

Discovery of PFCs contamination in Minnesota

When Good Science is Bad Politics

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Today's Talk

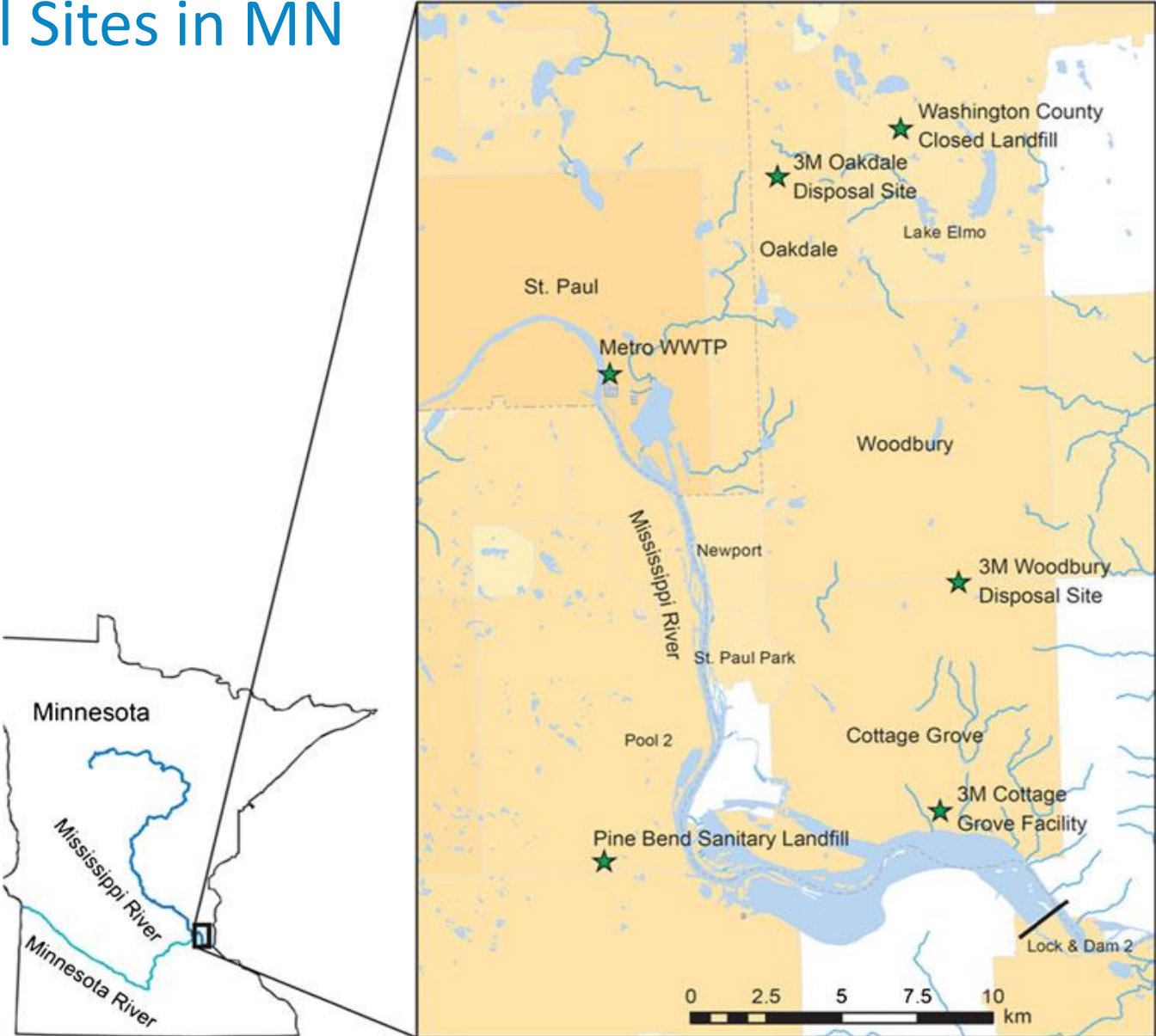
- ✓ Research on Emerging Contaminants
 - Discovery of PFCs contamination in Minnesota (2001-2006).
- ✓ Personal Story - When good science is bad politics
 - How conflict of interest affected government response by failing to protect the public.
 - How polluters buying influence with politicians and their appointees who are supposed to be serving the public.
- ✓ A Larger Global Picture - PFCs as New POPs in the Stockholm Convention
 - How to support Stockholm Convention's initiative in global screening of contaminated sites?
 - Starting with contaminated sites where USA is responsible.

