

**SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT  
FOR THE  
ALTGELD GARDENS COMMUNITY  
I-94 and 130th Street  
CHICAGO, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**August 6, 1997**

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## Table of Contents

| <u>Section</u> |                                       | <u>Page</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1              | Introduction .....                    | 1-1         |
| 2              | Background .....                      | 2-1         |
|                | 2.1 Site Description .....            | 2-1         |
|                | 2.2 Site History .....                | 2-2         |
| 3              | Site Assessment .....                 | 3-1         |
| 4              | Analytical Results .....              | 4-1         |
| 5              | Discussion of Potential Threats ..... | 5-1         |
| 6              | Removal Activities .....              | 6-1         |

| <u>Appendix</u> |                                       | <u>Page</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| A               | Aerial Photographic Analysis .....    | A-1         |
| B               | U.S. EPA CRL Analytical Reports ..... | B-1         |
| C               | Photo Documentation .....             | C-1         |

## List of Figures

| <u>Figure</u> |                         | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 2-1           | Site Location Map ..... | 2-3         |
| 2-2           | Site Features Map ..... | 2-4         |

## List of Tables

| <u>Table</u> |                                                                                   | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 3-1          | Standing Water Sample Description .....                                           | 3-1         |
| 3-2          | Surface Soil Sample Description .....                                             | 3-2         |
| 3-3          | Sub-Surface Soil Sample Description .....                                         | 3-3         |
| 3-4          | Block 11 Follow -up Surface Soil Sample Description .....                         | 3-4         |
| 4-1          | Summarized PAH Data for Standing Water Samples .....                              | 4-1         |
| 4-2          | Summarized PAH Data for Surface Soil Samples .....                                | 4-2         |
| 4-3          | Summarized PAH Data for Sub-Surface Soil Samples .....                            | 4-3         |
| 4-4          | Summarized PAH Data for Block 11 Follow Up Surface Soil Samples & X103\SS20 ..... | 4-4         |

## **1. Introduction**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Southeast Chicago Site Assessment Team (SAT) requested the Superfund Division Emergency Response Branch (ERB) and the Superfund Division Technical Support Section (TSS) to assess the possible presence of soil contamination at the Altgeld Gardens Community (AGC) located in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

On-Scene Coordinator Charles Gebien and Keith Lesniak of U.S. EPA ERB were tasked to perform the site assessment and to determine if conditions are present at the AGC which present an imminent and substantial threat to public health and welfare and the environment. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was advised of proposed assessment work and participated in sampling activities.

