



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Buffalo District



DERP-FUDS Fact Sheet

Former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works
Niagara County, New York

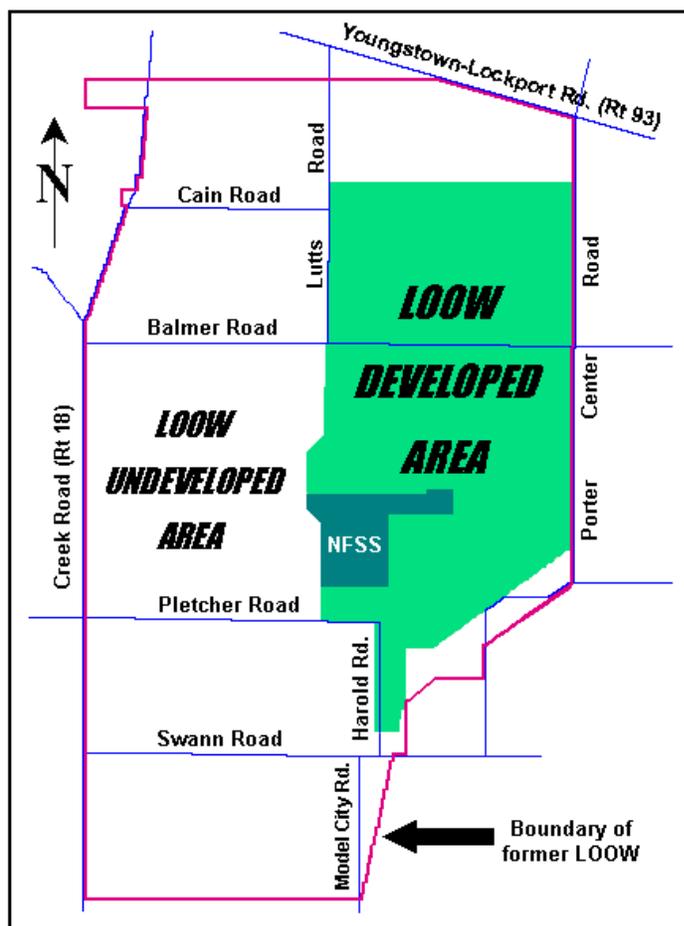
Site Status Update

September 2003

Brief Site Description and History

The former LOOW is a 7,500-acre Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Formerly Used Defense Site (DERP-FUDS) located in the towns of Lewiston and Porter, New York. The former LOOW was built for the purpose of manufacturing trinitrotoluene (TNT) during World War II. The TNT production, production support, and storage areas were constructed on approximately 2,500 acres. The remaining 5,000 acres, located to the west of the production area, were left undeveloped. The TNT plant was decommissioned in July 1943 due to excess production at other TNT plants after only nine months of operation. In 1945, the 5,000 acres outside the production areas were declared excess and transferred to the General Service Administration (GSA) for resale to private landowners.

Since the 1940s, the government and private landowners have used the 2,500-acre former TNT production and storage area for various activities, including: borane fuel plants (Air Force Plant [AFP]-68), a Navy Interim Pilot Production Plan (IPPP), jet engine testing facilities (AFP-38), a Nike missile facility, chemical and radioactive waste storage facilities (Niagara Falls Storage Site [NFSS]), municipal and hazardous waste landfills, and the testing of experimental communications equipment. As Department of Defense (DOD) operations decreased, the property was sold. Environmental investigations have confirmed Department of Defense-related contamination in several areas. Current owners of the site include local and federal governments, residential and agricultural areas, and private corporations. The Manhattan Engineer District and its successor, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), have used portions of the former LOOW for storage of radioactive wastes from approximately 1946 to the present. These wastes were primarily residues from uranium processing operations. The wastes were consolidated onto a 191-acre portion of the site currently owned by the Department of Energy. This facility is known as the Niagara Falls Storage Site (NFSS), and is being addressed under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP).



Former LOOW Site Map

Current Status of Active Projects

1. Remedial Investigation:

The purpose of the site-wide Remedial Investigation (RI) is to assess potential environmental impacts to the former LOOW resulting solely from past Department of Defense (DOD) use of the property. As part of the RI process, a historical archive search was conducted in 1997 to review the available information regarding past operations and investigations. The search is documented in the *LOOW History Search Report*, which is available upon request or in the Administrative Record File.

