



TOWN OF TONAWANDA: Army Corps requests landfill comments

Staff Reports

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— The Army Corps of Engineers is looking for resident input on yet another former town landfill containing radioactive material.

The Seaway Site, located in the Town of Tonawanda along River Road, was operated as a landfill from 1930 to 1993 and accepted municipal, commercial, construction and industrial wastes. During the 1940s, the Linde Air Products Division of Union Carbide processed uranium ores under contract to the Manhattan Engineer District. The mill tailings from those processes were transported from the Linde Site to the former Haist Property, leased by the federal government.

In the mid-1970s, Ashland Oil constructed oil tanks on that property and removed materials containing radioactive residues including radium, thorium, uranium and uranium products to the Seaway landfill. At the landfill, those materials were used as cover or grading material. The site was operated as a landfill by Browning-Ferris Industries through 1993, after which most of the landfill was capped by BFI in accordance with the requirements of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. But during the Corps' remediation efforts at Ashland, materials at higher-than-normal radioactive concentrations were found that appear to go onto the Seaway Site. At one location, those radiation levels may extend under the capped portion of the landfill, but remediation of this material as part of the Ashland project stopped at the property line.

The Corps conducted additional studies and issued an addendum to the original 1993 Feasibility Study performed by the Department of Energy. This addendum was completed this year and incorporates the results of subsequent Corps assessments of groundwater, institutional controls and radon emissions. The addition includes additional sampling results and improved volume estimates, updates the radiological risk posed by contaminants, and develops and evaluates alternatives for fixing the problem.

The Corps advocates identified containment, covering the residue within the landfill with at least 4.5 feet of material. The residue in areas located outside of the landfill collection system and exceeding the cleanup criteria will be removed and shipped off-site for disposal.

In addition, long-term surveillance and maintenance will be provided by the federal government to ensure that land use controls are in place to prevent future access to radioactive residue. The Corps contends this will protect human health and the environment and provide the best balance among the considered alternatives, particularly with respect to short-term effectiveness and costs.

Residents can have their say on the Corps proposal by writing to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FUSRAP Team, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14207. The formal public comment period on the proposed plan ends Oct. 27. In addition, the Corps will hold a public information session at 7 p.m. Sept. 24 at the Phillip Sheridan Building, 3200 Elmwood Ave.

For more information, call 1-800-833-6390 or visit www.lrb.usace.army.mil/fusrap/seaway.

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