



News Release

FORMERLY UTILIZED SITES REMEDIAL ACTION PROGRAM

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Cleanup to begin at Rattlesnake Creek this March

Buffalo - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District (the Corps) announces the start up of remediation work at its Rattlesnake Creek project in Tonawanda, this month. The Corps is working at this site as part of the Record of Decision (ROD) that was reached in 1998 for the environmental remediation (clean up) of radiological contamination at the Ashland sites in Tonawanda. The Ashland sites consist of 3 discreet areas located within the industrial corridor along River Road, just east of the Grand Island bridges and near the Seaway municipal landfill.

The Corps is pleased to report that it has made significant progress at the sites in Tonawanda, having completed environmental restoration of two of the Ashland sites (Ashland 1 and 2). The Corps will begin cleanup activities at the remaining site, Rattlesnake Creek, later this month. This last site encompasses the low-lying portion of Rattlesnake Creek, adjacent to the Ashland 2 site (see enclosed map, which shows the sites covered under the Ashland Sites Record of Decision).

The Ashland Sites are specifically located in the Town of Tonawanda, just north of the City of Buffalo (along the industrial corridor of River Road, between the Grand Island Bridges and Two Mile Creek Road). Rattlesnake Creek is a seasonal creek that runs approximately 6,000 feet from the edge of Seaway Landfill to where it joins with Two Mile Creek, which empties into the Niagara River. During cleanup of the Ashland 2 site, the Corps discovered that a portion of Rattlesnake Creek immediately adjacent to the Ashland 2 site was also contaminated. The Corps tested for contaminants all the way to the Niagara River and found that the only area contaminated with radiological materials is an approximately 4000 foot portion of Rattlesnake Creek nearest to the Seaway Landfill. The Corps will begin work to excavate the contaminated soil and sediment this March and finish by the fall 2005.

Successful Cleanup at the Ashland Sites

- The Ashland 2 Site was completed in 1999. The Corps restored the site with clean backfill, loam, and seed.
- The Ashland 1 and Seaway D site was completed in 2003. The Corps restored the site with clean backfill, loam, and seed.
- During cleanup of the Ashland 2 site, the Corps discovered that the portion of Rattlesnake Creek near the Ashland 2 site was also contaminated. The Corps will begin work to excavate the contaminated soil and sediment this March and finish by the fall 2005.

Background Information

More than 50 years ago, during Manhattan Project activities, contaminated soils were originally taken from the Linde site in Tonawanda and dumped on the Ashland 1 property. After some time, a portion of those soils were moved to the Ashland 2 site. Contamination from the Ashland 1 and 2 properties found its way into the Rattlesnake creek via rain and snow-melt erosion where

they were deposited as stream sediments in the stream bed. Some evidence shows that subsequent creek activities may have moved contamination up on to the banks of the creek at localized spots.

The Ashland Sites are part of the Corps' Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). FUSRAP is a Federal program that Congress established in 1974 to identify and restore sites contaminated with radioactive materials resulting from the early years of the nation's atomic weapons program (1940s-50s). In 1997, Congress transferred management of FUSRAP from the Department of Energy to the Corps. To date, the Buffalo District has completed remediation at three Western New York FUSRAP sites: the Former Bliss & Laughlin Site in Buffalo and the Ashland 1 and 2 Sites in Tonawanda. For more information on FUSRAP, visit the Corps website at <http://hq.environmental.usace.army.mil/programs/fusrap/fusrap.html>.

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