## **2. Background**

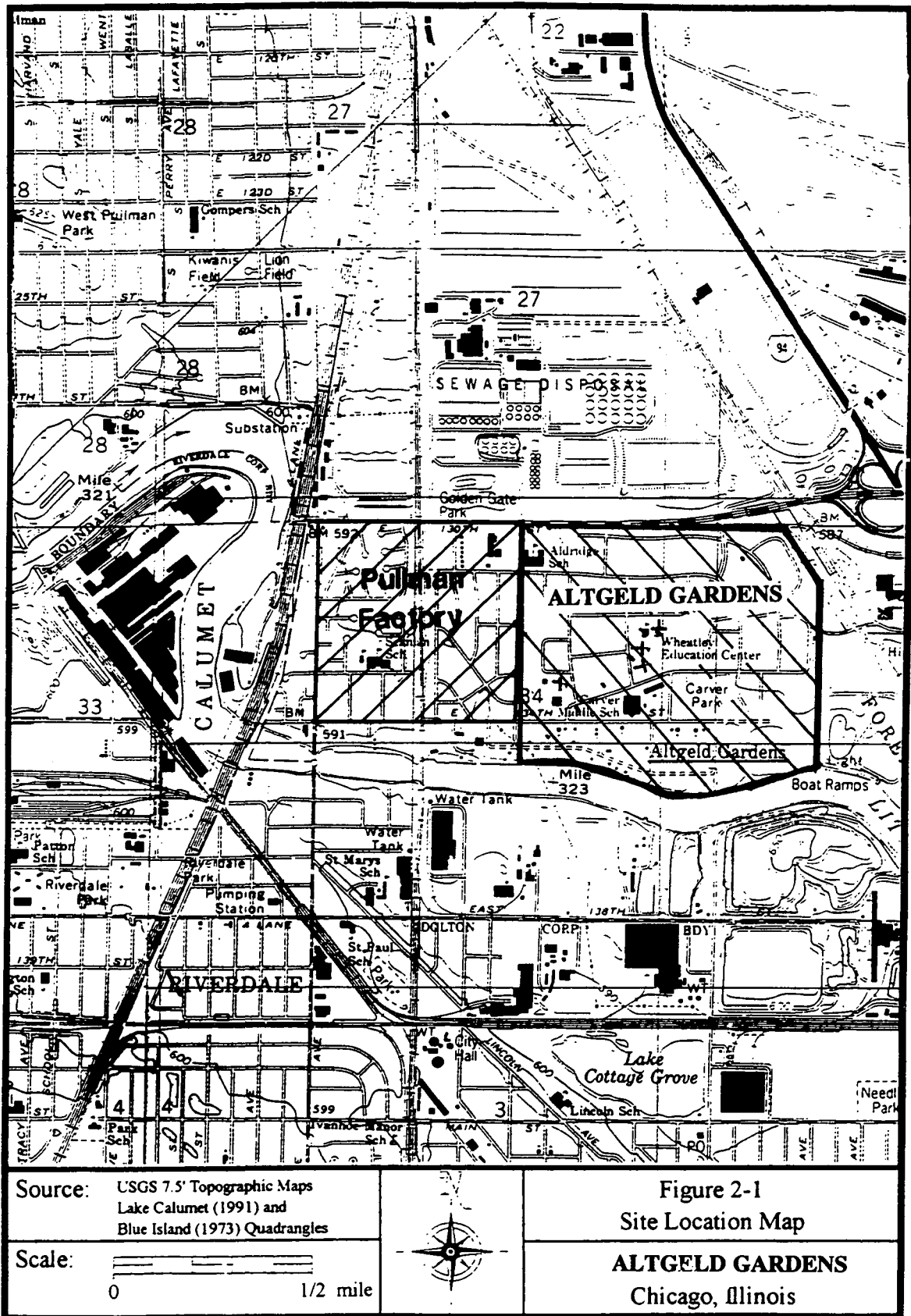
### **2.1 Site Description**

The Altgeld Gardens community (AGC) is a low-income housing development that is managed by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). The AGC is located near Interstate 94 and 130th Street, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois (Figure 2-1). The AGC is bounded on the north by 130th Street, on the south by the Little Calumet River, on the east by the Beaubien Woods, and on the west by St. Lawrence Avenue (Figure 2-2). Approximately 10,000 residents live in the AGC.

