

Stormwater Magazine, 9/22/2006

**Nancy McClintock, Assistant Director for Watershed Protection
City of Austin, TX**

...From McClintock's point of view, however, there was never any real human health threat. "Because PAHs tend to cling to sediments and don't dissolve readily, they are usually left behind by the water, and therefore they seldom become a drinking water or groundwater problem." Furthermore, "The contaminated sediments in the pool were generally under 15 to 17 feet of water, so the risk of significant contact with them was practically nonexistent." Also, she suspected that "the concentrations of PAHs in those and other contaminated sediments in the area, while above the screening limits for our study, were far below those at which one would expect adverse health impacts." She was right. In the toxicological report that was made in the aftermath of the incident, one toxicologist who concurred with McClintock's view is Dr. Richard Beauchamp of Texas Department of Health. Beauchamp was quoted in a press release from the Austin City Council announcing the reopening of the pool, indicating that concentrations were so low that a child playing in the mud, with the most contaminated sediments found covering his hands, arms, and legs for an hour at a stretch, would face no significant health risks. He added, "There is really no risk for a child playing with sediment."