Seaway FUSRAP Site

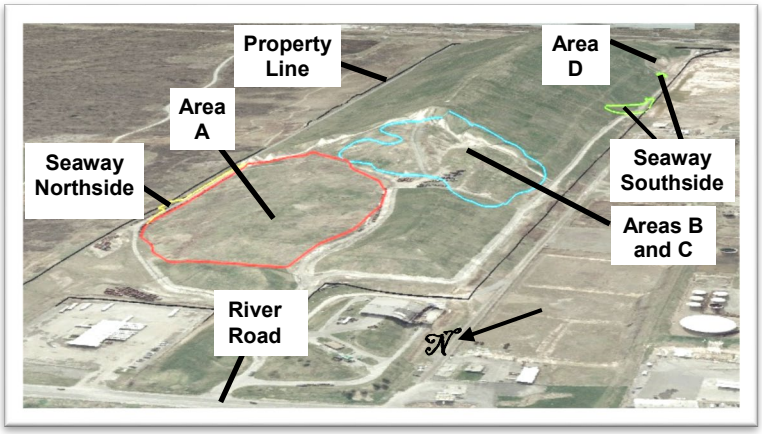
Town of Tonawanda, New York

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Buffalo District
April 2020

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 (MED) or early Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) activities. Congress transferred the management of FUSRAP from the U.S. Department of Energy to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1997.



Seaway Site with Area Identifiers

When implementing FUSRAP, the Corps of Engineers follows the investigation and response framework of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

Site Description

The Seaway Site is located within the 100-acre Seaway Industrial Park located along River Road in the Town of Tonawanda, Erie County, New York, north of Buffalo and just south of the Niagara River. The site was operated as a landfill by Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) through 1993. After ceasing operations, most of the landfill was capped by BFI in accordance with the requirements of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Site History

The Seaway Site was created when materials containing low levels of residual radioactivity were disposed of on the adjacent property, Ashland 1, leased by the federal government. These radioactive residues were the result of activities conducted at the former Linde Site to support the nation's nuclear weapons program. This material was later relocated by Ashland Oil to the Seaway Site Areas A, B, C, and the Ashland 2 Site. These residues contained radium, thorium, uranium and uranium daughter products.

Seaway Site Area A is an approximately 12-acre area located in the northeast section of the landfill. It is estimated that 40% of Area A is covered by a layer of fill material and refuse up to 10-feet thick. Areas B and C are a contiguous area in the closed portion of the landfill covering about seven acres. It is estimated that portions of Areas B and C have been covered with a thick layer of soil and refuse ranging from a few feet to more than 70 feet.

As a result of remediation of the sites adjacent to Seaway (Ashland 1, including Seaway Area D, and Ashland 2), two additional areas of contamination along the Seaway property were identified. These new areas are identified as Seaway Southside and Seaway Northside.

The Corps of Engineers conducted additional studies and issued an addendum to the 1993 feasibility study performed by the Department of Energy. This feasibility study addendum (FSA), completed in 2008, incorporated the results of subsequent Corps assessments of groundwater, radon emissions and land-use controls. The FSA also incorporated additional sampling results and improved volume estimates, updated the radiological risk posed by the FUSRAP-related materials (soil contaminated with radium, thorium, uranium, and uranium daughter products), and developed and evaluated remedial alternatives. The Corps concluded that CERCLA action was necessary for site soils to be protective of human health and the environment considering future industrial/commercial users. The site and adjacent areas are zoned industrial/commercial. A proposed plan was released for public comment on August 25, 2008. A public meeting was conducted on September 24, 2008, and the public comment period ended on November 28, 2008.

The Corps of Engineers signed the record of decision for the Seaway FUSRAP Site on October 25, 2009. The comments received during the public comment period and the responses to them are included in the responsiveness summary portion of the record of decision.

The selected remedy outlined in the record of decision is Alternative 6 - Containment with Limited Off-site Disposal. The selected remedy will be protective of human health and the environment, and complies with applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements. The selected remedy requires the capping of Seaway Areas A, B, and C within the landfill boundaries. The cap for the FUSRAP-related material will be constructed of multiple layers of various types of soil, fabric, and geomembranes at least 4.5-feet thick. Long-term monitoring of FUSRAP-related materials in capped areas, surveillance, and maintenance will be performed by the federal government. The federal government will ensure that land-use controls are in place to prevent future access to and disturbance of the contained FUSRAP-related materials.

The selected remedy requires excavation and shipment off-site for disposal of FUSRAP-related material that exceeds the cleanup criteria in the Seaway Northside and Southside areas, which are located outside the landfill boundaries.

In 2015, the Buffalo District initiated excavation and off-site disposal of FUSRAP-related soil located beyond the landfill leachate containment system on Seaway Northside. This was completed in fiscal year 2016 with a total of 1,121 cubic yards of material excavated and shipped off-site for disposal.

During fiscal year 2017, the Buffalo District completed an investigation to delineate the extent of FUSRAP-related contamination within Seaway Southside. Analytical results from soil samples obtained from 15 investigation test pits in the Southside area of the site projected a 70% increase in soil volume requiring excavation and disposal. The FUSRAP-related soils form a lens measuring less than 1-foot thick that extended approximately 100 feet northwest of the previously identified area of contamination at a depth of around 12 feet beneath the landfill embankment.

Status of the Site

In accordance with CERCLA, the Corps is performing a five-year review of the selected remedy for FUSRAP-related materials at the Seaway FUSRAP Site. The purpose of the CERCLA five-year review is to evaluate the effectiveness and protectiveness of the selected remedy contained within the record of decision. Additional information regarding the CERCLA five-year review process is in a newsletter available on the site website listed below.

Completion of the selected remedy for the Seaway Site will occur later pending the completion of ongoing remediation at other FUSRAP sites and the availability of program funding.

Administrative Record

The administrative record file for the Seaway Site is available on the website listed below and contains the record of decision and all supporting documents. It is available for your review by appointment at the address below.

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