a week of fire-fighting efforts by Chester County, Union County, and the SC Forestry Commission, the fire was thought to be extinguished. However, heat from within the landfill re-kindled the fire later in December. Smoke from the fire has been impacting nearby communities, including Lockhart, since that time. DHEC and EPA are monitoring the area to determine the impacts to local water and air quality.

Monitoring the water

DHEC staff collected samples from the public water supply well at the Broad River Mart located immediately adjacent to the landfill. Results from these samples indicated no impacts from the landfill to this source of drinking water.

Surface water samples may be collected from the landfill property at a later date if potentially harmful contaminants are found onsite and heavy rainfall causes a significant change in stormwater runoff.

Monitoring the air

Seven air monitoring stations have been continuously sampling the air near the landfill since late January. Five monitors are located in Lockhart, one is at the Broad River Mart, and one is located southeast of the landfill. The monitors are continuously measuring the levels of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in the air. The data are showing a pattern of increased PM_{2.5} levels usually between midnight and sunrise the next morning. The monitors are also documenting some basic meteorological data, such as wind speed, wind direction, and temperature.

Health Impacts from Particle Pollution

An increased amount of particulates in the air occurs when weather conditions bring the smoke from the landfill fire into the Town of Lockhart. Increased particulates can be bothersome and may aggravate some pre-existing health conditions. Our monitoring has found that the particulate concentrations from the smoke are highest in the early hours of the morning on days when the wind is coming from the direction of the fire and there is not enough wind to clear out the valley where the Town of Lockhart is located.

If you have a choice of when to walk, jog, or be outside, do so during the times that the smoke is not visible at ground level. As always, if you have any personal health concerns, we recommend that you seek advice from your regular health care provider.

Next Steps

DHEC recognizes that residents in the Lockhart Community have concerns about how their quality of life is being impacted by the landfill fire. We will continue to work closely with EPA in the coming weeks to further assess the landfill. Additionally, DHEC and EPA will continue to monitor air quality in the area for elevated levels of Particulates (PM_{2.5}). DHEC is committed to keeping your community informed on this issue.

Stay Informed

If you have any questions or would like to be added to our mailing list for updates, please contact Richelle Tolton, Community Liaison, at (803) 896-2333 or toltonrd@dhec.sc.gov.

Please share this update with others who may be interested!