



The Ashland Sites Soils Cleanup—COMPLETED

HISTORY

The Ashland Sites

Ashland 1 (including Seaway Area D), Ashland 2 & Rattlesnake Creek

The Ashland Sites consist of three discreet areas located within the industrial corridor in the Town of Tonawanda, Erie County, N.Y. — north of Buffalo and south of the Niagara River.

Accomplishments:

- The Ashland Sites Project is one of the largest environmental cleanup projects in Western New York
- During the cleanup, the Corps shipped over 258,000 tons of contaminated material safely out-of-state for disposal
- The Corps and its contractors maintained an outstanding safety record during entire cleanup effort (Over 312,000 hours of on-site work) with no lost time accidents
- Radiation doses to onsite workers were substantially below regulatory limits
- The Corps work has ensured the future safety of the local community



Over 258,000 tons of contaminated material safely excavated and disposed of out-of-state

In 1998, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the environmental remediation (clean up) of radiologically contaminated soils at the Ashland sites in Tonawanda. From 1944 to 1946, uranium processing wastes were transported from the Former Linde Site to a 10-acre area known then as the Haist property, now called Ashland 1. These materials consisted of about 8,000 tons of low-grade uranium ore tailings. In 1960, the property was transferred to Ashland Oil for use in the company's oil refinery activities.

In 1974, the company built two storage tanks on the property and moved excavated soil containing MED-related low-level radioactive residues to an area now known as Ashland 2.

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Remediation of the Ashland 2 site was completed in September of 1999. Completed work entailed the excavation and disposal of 52,250 tons of soils containing radioactive residuals from the processing of uranium ores, backfilling and final restoration of the site.

“The public has been a vital partner in the FUSRAP effort and it has been my pleasure to work with the military and civilian staff of the Buffalo District as it coordinates cleanup projects in accordance with Federal laws, standards and procedures.”

Ronald H. Moline, Supervisor
Town of Tonawanda
August, 2006



Remediation of the Ashland 1 Site (and the Seaway D site) began in June 1999 and was completed in December 2002. 172,900 tons removed and disposed of out-of-state

Nearly 25 Acres of Land Now Suitable for Development

The primary radioactive materials found at the Ashland 1 (including Seaway D), Ashland 2 and Rattlesnake Creek sites were uranium-238, radium-226, thorium-230, and their decay products. Some chemical residues from MED activities were also present.

The Corps conducted baseline risk assessments to determine the potential effects of these materials on human health and the environment on and near the site and to evaluate the need for cleanup actions. The assessments indicated that the sites needed to be cleaned up to ensure protection from radioactive residues under some possible future land use scenarios.

The Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) was initiated by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1974 to identify and cleanup contaminated sites used in the early years of the nation's atomic energy program. Management of the program was transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) from the U.S. Department of Energy in October 1997. DOE will remain the long-term steward of FUSRAP sites.

In 1998, the USACE signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Ashland 1 Site (including Seaway Area D) and the Ashland 2 Site. The ROD called for the excavation of soils exceeding the site-specific derived guideline of 40 picoCuries/gram thorium-230.

The Corps completed its remediation activities at the Ashland 2 Site in 1999; in the end removing 52,250 tons of contaminated soil from the site and transporting it for safe disposal out of state.

The Corps then moved on to fully complete remediation activities at the Ashland 1 & Seaway D sites in 2002. At those sites, the Corps and its contractors excavated, removed and safely disposed (again to an out-of-state facility) nearly 173,000 tons of contaminated soils and materials.

During cleanup of the Ashland 2 site, the Corps discovered additional contamination covering about a 1-mile stretch of an adjacent creek bed; Rattlesnake Creek. The Corps decided that before it declared the Ashland Site cleanup complete, it needed to address the contamination present in Rattlesnake Creek. So, in 2004 the Corps officially added the Rattlesnake Creek site to the Ashland Sites ROD. The Corps tested for the pertinent contaminants (those contaminants related to the old Manhattan Project activities) all the way downstream to the Niagara River. However, the Corps found that the only area contaminated with radiological materials was a portion of Rattlesnake Creek. Working with state and local officials and the community, the Corps worked hard to investigate, plan, and complete the cleanup of Rattlesnake Creek in September 2005, which now completes the remediation of all areas included in the 1998 Ashland Sites ROD.

The Corps of Engineers is now preparing the Ashland Completion Report, which will close out the 1998 Record of Decision. The ceremony today celebrates many years of hard team work and public support.



This photograph shows the completed Rattlesnake Creek Project (completed in September 2005) with crews placing clean topsoil and seeding the site with indigenous plants. Nearly 33,300 tons of contaminated soils were excavated from the site and safely shipped out-of-state to a licensed disposal facility.