### **2.2 Site History**

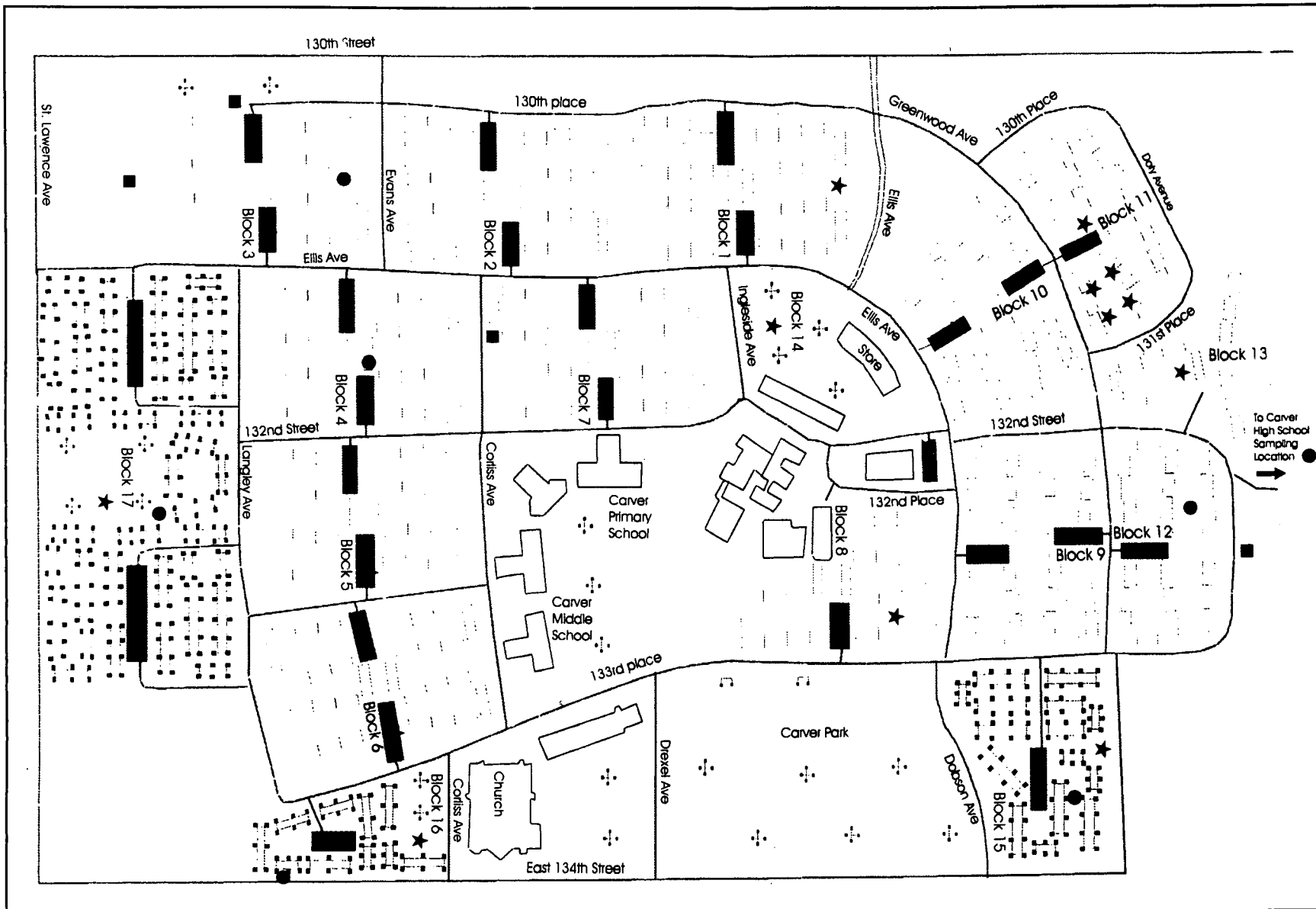
The AGC was constructed in approximately 1941, atop an agricultural area. Residents of the AGC have indicated that canals from the Pullman Sewage Farm carried sewage wastes from industrial areas north of the AGC, through the AGC, and southward to the little Calumet River, until the 1950s. Many residents complain that health problems including skin rashes and asthma are prevalent in the AGC. Two soil samples collected from the AGC as part of a 1990 U.S. EPA Site Screening Inspection (SSI) and 1994 Expanded Site Inspection (ESI) for the Pullman Sewage Farm identified elevated levels of PAHs, pesticides, and heavy metals in surface soil (Refer to Table 4-4). The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has recommended that additional soil testing is justified at the AGC, particularly in areas where children play. The contaminants of concern are phthalates, PCBs, PAHs, heavy metals, pesticides, and VOCs.

On July 18, 1996, OSC Gebien, U.S. EPA ERB, completed a Sampling QA/QC Work Plan (SWP) for sampling activities planned at the AGC. The sample locations that are included in the SWP were chosen by interviews with AGC leaders and are based on complaints of contamination in each of the locations. In August 1996, the U.S. EPA Characterization Research Division completed an aerial photographic analysis of the Pullman Sewage Farm and the AGC area. In November 1996, an addendum was added to further interpret historical drainage ways which appear in 1938 aerial photos of the AGC (Refer to Appendix A for the Aerial Photographic Analysis of Altgeld Gardens). The 1938 aerial photo shows the AGC property in cultivation prior to construction of housing units and depicts possible drainage ways.



