

**Questions and Answers
Tonawanda Landfill
Public Information Session
March 29, 2001**

All answers are provided by Corps of Engineers representatives unless otherwise indicated.

Q: There is a great deal of concern regarding the health and safety of the residents whose yards adjoin the landfill. Is there anything being done to fence off the area?

A: Based on sampling done by the Department of Energy, (DOE) there is no immediate health risk based on the amounts of Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP)-related material in the landfill. There is also vegetation on the site, which helps to keep things in place. As far as further access goes, that question should be deferred to the Town of Tonawanda, since the landfill is on its property. As far as the Corps goes, if we find that there's an immediate risk to the public, we will take action necessary to protect human health and the environment.

Q: Do you have any plans to extend sampling to the backyards of the residences on Hackett Dr.?

A: There was an instance at one of our sites in Ohio where there was evidence material was moved from the site to other properties and we sampled there. We would have to take a look at our sampling results. If we see the nature of the material as moving, we would consider sampling the land around resident's houses.

Q: Would you ever consider having your information sessions at a location in the City of Tonawanda, since the landfill is near city residents?

A: We are certainly open to better ideas to better serve the public. One of the questions in the Community Assessment that was passed out to everyone here at the meeting asks if there is another location where it would be more convenient to hold meetings. Based on the results, we may opt to have our next meeting at a different location.

Q: How much contamination could have gotten into Two Mile Creek?

A: Based on our research and conditions at the creek, it's unlikely that any FUSRAP-related material could have migrated into the creek from the landfill or mudflats. If our sampling indicates otherwise, we will conduct further sampling.

Q: How could you say that there's no contamination in there? The condition of the creek has changed so much over the past 25-30 years. The smell and the color are horrible.

A: In 1999, we conducted a Health Assessment for the landfill and mudflats area. We used a recreational user as our model, which would be someone who is on the site occasionally. Even using very conservative numbers, we found that there is no unacceptable risk for a recreational user at the landfill and mudflats area.

Q: My grandchildren go to Holmes Elementary School, which is near the Linde Site. Has there been any testing and sampling of the school?

A ([REDACTED], Erie Co. Legislature): The DOE conducted three kinds of studies (soil, surface and a fly-over with hi-tech equipment) in 1994-1995. There were no findings of contamination. (Corps): There is also an air monitor currently on top of the school, which has not had any above normal readings.

Q: What triggered the study of the Mudflats?

A: Under the direction of our Headquarters in Washington, we were able to secure funding.

Q: Is there any chemical contamination in the landfill? Who is taking care of that?

A (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)): The Town of Tonawanda owns and is ultimately responsible for any chemical contamination that is present. There is some low-level chemical contamination in the landfill, which is to be expected. We (the NYSDEC) are currently working with the town to cap the landfill, but we need to see what the Corps finds in its sampling before we consider the cap.

Q: What makes you so sure a cap is going to work?

A (NYSDEC): A well-maintained cap will keep the rain water out. Capping is the usual solution for closing a landfill.

Q: Are you sure that digging into the ground with a shovel is the only way to access the contamination?

A: Of course, there are other ways to become exposed. You can ingest the dirt or rub the dirt on your skin; if the dirt becomes airborne and you breathe it, that's another way. There are no guarantees but based on the fact that the land is covered in vegetation and the depth of the contamination, the only reasonable way someone can become exposed would be to dig up the dirt with a shovel. Our health assessment looked at different methods of exposure and found that there is no immediate threat, but we will supplement that finding with further sampling.

Q: I've lived in the area and have seen Praxair turn from a playground into Ft. Knox, and you're telling us that there's nothing going on there?

A: We are currently performing remedial action at the Linde site. There are cranes, plows and other pieces of heavy equipment that need to be segregated from the Praxair workers for safety reasons. Other than that, how Praxair chooses to conduct its security is its business.

Q: I have a question regarding the upcoming sampling. Does the Corps or the DOE have any idea on the quantities of contamination in the Landfill and Mudflats area?

A: We've estimated that there's around 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil in the landfill, which would be around 135 rail cars worth. These estimates are based on the information we currently have, and could be revised based on our sampling results.

Q: Do you have any idea how or why the material was brought to the landfill?

A: We don't really have a clear answer for that. So far, we haven't found any evidence that shows exactly how the material was brought there. Our investigation is still ongoing.

Q: Do you have a sampling plan?

A: We are developing a plan and coordinating with the NYSDEC, the Town of Tonawanda and the City of Tonawanda, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency for input.