

Inside Omya Vermont

Fall 2007 Vol.1 No.2

From Rob Tikoft

Omya Verpol Plant Manager



Omya's announcement of plans to consolidate management functions to the Greater Cincinnati area has garnered much attention. As we consolidate our North American headquarters, we remain dedicated to our Vermont operations and employees, and there continues to be a lot going on at our Florence facility. For that reason, I would like to share some *Vermont-specific* activities with you in this edition of "Inside Omya Vermont." Articles include:

- an update on the Section 5 independent environmental study;
- an introduction to our newly created community "Issue Teams;"
- an overview of Omya's Act 250 application for our tailings dewatering facility;
- and, a summary of this spring's biannual water monitoring event.

As the Plant Manager here in Florence, I welcome your comments and questions about our operation. I also extend an invitation to join us at our plant for a tour of the facility. We can accommodate one person, groups of 50, or any number in between. We are proud to show people what we do and how we do it. Please contact Mary-Kaye Macaulay at 802-770-7500, or me at 802-770-7617, to arrange your tour.



► Highlights

Omya News

June 21: Meeting held to discuss progress on noise and establish a plan for further efforts.

June 28: First meeting of the Trucks and Transportation Issue Team.

July 27: Spring 2007 semi-annual groundwater and surface water testing report released.

August 6: Surface water monitoring preliminary results indicate the presence of perchlorate in surface water discharged from the Hogback Quarry.

August 7: Meeting to review additional noise monitoring data.

August 17: Additional sampling and re-sampling results indicate perchlorate levels were all below the Vermont Health Advisory level.

September 17: Consultant presentation of Preliminary Phase II Hydrogeology/ Toxicology findings to Section 5 Oversight Team.

October 4: First meeting of the Plant Issue Team.

► Biannual Water Monitoring Event

Spring 2007 Water Monitoring Report

Twice per year, Omya conducts environmental monitoring of surface water and groundwater, both on-site at the Florence plant and in the surrounding vicinity. Sampling this past spring took place May 29–31, 2007.

Water samples were analyzed for a variety of compounds and elements, including 24 different metals. Levels of several metals, most commonly iron and manganese, were detected in a number of on-site monitoring wells above Vermont Groundwater Enforcement Standards (GES). Iron was detected above the GES in surface water off-site at two locations: in the Florence Post Office Swale and in a nearby spring—neither of which are drinking water sources. Aluminum and lead also were detected above their respective GESs in the same spring. Arsenic was detected in two on-site monitoring wells at levels of 10.2 and 10.4 parts per billion (ppb),

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Omya Community Issue Teams

This summer, Omya launched the first of three ongoing community "Issue Teams" to work cooperatively with interested neighbors to identify and address specific impacts of Omya's operations. *Issue Teams* will work together to find tangible solutions for issues identified within Omya's transportation, plant, and quarry operations.

The community *Issue Teams* will act as resources for local residents to better understand Omya's operations through a process that enhances communication between the company and its neighbors. These *Issue Teams* will also better enable Omya to understand and respond to residents' concerns and further involve these individuals in Omya's existing and future activities.

The **Trucks and Transportation Issue Team** met for the first time on June 28, 2007. Team members currently include local residents and business owners, Omya Logistics Manager Aric Farrar and Staff Geologist Andy McIntosh. During this meeting, team members identified a variety of general and Omya-specific concerns that stem from truck and rail traffic. The *Trucks and Transportation Issue Team* prioritized truck speed and railroad crossing safety as the first issues for the team to research and work on together (Please see the Issue Team in Action story). The team held its second meeting September 6, 2007.

On October 4, 2007, the **Plant Issue Team** held its first meeting. This team focused on identifying and addressing concerns related to the Verpol plant. Team members include local residents and business owners, a State Representative, a Town Manager, Omya Safety Manager Sean Alvarez, and Omya Production Superintendent Jim Morale. By the end of the year, the **Quarry Issue Team** will meet to look into concerns associated with Omya's quarrying operations.

Agendas and notes from the community *Issue Teams* meetings can be found at http://www.omyainvermont.net/lib_it.htm.

► Issue Team in Action

Emergency Vehicles at Blocked Railroad Crossings

During a discussion about rail traffic at the first Trucks and Transportation Issue Team meeting, a community team member asked what happens if an emergency vehicle encounters a blocked railroad grade crossing.

At the September 6 meeting, Team Leaders Aric Farrar and Andy McIntosh presented their findings on this topic. They found that:

- The State of Vermont prohibits trains from blocking crossings for more than five minutes at a time in most cases.
- It is normal practice for the railroad to move or "break" (decouple) trains for emergency vehicles, as long as it is safe to do so.
- Local emergency service personnel and the train company communicate with each other if they encounter a situation where there is a chance that the movement of vehicles or trains over crossings will be affected.
- Police cruisers and fire stations monitor the railroad radio frequency and first responders always have a backup route plan in place in case of a blocked crossing.

We are committed to addressing public safety concerns and happy to be able to pass along this information to the wider community.



