



News Release

FORMERLY UTILIZED SITES REMEDIAL ACTION PROGRAM

Release #05-20
October 14, 2005

Army Corps of Engineers completes its evaluation of former Manhattan Project Sites

BUFFALO, N.Y. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District is pleased to announce that it has completed its final reports detailing its Preliminary Assessments and/or Site Inspections of four Dayton sites that were part of the Nation's nuclear weapons research and production complex in the 1940s. These reports, which document the Corps' extensive historical records searches and on site sampling, should serve to reassure the local community that these sites pose no current or future danger to the community, public health and welfare or to the surrounding environment. The Corps will be holding a Dayton Sites Information and Availability Session on October 18th with reports and information on hand all day (from 2 pm – 9 pm) at the new Dayton Cultural & RTA Transit Center.

“We have good news to report,” stated Jim Karsten, Chief of the Special Projects Branch in the Corps' Buffalo District. “The Corps' investigations did not reveal any release, or threat of any future release, of radiological contamination from any of the sites,” explained Karsten. “We did not find any Manhattan Project-related contaminants that we need to investigate further. We will not have to pursue any further investigation or cleanup action at these sites, which is great news.”

The four sites under investigation were part of the overall U.S. nuclear weapons complex in the 1940s. They are Dayton 1 (1515 Nicholas Road), Dayton III (1601 West 1st Street), Dayton IV (the former Runnymede Playhouse), and the Dayton Warehouse (601 East 3rd Street).

The Manhattan Project activities in Dayton were referred to as the “Dayton Project,” a specific project involving the research, development and production of radioactive polonium-210, which was necessary for construction of the atomic bomb.

Historical records show that the Department of Energy (DOE) did clean up the Dayton Sites during the 1950s. In 1996, the DOE decided that these sites no longer warranted inclusion in FUSRAP. The local Dayton community, however, remained concerned that the former cleanup might not meet current environmental standards.

Karsten explained how the Corps became involved. “The State of Ohio requested that Congress task the Corps to perform a review of the sites,” said Karsten. “Congress and the state wanted the Corps to determine whether any of the sites posed a hazard to the local community or environment. We did this by conducting preliminary assessments and on-site sampling and surveys to determine whether or not these sites needed further investigation or cleanup. We're very glad to report to the community that we found no evidence showing any unpermitted releases or even indications of a potential future threat, even if these properties are utilized in the future.” Karsten was careful to explain, however, that the Corps' work only looked for contaminants related to past Atomic Energy Commission or Manhattan Engineering District activities. Through the years, other industrial activities may have taken place at these sites.

The Corps is mandated by Congress to follow the Comprehensive Environmental Response,

Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) process for determination of site investigation and cleanup. This process outlines the steps that must be taken to reach a final decision as to whether or not a site requires remediation. It also requires open involvement between the Corps, local and state agencies and the community.

The Buffalo District conducted Preliminary Assessments and/or Site Inspections (PA/SI), the first step in the CERCLA process, which included months of work reviewing historical records, gathering data, and performing onsite sampling and radiological surveys in order to determine whether or not there was any residual contamination present at any of the sites—anything that would warrant the inclusion of this site into FUSRAP.

“The Corps' goal,” said Karsten, “was to ensure the protection of human health and the environment. We’ve fulfilled that purpose and hope that anyone interested will take time to look at our final reports.” The Corps’ Dayton Sites project team will be in Dayton on October 18th with reports and information on hand at a day-long (from 2 pm – 9 pm) Dayton Sites Information and Availability Session. The session will be held at the new Dayton Cultural & RTA Transit Center located at the intersection of West Third Street and S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd. at the Third Street Bridge, just west of the I-75 Interstate.

The Corps also encourages interested community members to call the Corps' toll free number at 1-800-833-6390. Letters may be addressed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, Attention: FUSRAP Information Center, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14207. E-mails may be addressed to fusrap@usace.army.mil. Additional information regarding FUSRAP and the Dayton location can be found on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Buffalo District Web site at: www.lrb.usace.army.mil/fusrap.

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