



FUSRAP

Fact Sheet

Activities at Tonawanda, New York

U.S. Department of Energy • Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program • November 1994

This fact sheet has been prepared to address community outreach requirements set by the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Fact sheets are one part of an effort to provide public information on environmental restoration and waste management.

The Town of Tonawanda Landfill

Location and History of the Landfill

The Town of Tonawanda Landfill covers about 55 acres in Tonawanda, New York. Adjacent properties include a residential area within the City of Tonawanda, a Conrail spur line, a Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation utility corridor, and a municipal incinerator that is no longer in use.

Waste disposal at the landfill began during the 1930s and continued through 1989. Records indicate that the landfill was principally used for the disposal of household waste, construction and demolition material, leaves, incinerator ash, and unburned municipal waste.

It is suspected that low-level radioactive material was placed into the landfill as the result of the deposition of dredged stream sediments

from Twomile Creek sometime during the late 1940s or early 1950s. The stream sediments were contaminated as a result of work performed at the Linde Air Products division of Union Carbide. Linde performed separation operations on natural uranium ores for the nation's early atomic energy program under contract to the Manhattan Engineer District and the Atomic Energy Commission, predecessors of the Department of Energy (DOE).



The Town of Tonawanda Landfill.

To confirm the suspected existence of contamination at the landfill, DOE directed that a radiological survey be conducted by its Oak Ridge National Laboratory in late 1991. This survey did identify low activity level uranium ore and byproducts of the separation process that were characteristic of similar contaminants being addressed on four other properties in Tonawanda. As a result, the landfill was designated into DOE's Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), a national program initiated in 1974 for identifying and restoring sites contaminated with radioactive materials resulting from the early years of the nation's atomic energy program.

Characterization Studies of the Landfill

Since 1960, several studies have been conducted at the landfill to gather more information about site conditions and the nature of the materials deposited there. The survey conducted in 1991 indicated that the

radionuclides radium-226, thorium-230, and uranium-238 are present in the landfill in concentrations above those naturally found in the environment. These materials are probably the result of the processing of radioactive materials at the Linde facility.

FUSRAP will be conducting characterization work to gather additional information on the area and depth of contamination, the concentrations of the material, and the amount of contaminated soil. Surface water and sediments will be sampled to verify that surface water is not transporting contaminants to new areas, and groundwater samples will be analyzed to verify that contamination is not entering the groundwater system.

This work is scheduled for November 1994 and will last about two weeks. The samples collected will be sent to a laboratory for analysis, and the results will be evaluated by spring 1995. Information gathered during this study will help decision-makers evaluate cleanup strategies for the site.

For More Information

Please contact the DOE Public Information Center, 810 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda, New York 14150; phone (716) 871-9660. You may also call the FUSRAP 24-hour, toll-free public access line, 1-800-253-9759, and your call will be promptly returned.



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