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7.12.94

# Altgeld Gardens Sampling Locations



- ### Legend
- Residential Buildings
  - Overhead Lighting
  - Public Buildings
  - Pavement
  - ★ Surface Sampling Locations
  - Subsurface Sampling Locations
  - Standing Water Sampling Locations

### 3. Site Assessment

On July 18, 1996 OSC Charles Gebien and Keith Lesniak visited the AGC area, after a major storm event to observe and photo document possible flooding conditions. On July 22, 1996, OSC Gebien and Lesniak met at AGC with Mr. Fred Chang, P.E., Environmental Unit, CHA, to collect water samples from areas of chronic standing water within the AGC. Standing water samples were collected from seven locations (Figure 2-2) were collected from the following locations; Block 15 (SO1), Block 12 (SO5), Block 16 (SO6), Block 17 (SO7), Block 3 (SO2), Block 4 (SO3), Carver High School (SO9). Refer to Table 3-1 for further sample location and description information and to Appendix C for photographs taken during the flooding observation and water sampling activities. Sampling was conducted in level D protection. The samples were delivered to the U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory (CRL), Chicago, Illinois. The water samples were analyzed for ABN, pesticides/polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), volatile organic analytes (VOAs), metals, mercury, and cyanide.

On August 21, 1996 OSC Charles Gebien and Keith Lesniak returned to the AGC area, and met with Mr. Fred Chang, P.E., Environmental Unit, CHA, to collect soil samples from areas within the AGC which are suspected areas of contamination. Soil samples were collected from the surface of the ground at ten locations (Figure 2-2). Samples were collected from the following locations; Block 16 (S17), Block 17 (S18), Block 3 (S13), Block 4 (S14), Carver Primary School Courtyard on Corliss St (S21), Block 15 (S12), Block 12 (S16), Carver High School (S20), Block 11 (S15) and WIC Clinic (S19). Refer to Table 3-2 for additional sample description and location information and to Appendix C for photographs taken during the soil sampling activities. Sampling was conducted in level D protection. The samples were delivered to the U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory (CRL), Chicago, Illinois. The soil samples were analyzed for ABN, pesticides/PCBs, VOAs, metals, mercury, and cyanide.

On November 11, 1996, OSC Charles Gebien and Keith Lesniak returned to the AGC area, and met with Steve Peterson, Alan Gebien, and Tom Sedlacek. Mr. Fred Chang, CHA, was not present due to other obligations. The purpose of the visit was to investigate subsurface soils in historical drainage areas within the AGC, which were identified through aerial photographic analysis as potential routes of contamination from the former Pullman Sewage Farm. Four former drainage ways were chosen for Geoprobe sampling, and one Geoprobe boring was performed in each drainage way. Subsurface soil samples were collected from the four Geoprobe boring locations as shown in Figure 2-

2. Samples were collected as follows; Geoprobe I 2'-4' (S01), 4'-6'(S02), Geoprobe II 2'-4' (S03), 4'-6' (S04), 6'-8' (S11), Geoprobe III 2'-4' (S05), 4'-6' (S06), Geoprobe IV 2'-4' (S07), 4'-6' (S08) and 6'-8' (S09). Refer to Table 3-3 for further sample description and location information. Photographs were not taken during the Geoprobe soil sampling activities. Sampling was conducted in level D protection. The samples were delivered to the U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory (CRL), Chicago, Illinois. The soil samples were analyzed for ABN, pesticides/PCBs, VOAs, metals, mercury, and cyanide.

On March 25, 1997, OSC Charles Gebien and Keith Lesniak returned to the AGC area, and met with Mr. Fred Chang, CHA. The purpose of the visit was to collect additional surface soil samples in Block 11, because elevated levels of PAHs were identified from our earlier surface soil sample in that block. Four samples were collected from a courtyard lawn area as follows: front of Unit 13055 (S01), front of Unit 1128 (S02), front of Unit 1114 (S03), and front of Unit 13073 (S04). Refer to Table 3-4 for further sample description and location information.