Discovery of PFC Contamination from 3M Manufacturing Facility in MN

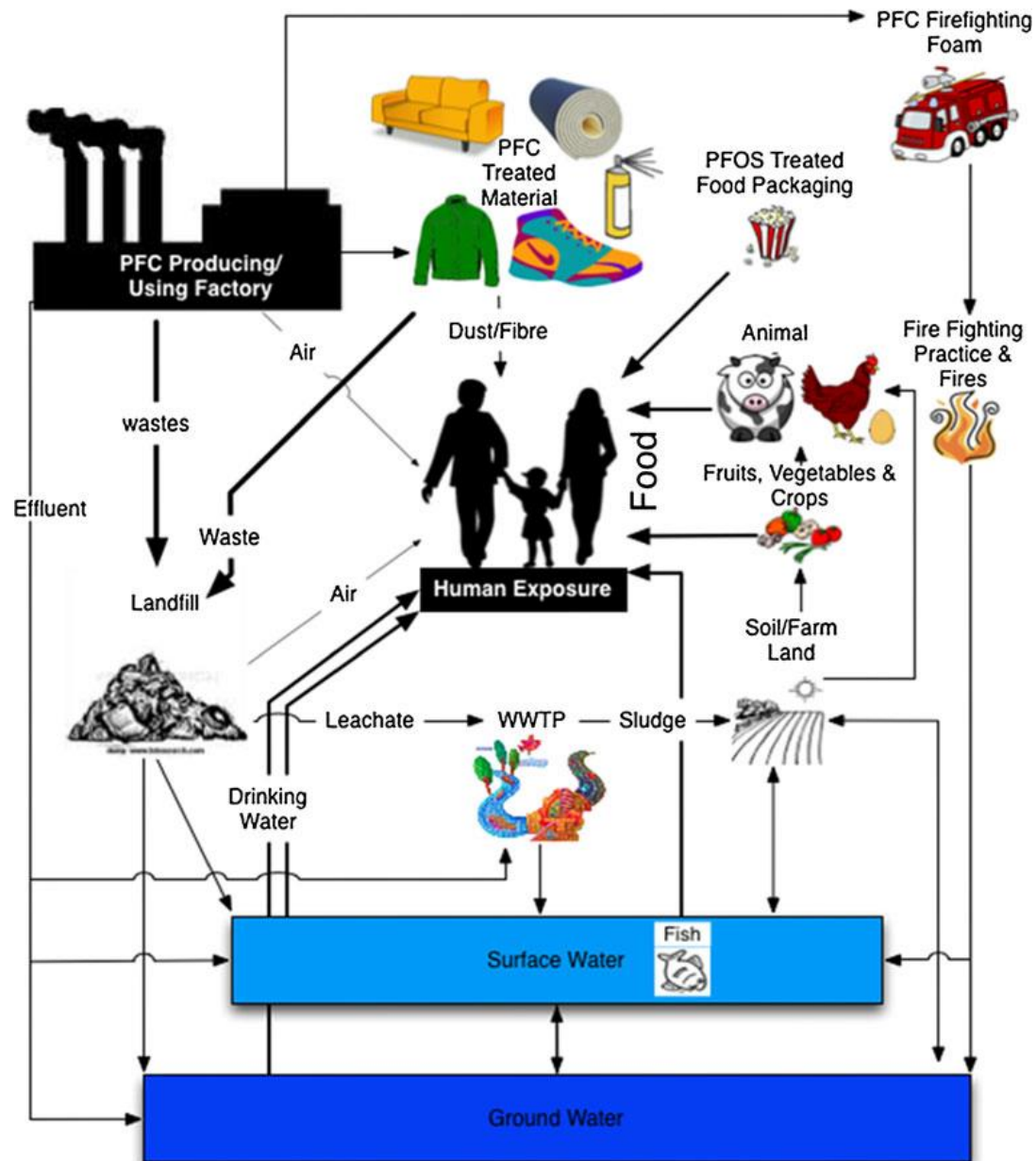
- First comprehensive investigation, revealing widespread contamination of MN environment due to improper control and mismanagement of PFC production wastes.
- 3M Company, the primary global producer of PFOA and PFOS-related PFCs, manufactured these chemicals at its Cottage Grove facility in MN from the late 1940's until 2002.
- Over five decades of PFC production, 3M generated significant amounts of wastes which were deposited at several sites in MN, contaminating ground water, drinking water, local fish, and the Mississippi River.