► Act 250

Tailings Dewatering Facility

In early June, Omya submitted an application for an amendment to its Act 250 permit to add a new tailings dewatering facility at the Florence plant. At a total project cost of approximately \$10 million, the tailings dewatering facility will eliminate the current use of the open settling cells, enhance water recovery from the tailings product, and improve overall operations. The facility will remove over 90 percent of the process water from the tailings within a controlled environment of tanks and equipment, returning the process water back to the main plant for re-use.

The dewatering facility not only will improve environmental performance by directly recovering most of the process water, but it also will improve handling characteristics and thereby increase the potential for commercial use of the tailings product. In addition, the elimination of diesel powered heavy equipment that periodically excavates the current settling cells will reduce impacts to air quality and noise.

The Act 250 Application currently is pending before the District 1 Environmental Commission, and a public hearing was held on September 5, 2007.

For more information about the Tailing Dewatering Facility project, please contact Omya's Mike Laurent, (802) 770-7568, or view www.OmyaInVermont.net/em_tailmgmt.htm.

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► What's Happening

Section 5 Update

Section 5 of Act No. 65, approved in June 2005 by the Vermont Legislature, requires a study of Omya's Florence operations to be conducted by certified, independent, third-party experts. Omya, with the help of CLF Ventures, organized the Section 5 Oversight Team, which consists of local residents, a State Senator, a Pittsford municipal representative, Omya senior management, an University of Vermont professor, a VT Agency of Natural Resources representative, and environmental advocates. The Oversight Team selected two independent consultants to perform the study, Cambridge Environmental Inc. and Geosyntec Consultants Inc., both based in Massachusetts.

The first phase of the study involved a review of existing information and data. The Phase I Report was completed and released in January 2007. It highlighted areas requiring additional data collection that are being addressed in Phase II. Work began on Phase II in May 2007, and will be completed with a final report submitted to the Vermont Legislature on or before January 15, 2008.

The Section 5 consultants spent the summer and early fall of 2007 gathering

new data to enable a more complete evaluation of Omya's operational impacts. In August, the consultants identified the presence of perchlorate in surface water at points of discharge from the Hogback Quarry. Perchlorate is commonly used in explosives, fireworks, and some agricultural applications. About two years ago, Omya had requested of its quarry subcontractors to use perchlorate free primary blasting agents.

Preliminary results from a second round of sampling and analysis showed lower perchlorate levels at the re-sampled quarry outfall locations. Four drinking water wells were shown to have perchlorate levels approximately 20 times lower than the Vermont Health Advisory level. No perchlorate was detected in nearby ponds.

Throughout the fall of 2007, the Section 5 consultants will continue to present their preliminary findings to the Section 5 Oversight Team and to the public. The consultants will deliver the final report to the Vermont Legislature on or before January 15, 2008, and will then begin a series of presentations to the Florence community.

Additional Section 5 Study information, including detailed Progress Reports and Oversight Team meeting summaries, can be found on our website: www.OmyaInVermont.net/lib_sect5.htm.

will incorporate efforts to minimize the potential for future interference.

Groundwater and surface water quality continues to be evaluated in accordance with the State-approved monitoring plan. The results of the sampling event are regularly submitted to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the Pittsford-Florence Water District, and the District Environmental Commission, and are also posted on the www.OmyaInVermont.net web site. In addition, we have established a dedicated community call-in line for any questions regarding the water monitoring reports. The phone number is: 802-770-7644. We pledge to return all calls made to the Community Feedback Line by 5:00 p.m. on the next business day.

Water Monitoring Report

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slightly above the GES of 10 ppb.

Low levels (below the Vermont Ground-water Enforcement Standard) of two of the four flotation reagent components were detected in one on-site well; none of the four components were detected off-site.

Free chlorine was detected at low levels in the majority of sampling locations, and at levels above the environmental standard at all four locations at the Post Office Swale. Because these results may have been affected by the existing acidity (pH) of the water and/or by dissolved manganese concentrations in the water, subsequent testing

From the CEO

A Note from Tony Colak

By now, most of our readers probably have heard about the decision to consolidate Omya's management functions to the Greater Cincinnati area. This decision reflects the growth of Omya over the years, most notably the geographic expansion of our production facilities throughout the United States and Canada.

Omya will continue to be a proud member of the Vermont community and will continue to employ more than 280 people and 150 subcontractors at our production facility in Florence and at the Proctor campus. In addition, we recognize the importance of maintaining and enhancing strong relationships with community stakeholders like you, and we are dedicated to ensuring a smooth transition during our move. Please continue to rely on the Omya team that currently addresses your questions and concerns.

Some of you may be wondering how my role will shift as a result of these changes. Even though I am the new CEO of Omya North America, I remain completely committed to Vermont, my role on the Section 5 Oversight Team, and the independent process undertaken by the team and consultants relating to Section 5. In other words, I personally will see the Section 5 process through to its successful completion next year.

Finally, I want to extend thanks to every person or group that has reached out to us over the years. I believe very firmly in open community dialogue, and fully support increased constructive feedback about our operations in Vermont. Our door is open and I encourage you to come see us.

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View to south overlooking primary setting (dewatering) cells and Kane & Drake Tailings Management Area.



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