Seaway FUSRAP Site

Town of Tonawanda, New York

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Buffalo District
May 2016

Building Strong ®

Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP)

FUSRAP was initiated in 1974 to identify, investigate, and clean up or control sites throughout the United States that were part of the Nation's early atomic weapons and energy programs during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Congress transferred the management of FUSRAP from the U.S. Department of Energy to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1997. When implementing FUSRAP, the Corps follows the investigation and response framework of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

Seaway Site with Area Identifiers

Site Description

The Seaway Site is located within the 100-acre Seaway Industrial Park located along River Road in the Town of Tonawanda, Erie County, NY, north of Buffalo and just south of the Niagara River. The site was operated as a landfill by Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) through 1993. After ceasing operations, most of the landfill was capped by BFI in accordance with the requirements of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Site History

The Seaway Site was created when Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP)-related materials containing low levels of residual radioactivity were disposed of on the adjacent property, Ashland 1, leased by the federal government. These radioactive residues were the result of activities conducted at the former Linde Site to support the nation's nuclear weapons program. This material was later relocated by Ashland Oil to the Seaway Site Areas A, B, C, and the Ashland 2 Site. These residues contained radium, thorium, uranium and uranium daughter products.

Area A is about an 11-acre area. It is estimated that 40 percent of Area A is covered by a layer of fill material and refuse up to 10-feet thick. Areas B and C combined are about four acres. It is estimated that portions of Areas B and C have been covered with up to 80 feet of fill.

As a result of remediation of the sites adjacent to Seaway (Ashland 1 and Ashland 2), two additional areas of contamination along the Seaway property were identified. These new areas are identified as Seaway Southside and Seaway Northside.

The Corps of Engineers conducted additional studies and issued an addendum to the 1993 feasibility study performed by the Department of Energy. This feasibility study addendum (FSA), completed in 2008, incorporates the results of subsequent Corps assessments of groundwater, radon emissions and land-use controls. The FSA also incorporates additional sampling results and improved volume estimates, updates the radiological risk posed by the FUSRAP contaminants, and develops and evaluates remedial alternatives. The Corps concluded that CERCLA action is necessary for site soils to be protective of human health and the environment considering future industrial/commercial users. The site and adjacent areas are zoned industrial/commercial. A proposed plan was released for public comment on August 25, 2008. A public meeting was conducted on September 24, 2008; and the public comment period ended on November 28, 2008.

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Commander, Major General John W. Peabody, executed the record of decision for the Seaway FUSRAP Site on October 25, 2009. The comments received during the public comment period and the responses to them are included in the responsiveness summary portion of the record of decision.

The selected remedy is Alternative 6 - Containment with Limited Off-site Disposal. The selected remedy requires excavation of FUSRAP-related material in Seaway Northside and Southside that are located outside the landfill boundaries that exceeds the cleanup criteria and requires shipping it off-site for disposal. It also requires the capping of Investigative Areas A, B, and C within the landfill boundaries. The cap for the FUSRAP-related material will be constructed of multiple layers of various types of soil, fabric, and geomembranes at least 4.5 feet thick.

Long-term monitoring of FUSRAP-related materials in capped areas, surveillance, and maintenance will be performed by the federal government. The federal government will ensure that land-use controls are in place to prevent future access to and disturbance of the contained FUSRAP-related materials. This remedy will be protective of human health and the environment, and complies with applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements.

Status of the Site

During 2014 an investigation to further delineate the extent of contamination in the Northside area was conducted, which identified the presence of less FUSRAP-contaminated soil than previously estimated. In fiscal year 2015 the Buffalo District initiated excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil located beyond the landfill leachate containment system on the Seaway Northside. During fiscal year 2017 the Buffalo District will complete the excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soils on the Seaway Southside. Implementation of the capping of Seaway Areas A, B, and C will occur later pending the completion of currently ongoing cleanups at other FUSRAP sites and the availability of program funding.

Administrative Record

The administrative record file for the Seaway Site contains the record of decision and all supporting documents. It is available for your review by appointment at the address below. Information about the site is also available on web at the address below.

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