The Corps has currently completed two phases of the Remedial Investigation. Phase I was initiated in June 1997 and completed in July 1999. It was designed to investigate areas of the former LOOW that were identified in the History Search Report as possibly containing contamination from past DOD activities, and areas where investigations were previously performed, but data gaps remain. Phase II of the RI, completed in February 2002, was designed to investigate areas of the former LOOW that required further investigation and delineation based on the results of the Phase I investigation. Both reports have been completed and can be viewed in the Administrative Record. The three remaining RI tasks include:

- **Risk Assessment**

The Corps is currently drafting work plans to perform a screening level risk assessment on data collected during investigation efforts that have already been completed. The purpose of this risk assessment is to determine if any areas of the site already investigated are posing unacceptable risks to human health and the environment, warranting further investigation, either by additional sampling and/or performance of a baseline risk assessment. Those areas of investigation that do not pose an unacceptable risk will be closed out. Risks will be determined for current and various future land uses, and will be assessed according to United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and New York State guidance. A first draft of the screening level risk assessment is scheduled for completion in Fall 2003. The Baseline Risk Assessment is scheduled to begin in late 2003.

- **Small Bermed Clearings (SBCs) Preliminary Assessment / Site Inspection (PA/SI)**

As a result of a supplemental historical aerial photography analysis performed in October 2002, small, disturbed areas that appeared to be surrounded by berms appeared in photos of the undeveloped area of the former LOOW from 1944. Upon closer inspection, these turned out to be small pits or cleared areas contained within a berm. Based on that description, the Corps began to refer to them as small bermed clearings (SBCs). The Corps conducted field reconnaissance to locate some of the SBCs that may have remained undisturbed and coordinated work plans for investigation and sampling of those areas, with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Health and the LOOW Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The investigation has recently been completed. Preliminary results do not indicate any levels of TNT or radionuclides above levels typically associated with background. A report will be developed and coordinated with the aforementioned organizations late in 2003.

- **Investigation of Underground Pipelines/Utilities**

The former LOOW site contains numerous underground pipelines/utilities that may contain contaminated material. The pipelines will be investigated to determine if contamination is present. The Corps will complete a Scope of Work to address these pipelines/utilities and award a contract for this work when funding becomes available.

2. TNT Walkover Interim Removal Action (IRA):

The Corps has completed an interim removal action in the summer of 2003 of surface crystalline TNT discovered along the former TNT lines. There were four distinct areas that were covered; three areas along

the former TNT line and a formerly used decontamination pad. Based on the information collected during this walkover, a report is being developed that will include recommendations for further action. The report is anticipated late in 2003 and will be coordinated with all applicable site owners and stakeholders.

3. Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP):

There is a former WWTP on property currently owned by the Town of Lewiston. The Corps has determined that the WWTP is not eligible for a Building Demolition/Debris Removal (BD/DR) project through the DERP-FUDS program. However, explosives experts believe that there may be TNT present in the WWTP pipes and sumps. A review of existing site investigation data concluded that the TNT sampling done to date was not sufficient to characterize the WWTP site. Subsequent investigation has revealed that there may be TNT in the Acid Waste lines and sanitary sewer lines and in all buildings associated with the WWTP. The Corps has conducted an assessment of the area and will detail the results in a report that will be coordinated with the applicable site owners and stakeholders late in 2003.

4. Areas A & B:

Drums containing acetone and other organic compounds were buried in the north-central portion of Chemical Waste Management (CWM) property known as Area A. Contamination has also been identified in Area B, a burn pit used for the incineration of lithium, kerosene, and other substances immediately west of Area A. The Corps is ready to complete a remedial design and begin this interim removal action if funding becomes available.

5. Area C:

A drum burial area has been identified northeast of the CWM leachate collection facility and a trash pit area has been identified northwest of the CWM drum handling area. The Corps is ready to complete a remedial design and begin this interim removal action if funding becomes available.

Where can I get more information?

The USACE Buffalo District has established an administrative record for this site. This record contains reports of past investigations and other pertinent site data. As new information becomes available, it will be added to the record. This record is available for viewing by the public at the following sites:

Lewiston Public Library • 305 South Eighth Street • Lewiston, New York
Youngstown Free Library • 240 Lockport Street • Youngstown, New York
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) • 1776 Niagara Street • Buffalo, New York

To get more information about LOOW or other DERP-FUDS issues, or to be added to the program's mailing list, contact:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
Public Affairs Office
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207
(716) 879-4410

You may also call the district toll-free telephone number: **1-800-833-6390** or e-mail at **derpfuds@usace.army.mil**

The USACE Buffalo District Web page is: **<http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow>**