**Table 3-1  
Standing Water (Collected 7/22/96)  
Sample Description**

| <b>Sample No.</b> | <b>Appearance</b>                | <b>Location</b>                                                                                     |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S01               | Clear Water                      | Sample from lawn area near unit 1078 in Block 15. Photos 1-5                                        |
| S02               | Clear water                      | Sample from grassy area near unit 13034 in Block 3. Photos 18-20.                                   |
| S03               | Cloudy water                     | Sample from hose that was pumping flood water from basement of unit 13144 in Block 4. Photos 15-17. |
| S05               | Clear water with mosquito larvae | Sample from lawn area in front of unit 1153 in Block 12, Photos 6-8.                                |
| S06               | Clear water with mosquito larvae | Sample collected from lawn sidewalk area in front of units 706 and 708 in Block 16. Photos 9-11.    |
| S07               | Clear water with mosquito larvae | Sample from base of playground slide in back of unit 13221 in Block 17. Photos 12-14.               |
| S09               | Clear water with mosquito larvae | Sample from grassy ditch west of Carver High School in Beaubien Woods. Photos 21-24.                |

**Table 3-2**  
**Surface Soils (Collected 8/21/96)**  
**Sample Description (0-3 inches depth)**

| <b>Sample No.</b> | <b>Appearance</b> | <b>Location</b>                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S12               | Soil              | Sample collected from grassy area in courtyard near unit 1076 in Block 15. Photos 7-8.                                 |
| S13               | Soil              | Sample collected from grassy area in front of unit 13042 in Block 3. Photo 4.                                          |
| S14               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area in courtyard near unit 13124 in Block 4. Photo 5.                                              |
| S15               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area near unit 1130 in Block 11. Photo 11.                                                          |
| S16               | Soil              | Sample collected from grassy area near unit 1149 in Block 12. Photo 9.                                                 |
| S17               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area near units 706 and 708 in Block 16. Photos 1 and 2.                                            |
| S18               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area, near lamp post, adjacent to slide, in playground area in Block 17. Photo 3.                   |
| S19               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area in front of WIC Clinic. Photo 12.                                                              |
| S20               | Soil              | Sample from grassy ditch west of Carver High School in Beaubien Woods between R.R. tracks and entrance road. Photo 10. |
| S21               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area in Carver Primary School courtyard approx. 50 ft. North of play area equipment for school.     |

**Table 3-3  
Sub-Surface Soils (Collected 11/12/96)  
Sample Description**

| <b>Sample No.</b>   | <b>Depth<br/>(feet)</b> | <b>Appearance</b>                    | <b>Location</b>                                                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geoprobe I<br>S01   | 2' to 4'                | Light brown clay soil                | Sample from grassy area east of Corliss St. in Block 7.                             |
| Geoprobe I<br>S02   | 4' to 6'                | Light brown clay soil                | Sample from grassy area east of Corliss St. in Block 7.                             |
| Geoprobe II<br>S03  | 2' to 4'                | Mottled clay with yellow specks      | Sample from field east of 133rd St. immediately east of Block 12.                   |
| Geoprobe II<br>S04  | 4' to 6'                | Mottled clay with sand               | Sample from field east of 133rd St. immediately east of Block 12.                   |
| Geoprobe II<br>S11  | 6' to 8'                | Wet brown clay                       | Sample from field east of 133rd St. immediately east of Block 12.                   |
| Geoprobe III<br>S05 | 2' to 4'                | Brown clay soil with pieces of brick | Sample from grassy playground area 30 ft. southwest of rocket ship west of Block 3. |
| Geoprobe III<br>S06 | 4' to 6'                | Brown clay soil with pieces of brick | Sample from grassy playground area 30 ft. southwest of rocket ship west of Block 3. |
| Geoprobe IV<br>S07  | 2' to 4'                | Brown clay soil                      | Sample from grassy area midway between light post and large willow tree in Block 3. |
| Geoprobe IV<br>S08  | 4' to 6'                | Brown clay soil                      | Sample from grassy area midway between light post and large willow tree in Block 3. |
| Geoprobe IV<br>S09  | 6' to 8'                | Brown clay soil                      | Sample from grassy area midway between light post and large willow tree in Block 3. |

**Table 3-4**  
**Block 11 Follow up Surface Soils (Collected 3/25/97)**  
**Sample Description (0-3 inches depth)**

| <b>Sample No.</b> | <b>Appearance</b> | <b>Location</b>                                                             |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S01               | Soil              | Sample collected from grassy area in courtyard near unit 13055 in Block 11. |
| S02               | Soil              | Sample collected from grassy area in courtyard near unit 1128 in Block 11.  |
| S03               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area in courtyard near unit 1114 in Block 11.            |
| S04               | Soil              | Sample from grassy area in courtyard near unit 13073 in Block 11.           |

#### **4. Analytical Results**

The water samples, surface soil samples, and sub-surface samples were analyzed for ABN, pesticides/polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), volatile organic analytes (VOAs), metals, mercury, and cyanide. All samples were analyzed at the U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory (CRL), Chicago, Illinois.

