

## **Current remediation phase wrapping up**

By Randy Petersen  
Miami News-Record

The latest phase of yard remediation in the Tar Creek Superfund site is nearly complete.

After seven months of working on Native American owned property, workers are expected to complete current efforts by May 1.

"We expect to have one more shift and we will be done with the actual excavation work," Said Bob Sullivan, Environmental Protection Agency remediation project manager.

Sullivan said EPA contractor CH2MHILL has completed all, or most, work of 103 of the 107 yards targeted in August.

While yard work is nearly done, Sullivan said CH2MHILL won't be packing up for awhile.

"They will continue to have a presence," he said, noting the contractor's agreement calls for the company to continue soil sampling in Miami-area parks, school yards and daycare centers.

He said work out of CH2MHILL's local office likely will continue through the summer months.

Meanwhile, the state Legislature continues to debate over a \$4.3 million match to gain access to \$38.7 million in Superfund work.

If the state money is approved, yard remediation on the remaining properties in the Superfund site could continue.

Sullivan said it will take approximately a month to get new contracts signed and plans in place to start a new phase of remediation.

"We're poised at anytime to issue subcontracts for the other work," he said.

Still, he said a delay is needed to meet certain government requirements.

"We can't crank it up overnight," he said.

Sen. Rick Littlefield, D-Grove, voiced concern last week that the workers and potential funding could disappear if a state match isn't approved soon.

Sullivan said there is no deadline set for the matching funds, but he noted the EPA sets its budgets on a fiscal year that starts in October.

The \$38.7 million will need to be spent by October or the EPA could lose it in the new funding cycle.

"If the money can't get spent on Tar Creek, EPA will likely look at spending on other projects," he said.

Sullivan said he doesn't expect transfer of the federal remediation funds until after the Legislature adjourns, noting any EPA decision would likely come in late summer or early fall.