Fact Sheet

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U.S. DEPARTMENT of ENERGY | Office of Legacy Management

Tonawanda, New York | Landfill Site

A FUSRAP SITE

This fact sheet provides information about the **Tonawanda Landfill site.** Long-term stewardship responsibilities for this site are managed by the **U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management** under the **Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program.**

Site Information and History

The Tonawanda, New York, Landfill Site is in Tonawanda, Erie County, New York, north of Buffalo. The Landfill site is owned by the Town of Tonawanda and is about 1 mile north of the Tonawanda, New York, Site (formerly known as the Linde site or Linde Air Products), which is a related Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) site.

Originally the site of a quarry in the 1920s, the 170-acre Tonawanda Landfill operated as a municipal landfill from the 1930s to 1989 that accepted a variety of waste, including incinerator ash, sewage sludge, construction debris, and municipal and yard waste. The landfill had two areas: the 115-acre mudflats used for sewage sludge placement and dewatering and the northern 55-acre landfill used for solid waste.

While inspecting areas bordering the Tonawanda site in 1991, investigators detected irregular readings of elevated gamma radiation in the landfill. The contamination source was waste material from the Tonawanda site. Between 1942 and 1946, Linde Air Products processed uranium ore under contract with the Manhattan Engineer District. Disposing and relocating processing wastes from the site resulted in higher radionuclide levels at four nearby properties in Tonawanda, including the Tonawanda Landfill site.

In 2007, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) split the Landfill site into two operable units, known as OUs: the Landfill OU and the Mudflats OU. In 2008, USACE determined the Mudflats OU did not need any further remediation.

The Landfill OU is within an inactive landfill owned and closed by the Town of Tonawanda in 2024 under authority of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. USACE conducted investigations and removal actions at the Landfill OU, completing remediation in 2020. After USACE released the Site Closeout Report in 2022, and after a two-year maintenance and monitoring period, the site was turned over to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) in 2024 for long-term stewardship.

Regulatory Setting

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, a predecessor agency to DOE, established FUSRAP in 1974 to evaluate radioactive contamination at sites used in developing the United States' nuclear weapons and atomic energy programs.

DOE has legislative authority under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to perform radiological surveys, monitoring, and maintenance at sites used to support DOE predecessor agencies' nuclear activities. DOE also had legislative authority under the Atomic Energy Act to remediate FUSRAP sites that required some form of response action.

Continued

In 1997, Congress transferred responsibility for FUSRAP site characterization and remediation from DOE to USACE. Since 1997, response actions at FUSRAP sites have been done in agreement with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

LM retains responsibility for long-term stewardship of remediated FUSRAP sites.

USACE remediated the contaminated areas of the Tonawanda Landfill site to site-specific numerical standards established in a Record of Decision issued in 2017. The standards were based on criteria in Title 10 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, Subpart E. USACE Buffalo District finished remediating the Tonawanda Landfill in July 2020.

The remedy included excavating to a depth of 1.5 m (5 feet) over the areas with FUSRAP-related material and refilling them to the original surface elevation with clean soil. USACE shipped the contaminated soil to a licensed facility in Belleville, Michigan. After completing the remedial action, USACE graded and reseeded the areas to return the surface to its original elevation and prevent erosion.

Current Site Conditions

The Tonawanda Landfill FUSRAP site is located within and next to the Tonawanda Landfill. With the municipal landfill closure substantially complete in 2023, the Town of Tonawanda took over maintenance and monitoring per Title 6 of the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations Part 360. LM will retain responsibility of the FUSRAP-related material remaining in the landfill.

The Tonawanda, New York, Landfill, Site.

Legacy Management Activities

The Tonawanda Landfill site Record of Decision requires no operations or maintenance activities.

LM's long-term surveillance responsibilities include a site inspection and long-term periodic review every five years, and an annual desktop assessment to review site ownership, current land use, and compliance with current land use regulations. Stewardship activities also include managing site records and responding to stakeholder inquiries.

Contact Information

In case of an emergency at the site, contact 911.

LM toll-free emergency hotline: **(877) 695-5322**

Site-specific documents related to the **Tonawanda, New York, Site** are available on the LM website at **www.energy.gov/lm/tonawanda-new-york-landfill-site**.

For more information on FUSRAP site history or current long-term stewardship activities, contact:
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