

# Army Corps plan calls for removal of radioactive waste at LOOW site

- ARMY CORP: Plans calls for removal of radioactive waste and clean up of Pletcher Road site.



Photo by James Neiss  
Niagara Gazette

## 120123 LOOW 2.jpg

The Niagara Falls Storage Site on Pletcher Road.

Posted: Thursday, December 3, 2015 8:31 pm

**Army Corps plan calls for removal of radioactive waste at LOOW site**By Mark Scheer [mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com](mailto:mark.scheer@niagara-gazette.com)

The decades-long effort to rid the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site of radioactive waste and contamination has taken a big step forward.

A proposed remediation plan released Thursday by the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers is calling for the "off-site disposal of the entire contents" of the property commonly referred to as the LOOW site. The land, located on Pletcher Road, became an interim storage facility for radioactive waste back in 1944. Materials stored on the property stem from the development of nuclear weapons as part of the Manhattan Project.

Radioactive wastes and residues continued to be brought to the site for storage until 1952. In 1982, the Department of Energy began clean-up and consolidation of the radioactive wastes and residues in an earthen containment cell constructed on the property. That work, according to the Army Corp., was completed in 1986.

The Army Corp. examined four alternatives for the property, identifying Alternative 4 as the "preferred alternative." A notice announcing the release of the feasibility study and proposed plan describes Alternative 4 as involving "excavation, partial treatment and off-site disposal of the entire contents of the IWCS."

Amy Witryol, one of several Lewiston residents and officials who have for years been advocating for such a plan to move forward at the LOOW site, characterized the announcement as "huge" and a "major step forward" in the effort to rid the site of radioactive waste.

"We've had people in this county working on this for more than a half century," she said. (The Army Corps. of Engineers) came to the right conclusion."

The analysis of the site included five alternatives, ranging from no action to partial removal of hazardous materials with treatment and off-site removal of radioactive materials. Information released by the Army Corps. on Thursday describes the preferred alternative as providing "the best overall protection of human health and the environment."

Under a section identified as "key additional reasons" for selecting Alternative 4, the Army Corps notes that the move would: consolidate LOOW site material with similar waste at an off-site government-owned or "appropriately licensed" byproduct material disposal facility; decrease the overall number of disposal facilities as well as "reduce future spending on post-closure care;" support the "stated goal" of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) regulations, which discourages the "proliferation of small waste disposal sites" and encourages the reduction of "perpetual surveillance obligations" and consolidate disposal sites helping to reduce "the potential risk to the public from government-owned wastes."

The Army Corps. is now accepting public comments on the proposed plan through Feb. 6, 2016. A public meeting will be held next month during which Army Corps. representatives will offer information on the history of the site, an explanation of the proposed plan and preferred alternative and will accept public comments. The session is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Town of Lewiston Senior Center, 4361 Lower River Road, Youngstown.

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The proposed plan and supporting documents are available electronically in the administrative record file for the site, which is located in the Town of Lewiston Public Library, 305 S. Eighth St., Lewiston and the Youngstown Free Library, 240 Lockport St., Youngstown.

The feasibility study and proposed plan are also available on the web at:  
<http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/Missions/HTRW/FUSRAP/NiagaraFallsStorageSite.aspx> in the Reports Section.

Additional information can be obtained via email at [fusrap@usace.army.mil](mailto:fusrap@usace.army.mil), or by calling (800) 833-6390