

Project Name

Environmental Awareness Project for Major International Company's Charcoal Plant

Client

Buchanan & Bos, Grand Rapids, MI

Services Provided

- Produced an Expert Report
- Provided Expert Testimony Which Addressed the Activities of the Company During its Operations at the Site
- Evaluated Whether the Company Violated Environmental Regulations
- Evaluated Whether Officials Should Have Known about Waste Management

Project Description

The plant is situated in the City of Marquette, Michigan on 77 acres of land, located within 100 feet of the shores of Lake Superior. The plant operated from 1902-1969 and distilled hardwood, producing charcoal briquettes, acetic acid, methanol and other wood-derived chemicals. Wastes associated with the hardwood distillation process included wood tars, sawdust, boiler ash, and tar residues. Tar residues and other fill materials were buried in unlined pits in a landfill.

Approach

SAI assessed the level of environmental knowledge historically available to industrial management personnel. From textbooks, periodicals, and testimonies, SAI documented sound waste management practices as early as the late 1920s.

SAI compiled a summary of the industrial, state, and federal environmental legislation that the plant's waste disposal practices violated. SAI demonstrated that the company dumped 65,540 tons of waste and violated Michigan's Public Act 87 from 1965 to 1969. It was also found that other similar industries implemented safe industrial practices as early as 1939.

