



Niagara Falls Storage Site, New York



FACT SHEET

This fact sheet provides information about the Niagara Falls Storage Site, New York. This site is currently managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but will eventually transfer to the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management.

Site Description and History

The Niagara Falls Storage Site, New York, is a 191-acre site located on Pletcher Road in the towns of Lewiston and Porter, Niagara County, in northwestern New York. It is approximately 10 miles north of the city of Niagara Falls and 19 miles northwest of Buffalo, New York. The site is a remnant of the U.S. Army's 7,500-acre Lake Ontario Ordnance Works. The property includes a 10-acre interim waste containment structure (IWCS) for radioactive waste and residues, which is covered by an interim cap designed to retard radon emissions and rainwater infiltration, and three buildings: Building 401, which contains isolated areas of fixed, low-level radioactive contamination, and two maintenance buildings.

In 1944, during World War II, the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) used the site for the storage and transshipment of radioactive residues and wastes from the processing of uranium ore. By 1948, the War Assets Administration had transferred or sold 6,000 acres of the original property, and the remaining 1,500 acres were subsequently given to the newly formed Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). From 1955 to 1975, more than 1,300 acres were transferred or sold to private concerns, leaving the current 191 acres that are owned by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

In 1943, Building 401 was used as the powerhouse for the trinitrotoluene (TNT) plant at the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works; operations involving the manufacture of TNT only continued for 1 year. The building was used to manufacture boron-10, which is not radioactive, from 1953 to 1959 and from 1965 to 1971. Building 401 is currently structurally sound and has been secured to prevent trespassing.

In 1952, drums containing radioactive uranium ore processing residues (K-65) were stored in a silo, which has since been demolished. In the 1980s, DOE placed the residues in the engineered IWCS, which was completed in 1991. DOE began cleanup of the radioactive wastes in 1982 under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), and as of March 2004, DOE and the U.S. Army Corps of



Location of the Niagara Falls Storage Site, New York

Engineers (USACE) had consolidated approximately 235,000 cubic yards of contaminated material and 25,000 cubic yards of radioactive residues (of which approximately 4,000 cubic yards comprise K-65 high activity residues) into the IWCS. Although radiological contamination of soil exists throughout the site, it is at levels considerably below those of the materials stored in the IWCS. The primary contaminants of concern at the site are radium, thorium, and smaller amounts of uranium.

Regulatory Setting

AEC, a predecessor agency to DOE, established FUSRAP in March 1974 to evaluate radioactive contamination at sites where work was performed to develop the nation's nuclear weapons and early atomic energy program. After reviewing records and radiometric surveys for more than 600 sites connected with the nuclear weapons program, DOE identified 46 sites that required cleanup, including the Niagara Falls Storage Site. Congress transferred responsibility for FUSRAP

site characterization and remediation to USACE in 1997. DOE retains responsibility for long-term surveillance and maintenance of remediated FUSRAP sites.

The Niagara Falls Storage Site is being addressed under the processes defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Cleanup and Liability Act (CERCLA). USACE is currently preparing a Remedial Investigation of the site, scheduled for completion in fall 2007, to determine the nature and extent of contamination requiring cleanup. USACE is also working on a Feasibility Study to develop and evaluate alternatives to address the contamination. The feasibility study is scheduled for completion in fall 2009. Final remedy selection will follow.

Current Site Conditions

USACE is responsible for all remediation activities. The Niagara Falls Storage Site is routinely evaluated with chemical and radiation sampling, and the site continues to be maintained with emphasis on ensuring that the cap is free from cracks and functioning properly.

Site closure is pending, and long-term surveillance and maintenance requirements will be determined once final site conditions are known. Upon completion of remedial action, responsibility for the Niagara Falls Site will transfer from USACE to the DOE Office of Legacy Management.

Additional Information

Documents related to the Niagara Falls Storage Site and links to additional information about the site are available <http://www.LM.doe.gov/land/sites/ny/niagarass/niagarass.htm> and <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/fusrap/>.

For more information about DOE Legacy Management activities at the Niagara Falls Storage Site, contact

U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
2597 B³/₄ Road, Grand Junction, CO 81503
(970) 248-6070 (monitored continuously), or
(877) 695-5322 (toll-free)