Analytical results indicate that slightly elevated levels of PAH compounds may be present in the surface soils within the AGC area. PAH data is summarized for standing water, surface soils, and sub-surface soils in tables 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3. Refer to Appendix B for CRL analytical reports and corresponding QA/QC reviews.

**Table 4-1**  
**Summarized PAH Data for Standing Water Samples**  
**All concentrations in ppb**

| Compound                   | Sample Designation |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                            | S01                | S02 | S03 | S05 | S06 | S07 | S09 | R01 |
| di-n-Butylphthalate        | 5 U                | 1 J | 5 U | 5 U | 3 J | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Carbazole                  | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Fluoranthene               | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Anthracene                 | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Pyrene                     | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate | 2 J                | 2 J | 4 J | 2 J | 1 J | 2 J | 5 U | 4 J |
| Chrysene                   | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Benzo(a)anthracene         | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene       | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene       | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Benzo(a)pyrene             | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |
| Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene     | 5 U                | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U | 5 U |

**Key:**

- J = Estimated value.
- U = Not detected.
- B = Contaminant found in laboratory method blank.

Source: U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory, Chicago, Illinois.

**Table 4-2**  
**Summarized PAH Data for Surface Soil Samples**  
**All concentrations in ppb**

| Compound                   | Sample Designation |         |          |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                            | S12                | D12     | S13      | S14     | S15     | S16     | S17     | S18     | S19     | S20     | S21     |
| di-n-Butylphthalate        | 3800               | 2000    | 1800     | 12000   | 6300    | 4400    | 2300    | 3100    | 6800    | 4900    | 3000    |
| Carbazole                  | 990 U              | 1000 U  | 1000 U   | 1000 U  | 370 J   | 1100 U  | 1100 U  | 930 U   | 940 U   | 990 U   | 970 U   |
| Fluoranthene               | 250 J              | 280 J   | 450 J    | 630 J   | 4800    | 600 J   | 580 J   | 930 U   | 850 J   | 990 U   | 530 J   |
| Anthracene                 | 990 U              | 1000 U  | 1000 U   | 1000 U  | 630 J   | 1100 U  | 1100 U  | 930 U   | 200 J   | 990 U   | 970 U   |
| Pyrene                     | 210 J              | 250 J   | 370 J    | 530 J   | 4000    | 520 J   | 450 J   | 930 U   | 870 J   | 990 U   | 460 J   |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate | 6900 BJ            | 6600 BJ | 12000 BJ | 2100 BJ | 1600 BJ | 7900 BJ | 6500 BJ | 4900 BJ | 9800 BJ | 4900 BJ | 8600 BJ |
| Chrysene                   | 990 U              | 1000 U  | 300 J    | 410 J   | 2700    | 370 J   | 380 J   | 930 U   | 380 J   | 990 U   | 350 J   |
| Benzo(a)anthracene         | 990 U              | 1000 U  | 1000 U   | 360 J   | 2500    | 400 J   | 380 J   | 930 U   | 480 J   | 990 U   | 330 J   |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene       | 270 J              | 330 J   | 380 J    | 540 J   | 3400    | 530 J   | 540 J   | 930 U   | 370 J   | 990 U   | 460 J   |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene       | 990 U              | 1000 U  | 1000 U   | 230 J   | 1000 J  | 230 J   | 230 J   | 930 U   | 160 J   | 990 U   | 180 J   |
| Benzo(a)pyrene             | 190 J              | 220 J   | 300 J    | 380 J   | 2500    | 410 J   | 400 J   | 930 U   | 370 J   | 990 U   | 370 J   |
| Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene     | 180 J              | 230 J   | 290 J    | 380 J   | 2000    | 390 J   | 390 J   | 930 U   | 270 J   | 990 U   | 340 J   |

**Key:**

- J = Estimated value.
- U = Not detected.
- B = Contaminant found in laboratory method blank.

