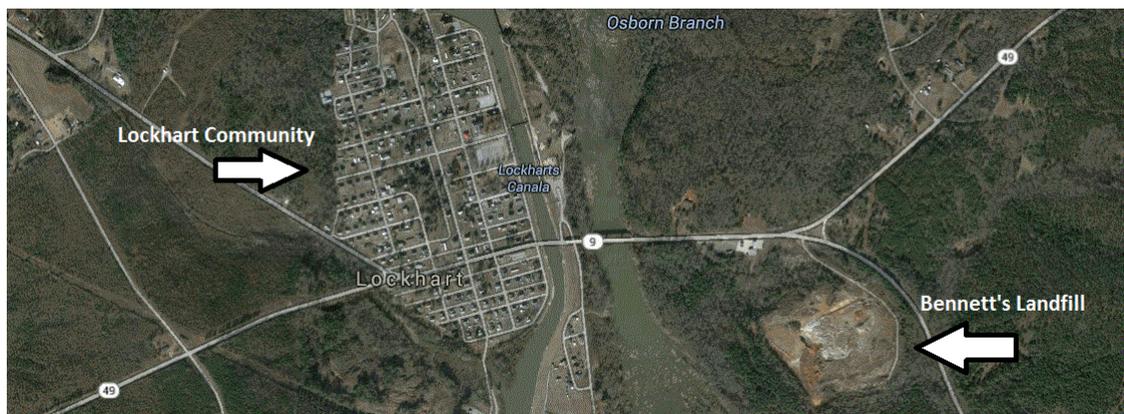




Lockhart Community Update

March 25, 2015

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



DHEC Legal Actions on Bennett's Landfill

In addition to assisting the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in monitoring and assessment efforts at the landfill (as outlined in our March 6, 2015, flyer), DHEC is taking legal action to compel both the landfill permit holder and the property owner to permanently close the landfill. To date, the landfill permit holder has not closed the landfill or made efforts to extinguish the fire. DHEC's pursuit of holding the landfill owner accountable for his obligations under the permit is ongoing.



Monitoring the air

The EPA has conducted sampling of the smoke and soil at the landfill to determine if there are any hazardous substances being released either through the smoke, by stormwater runoff, or by other exposure pathways. No hazardous levels of toxic compounds have been found that would trigger an immediate response by EPA. EPA is currently evaluating findings to determine if additional federal assistance can be provided. DHEC and EPA are still collecting continuous samples of particulate concentrations at seven air monitoring stations (pictured on the left), as mentioned in DHEC's March 6, 2015, flyer.

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 when there is not enough wind to push the smoke out of the river valley where the Town of Lockhart is located.

If you have a choice of when to walk, jog, or be outside, we recommend that you do so during 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 health care provider.

Next Steps

DHEC's role is to protect public health and the environment in all areas of our state. We take this responsibility seriously. We are actively pursuing all avenues to find resources to address the fire in a safe and effective manner. Our work with local, state, and federal officials in this regard is ongoing. Additionally, DHEC and the EPA are working to further assess landfill conditions and monitor air quality in the area for elevated levels of particulates (PM_{2.5}).

In an effort to keep you informed of weather conditions that affect smoke levels, DHEC has begun and will continue providing daily (Monday through Friday via fax and email) air quality forecasts to Lockhart Town Hall, Broad River Mart, Lockhart School, Chester County Emergency Management Division, Union County Emergency Management Division, and any interested resident.

DHEC is aware of the concerns that many Lockhart residents have expressed about how the landfill fire is impacting their lives. We have reached out to Mayor Ailene Ashe for assistance in distributing information and meeting with local residents to hear concerns first-hand. We will remain vigilant in our efforts to keep your community informed of future developments concerning the landfill fire.

Stay Informed

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

Please share this update with others who may be interested!