



Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties, New York

FACT SHEET

*This fact sheet provides information about the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties, New York.
This site is managed by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management.*

Site Description and History

The Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties, New York (formerly the Niagara Falls Storage Site) is located in Lewiston, New York, approximately 10 miles north of the city of Niagara Falls, New York. The site is a remnant of the U.S. Army's 7,500-acre Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, which was used by the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) for the storage and transshipment of radioactive materials during World War II. 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 U.S. 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 comprise the Niagara Falls Storage Site.

From 1944 to 1947, the MED stored uranium ore processing residues at the site. In addition, the original site was used as a storage site for uranium metal rods and as a disposal site for radioactive wastes. Between 1953 and 1959, a major cleanup was conducted, including consolidation, removal, and transportation off site of surface debris. However, despite these cleanup efforts, radioactively contaminated soils and residues were left at the site.

Over the years, contaminated materials stored at the site were subject to wind and erosion, causing contaminants to migrate off site onto other properties. Referred to as vicinity properties, they included 25 properties A, B, C', D, F, H', L, M, N/N' North, a portion of Modern Landfill, Inc. property on N/N' North, N/N' South, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, West Drainage Ditch, Central Drainage Ditch, and areas along Fletcher Road—plus 3 anomaly properties: Anomaly AA (located in the town of Lewiston), Anomaly BB (in the town of Niagara Falls), and Anomaly CC (in the city of Niagara Falls).

From October 1970 to June 1971, radiological surveys of 1,300 acres indicated that approximately 6.5 acres had residual radioactive material that exceeded AEC guidelines. As a result, 15,000 to 20,000 cubic yards of



Location of the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties, New York

contaminated soil were removed. DOE conducted an aerial radiological survey of the region in 1978. Detailed radiological characterization surveys conducted in 1979 and 1980 identified contamination in excess of U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) guidelines along the entire length of the West Drainage Ditch and most of the Central Drainage Ditch. From 1981 to 1985, Oak Ridge National Laboratory performed radiological surveys of the 1,300 acres. Of the 25 properties surveyed, 23 were eventually found to be contaminated. The 1979–80 radiological characterization and subsequent remedial action were performed as part of DOE's Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP).

Remedial action of these 25 properties, which was completed in 1986 and covered most of the 1,300 acres, consisted of excavating soil and rubble and restoring off-site drainage ditches. Approximately 50,000 cubic yards of low-level radioactive waste were removed,

placed in watertight dump trucks, and transported to an earthen containment cell constructed on the Niagara Falls Storage Site, where they remain pending a final decision on remedy.

The anomaly properties were identified as being radioactively contaminated in 1985 based on a mobile gamma scanning survey (a radiological survey conducted from a specially equipped passenger van fitted with equipment that detects anomalous gamma radiation emanating from a nearby property).

Contamination was left in place along portions of the Central Drainage Ditch where radium-226 concentrations exceeded FUSRAP guidelines. Because a hazard analysis indicated that the contamination posed no risk to members of the public, supplemental limits were applied to that section of the ditch. Supplemental limits may be applied in place of the primary limits in situations where the cost of remediation would be unreasonably high compared to the long-term benefits, and the residual contamination does not pose a present or future risk to human health or the environment.

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 Vicinity Properties. Congress transferred responsibility for FUSRAP site characterization and remediation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1997. DOE retains responsibility for long-term surveillance and maintenance of remediated FUSRAP sites.

The Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties was remediated to criteria in *Guidelines for Residual Radioactive Material at Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program and Remote Surplus Facilities Management Program Sites*. A notice of cleanup certification for the site was published in the *Federal Register* on October 25, 1991.

In fiscal year 2004, DOE transferred responsibility for the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties from the DOE Office of Environmental Management to the DOE Office of Legacy Management.

Current Site Conditions

Post-remedial action survey data indicate that the radiological condition of the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties is in compliance with applicable DOE standards and guidelines for cleanup of residual radioactive contamination. Contamination in the supplemental limits area of the Central Drainage Ditch is below the risk-based standard established specifically for that area. An independent verification survey conducted after the completion of remedial action detected no residual radioactivity at the site that exceeded current guidelines. Therefore, DOE released the individual vicinity properties for unrestricted use.

Legacy Management Activities

No monitoring, maintenance, or site inspections are required for the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties. DOE Legacy Management responsibilities consist of managing site records and responding to stakeholder inquiries.

Contacts

Documents related to the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties are available on the DOE Legacy Management website at <http://www.lm.doe.gov/niagara/vicinity/Sites.aspx>.

For more information about DOE Legacy Management activities at the Niagara Falls Vicinity Properties, 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)