

Unisys Corp. says cleanup of dump site is too costly

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Unisys Corp., successor to Remington Rand Co., said it will clean up its former dump site near Seeley Creek.

But the state Department of Environmental Conservation said the company, which says it has already spent more than \$6 million on cleanup at the site, has indicated that it can't afford to clean all the contaminated soil at the former dump site.

The former Remington Rand factory, on South Main Street on Elmira's Southside, manufactured busi-

ness machines from 1937 until 1972 at the site where Southside High School now stands.

The dump, next to Seeley Creek at the end of Cedar Street in Southport, was used for more than 20 years to dispose of factory wastes, from paint stripper to coal ash.

The portion of the landfill on the south side of the creek and the surface soil on the north side of the creek have been cleaned. But contamination in the form of lead, cadmium, nickel and polychlorinated biphenyls, known as PCBs, remains below the surface on the north side, according to Manmohan Mehta, the DEC environmental engineer in charge of the cleanup.

What's left of the hazardous waste

at the creek could be cleaned up in a single spring and summer, Mehta said. But the operation has been stalled since 1995, when Unisys estimated that an additional 36,000 to 70,000 cubic yards of material would need to be removed at a cost of more than \$25 million.

"Excavating this volume of material would be equivalent to strip mining the site," Unisys representatives wrote the DEC in 1994.

Mehta said last week that only about 20,000 cubic yards of soil must go.

Joe Barrett, manager of corporate and media relations for Unisys, said, "We'll do what it takes. We're waiting to hear from the state, and we'll do what they ask."

The DEC is negotiating with the company to create a new cleanup plan, possibly setting more relaxed parameters for the amount of contamination that can remain in the soil, Mehta said.

"If it's not going to do harm, we don't necessarily have to clean up to the standard every time," Mehta said. "Here, there is no development potential anyway because it's on a flood plain."

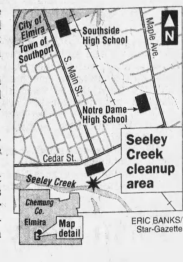
At one time, the fact that the site was on a flood plain made it more dangerous because contaminated soil could wash downstream. This happened in 1994, but immediately afterward Unisys volunteered to shore up the creek's banks with rocks, Mehta said.

If cleanup requirements are relaxed, a cap of dirt will be placed over the contaminated soil to keep it from eroding away over time, Mehta said.

The original agreement between the company and the DEC stipulated that Unisys would pay up to \$5 million to clean the site.

If Unisys can't pay for the work, state taxpayers will probably have to foot the bill, Mehta said.

Unisys, a computer and Internet company in Lombard, Ill., was formed in 1986 through the merger of the Burroughs Co. and Sperry-Rand Corp. Remington Rand was a predecessor of Sperry-Rand.



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