



Former Guterl Specialty Steel Site

Lockport, New York

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS Buffalo District

January 2018

Building Strong®

Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program

The Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) was initiated in 1974 to identify, investigate, and if necessary, clean up or control sites throughout the United States contaminated as a result of Manhattan Engineer District or early Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) activities. When implementing FUSRAP, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers follows the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP).



Aerial view of the Guterl Site (looking southwest)

Site Description

The Former Guterl Specialty Steel Corporation Site is located 20 miles northeast of Buffalo, New York, in Lockport, Niagara County, New York.

The approximately 70-acre site is bordered by Ohio Street on the south and east, residential and commercial properties to the north, and New York State Route 93 on the west. The Erie Canal is south-southeast of the Guterl Site boundary. The Guterl Site is comprised of three areas:

- The 52-acre Allegheny Technologies Incorporated (ATI) Specialty Materials (formerly Allegheny Ludlum Corporation) property includes four buildings that were constructed after the termination of AEC activities. ATI Specialty Materials currently operates an active specialty steel manufacturing facility in the southwest portion of this property.
- The 8.6-acre hazardous waste disposal site, owned by ATI Specialty Materials, is located in the northwest corner of the site. The disposal site ceased operations as a waste disposal area in 1981. This area is listed as a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) inactive hazardous waste site.
- The 9-acre Excised Area, owned by Guterl Specialty Steel, includes nine buildings located in the southeast corner of the site that were used by the AEC to roll uranium metal. These buildings are currently abandoned and a chain link security fence surrounds the dormant buildings.

Site History

Between 1948 and 1956, the New York Operations Office of the AEC managed contracts with Simonds Saw and Steel, a previous owner of the property, to roll uranium steel billets into rods. The uranium metal billets were received from off-site sources via rail car and were shipped back off site via rail car after rolling to contract specifications. Records indicate that Simonds Saw and Steel processed between 25 million and 35 million pounds of natural uranium metal and approximately 30,000 to 40,000 pounds of thorium metal between 1948 and 1956.

The U.S. Department of Energy declared the Guterl Site eligible for FUSRAP in 2000. Under FUSRAP, the Corps of Engineers Buffalo District is evaluating the Guterl Site consistent with the process and guidance established under CERCLA and the NCP.

Corps of Engineers Activities

Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection

The Corps of Engineers conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection (PA/SI) in 2001. The purpose of the assessment was to review information to determine if the site posed a potential threat to human health or the environment, or if there was a need for further action by the Corps of Engineers under FUSRAP. The PA/SI concluded that there was no immediate threat to human health or the environment at the Guterl Site; however, because of the potential for the FUSRAP-related contaminants to pose a threat to human health and the environment in the future, it was recommended that the Guterl Site proceed to the remedial investigation (RI) phase to further characterize radioactive residuals associated with past activities.

Remedial Investigation

The RI was completed in August 2010. Activities performed during the RI field data collection consisted of sampling and analysis of soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, and building materials. Sampled media were analyzed for FUSRAP-eligible radionuclides (uranium, radium, and thorium). The RI concluded that:

- There are currently no imminent threats to human health or the environment due to FUSRAP-related materials on the Guterl Site.
- The RI confirmed the presence of, and added new information about, the nature and extent of thorium and uranium contamination at the Guterl Site.
- Soil and groundwater contamination was documented above RI screening levels (levels established by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to assist in defining the nature and extent of contamination) within the Guterl Site boundary.
- Some degree of FUSRAP-related material was detected above background in the Excised Area including all the buildings, the soil, and the utility surface water/sediments. The most heavily contaminated buildings in the Excised Area are Buildings 6 and 8, primary buildings used for receiving, heating, rolling, packaging, and shipping uranium metal.
- Shallow bedrock groundwater on the Guterl Site is impacted by FUSRAP-related materials.

- Surface water and sediment samples collected from the Erie Canal did not indicate FUSRAP-related impacts.

Following the RI, the Corps of Engineers performed a data gap analysis to identify gaps in existing data obtained through the RI process, and collect additional data to be used in the preparation of the feasibility study (FS). Conclusions of the data gap analysis were documented in the data gap analysis report (DGAR). No additional data collection was recommended for soil, surface water, sediment or buildings. Additional data collection was recommended for groundwater.

Data Gap Investigation

A data gap investigation (DGI) was completed in 2012 to address the data gaps identified in the DGAR. The DGI included the installation of additional monitoring wells, aquifer testing, additional groundwater sampling and analysis, and a supplemental sampling round in 2011. The DGI concluded that:

- Groundwater underlying the Guterl Site is not a current source of potable water. Since there is no exposure to groundwater directly under the site, there is no current risk to human health from the underlying contaminated groundwater.
- Although RI sampling in 2007 showed no uranium in the surface water or sediments of Erie Canal above natural background and uranium is not a contaminant that typically bio-accumulates in fish, further groundwater sampling (past the 2011 supplemental sampling event) was recommended to monitor uranium in groundwater seeps entering into the Erie Canal.

Environmental Monitoring

Since 2012, the Corps of Engineers has conducted routine monitoring of the following environmental media to monitor conditions at the Guterl Site and to support the development of potential groundwater remedial alternatives in the FS:

- Groundwater underlying the Guterl Site,
- Groundwater seeps into the Erie Canal, and
- Surface waters of the Erie Canal.

Uranium concentrations in the shallow bedrock groundwater underlying the Guterl Site continue to exceed the allowable drinking water level set by the USEPA (i.e. maximum contaminant level or MCL). However, since groundwater underlying the site is not a current source of potable water, there is no current risk to human health.

Although some groundwater seeps into the Erie Canal have shown uranium levels slightly exceeding the MCL, the uranium would be significantly diluted by waters of the canal. Even at that undiluted level, it should not have an adverse impact to someone using the water for recreational (not drinking water) purposes.

Uranium concentrations in surface water in the Erie Canal are indistinguishable from uranium concentrations measured upstream of the site.

Status of the Site

The Corps of Engineers is currently developing the FS to identify and evaluate potential remedial alternatives to eliminate unacceptable risks to human health and the environment appropriate for the future industrial land use of the site. A proposed plan that will identify the Corps of Engineers preferred remedial alternative is also being developed. The FS report and the proposed plan are scheduled for release in fiscal year 2019.

The Corps of Engineers continues to monitor conditions at the Guterl Site and post annual environmental monitoring data reports to the Corps of Engineers' project website.

Administrative Record File

The Corps of Engineers maintains an administrative record file, which contains documents that will form the basis for the selection of response actions at the Guterl Site.

The administrative record file is maintained at the two locations listed below, for the convenience of the public.

If you would like to review the file at the public library, please call ahead to check on their operating hours.

Lockport Public Library

23 East Avenue
Lockport, New York 14094
716-433-5935

If you would like to visit the Corps of Engineers' office, please call ahead for an appointment.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, New York 14207
800-833-6390 (Option 4)

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