Source: U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory, Chicago, Illinois.

**Table 4-3**  
**Summarized PAH Data for Sub-Surface Soil Samples**  
**All concentrations in ppb**

| Compound                   | Sample Designation |         |        |        |        |        |        |          |          |        |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|--------|
|                            | S01                | S02     | S03    | S04    | S05    | S06    | S07    | S08      | S09      | S11    |
| di-n-Butylphthalate        | 7600 B             | 10000 B | 8800 B | 5600 B | 8200 B | 7600 B | 7300 B | 15000 BD | 14000 BD | 8100 B |
| Carbazole                  | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Fluoranthene               | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Anthracene                 | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Pyrene                     | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate | 1700 B             | 2200 B  | 1600 B | 1100 B | 140 JB | 760 JB | 710 JB | 1300 B   | 830 JB   | 1500 B |
| Chrysene                   | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Benzo(a)anthracene         | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene       | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene       | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Benzo(a)pyrene             | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |
| Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene     | 1100 U             | 1300 U  | 1500 U | 1100 U | 970 U  | 1100 U | 1000 U | 1200 U   | 1200 U   | 1100 U |

**Key:**

- J = Estimated value.
- U = Not detected.
- B = Contaminant found in laboratory method blank.

Source: U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory, Chicago, Illinois.



**Table 4-4**  
**Summary PAH Data for Block 11 Follow Up Surface Soil Samples and X103/SS20 Historical PAH Data**  
**All concentrations in ppb**

| Compound                   | Sample Designation |        |        |        |                    |                     |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
|                            | S01                | S02    | S03    | S04    | X103<br>(May 1990) | SS20<br>(Nov. 1994) |
| di-n-Butylphthalate        |                    |        |        |        | -----              | 1300 J              |
| Carbazole                  |                    |        |        |        | -----              | 2400 J              |
| Fluoranthene               | 2100 J             | 2300 J | 1800 J | 1400 J | 1800.00            | 23,000              |
| Anthracene                 | 2500 U             | 2400 U | 2400 U | 2200 U | -----              | 3500 J              |
| Pyrene                     | 1600 J             | 2300 J | 1700 J | 1400 J | 1600.00            | 22,000              |
| Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate |                    |        |        |        | 480.00 J           | -----               |
| Chrysene                   | 1010 J             | 1300 J | 1100 J | 740 J  | 720.00 J           | 12,000              |
| Benzo(a)anthracene         | 1100 J             | 1300 J | 1100 J | 920 J  | 1000.00            | 9700                |
| Benzo(b)fluoranthene       | 1500 J             | 1600 J | 1600 J | 1040 J | 830.00 J           | 7900                |
| Benzo(k)fluoranthene       | 550 J              | 520 J  | 390 J  | 380 J  | 510.00 J           | 11,000              |
| Benzo(a)pyrene             | 990 J              | 1200 J | 980 J  | 740 J  | 670.00 J           | 9000                |
| Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene     | 970 J              | 1080 J | 870 J  | 620 J  | 440.00 J           | 4600                |

**Key:**

- J = Estimated value.
- U = Not detected.
- B = Contaminant found in laboratory method blank.

Source: U.S. EPA Central Regional Laboratory, Chicago, Illinois.

## **5. Discussion of Potential Threats**

Analyses of surface soils, sub-surface soils and standing water within the AGC indicate that although elevated levels of PAHs were identified in surface soils within block 11, the levels do not exceed the recommended removal action level (RAL) for total PAHs (500-1000 PPM total PAHs) established in the "Emergency Removal Guidelines". Information from this report is being reviewed by U.S. EPA for a health based risk assessment.

There are no conditions present in the areas assessed at the AGC that may present an imminent and substantial threat to public health and welfare and the environment, based on considerations set forth in paragraph (b) (2) of Section 300.415 (b) (2) of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan (NCP).

## **6. Removal Activities**

There were no conditions observed at the AGC during the site assessment which warrant a removal action.

## **Appendix A**

### **Aerial Photographic Analysis Altgeld Gardens**

-6-

**Appendix B**

**Analytical Reports Altgeld Gardens**