<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/leg/minutes/database/84-s-1261-0-20060227-a.pdf>

3M Cottage Grove PFCs Production Facility and Disposal Sites in MN



Environmental Releases and Exposure Risks



Personal Story

My story reflects how polluters buying influence with politicians and their appointees who are supposed to be serving the public.

The former MPCA Commissioner, coming from a regulated business to become the regulator was a good example of this, as was her decision to force me out of my job.

Toxic Traces - NPR Report

<http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/projects/2005/02/toxictraces/>

Conflict of Interest at Environmental Agency is Not Unique to Minnesota

When polluters take advantage of "fox guarding the chicken coop" arrangements, where their people run state environmental agencies!

<http://www.apple-pie.org/ttp/default.asp?articleid=55>

When good science is bad politics - City Pages

<http://www.citypages.com/news/when-good-science-is-bad-politics-6690845>

When Good Science is Bad Politics



11 Years Later - 3M Still Off the Hook

- MPCA never published our comprehensive PFC study, instead later published a study that was submitted to them by 3M.
- 3M escaped legal liability and financial responsibility in mismanagement of its PFC production wastes and its role in local PFC contamination.
- Four years later (2010), MN State Attorney General filed new lawsuit against 3M on behalf of Minnesotans for polluting their drinking water. After 6 years of legal holdups, in 2016 the case was finally moved forward!
- Similar law suit was filed in 2016 against 3M in Decatur, AL.

Larger Global picture

Synergies - Multilateral Environmental Agreements



Prohibit, eliminate and/or restrict the production and use, the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs. Identify and manage the stockpiles and wastes containing POPs.



Control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal; reduction of hazardous waste generation and the promotion of environmentally sound management of such wastes.



Promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among Parties in the international trade of hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm.

PFCs as New POPs in Stockholm Convention

- In response to this global problem, in May 2009, PFOS and related substances were added to the Stockholm Convention “New POPs” listings and officially became the first fluorinated persistent organic pollutants.
- Consequently, PFOS and its related substances must be regulated and addressed globally in accordance with the provisions of the Convention which has been ratified by 178 countries, excluding the USA.
- The mass flow and waste management of PFC producing and using industries should be tightly regulated by national authorities. Compliance with the obligations of the Stockholm Convention is essential to effectively address global PFC contamination.

Stockholm Convention's initiative in global screening of contaminated sites

- The Convention requires its parties to develop an inventory and systematic screening of PFC contaminated sites based on PFOS inventory guidance developed by Stockholm Convention.
- Recommendations for risk reduction of PFOS highlighted the need for assessment of production, use, and end-of-life stages, proposing to undertake “urgent investigations into landfills where past and present wastes are deposited.”
- The Stockholm Convention recommendations promote the transfer of knowledge and technology, including capacity-building and good practice stories to support global efforts to reduce PFOS risks.
- In October 2015 the Convention POPs Review Committee submitted a proposal to add PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related compounds to the Stockholm Convention “New POPs” listings.