



Fernald Preserve, Ohio, Site

A CERCLA site

This fact sheet provides information about the **Fernald Preserve site**. Long-term stewardship responsibilities for this site are managed by the **U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management** under the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act**.

Site Information and History

The Fernald Preserve is located on the site of the former Feed Materials Production Center, a uranium processing facility that produced high-purity uranium metal products as the first step in America's nuclear weapons production cycle. The site's production mission began in 1951 and continued until 1989, when production operations ceased and Fernald's mission changed to environmental remediation. The comprehensive environmental remediation and ecological restoration of the site was completed (with the exception of groundwater) in 2006 at a cost of \$4.4 billion. At the time, this cleanup was one of the largest environmental cleanup operations ever undertaken in U.S. history.

The Fernald site was cleaned to standards endorsed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), DOE contractors, residents near the site, interest groups, and members of the surrounding communities. Those cleanup standards were approved by EPA and Ohio EPA as being protective of human health and the environment for the intended future land use. A groundwater extraction and treatment operation is Fernald's only remaining remediation activity. Groundwater in the Great Miami Aquifer beneath the site is being cleaned to the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act standards. The main contaminant is uranium.

The 1,050-acre Fernald site has now come full circle. The property's natural features have been restored using native plants and grasses. Restoration activities at the site have

created one of the largest man-made wetlands in Ohio, open water, upland forests, a lengthy riparian corridor, and 385 acres of grassland, including tallgrass prairie and savanna. The site's varied and unique habitats are accessible on a 7-mile network of trails. More than 250 species of birds have been observed, and over 100 different species have been documented as nesting at the Fernald Preserve.

The award-winning Fernald Preserve Visitors Center is the focal point of public activity at the site. Completed in August 2008, the visitors center was a warehouse that was redesigned in cooperation with the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning. Exhibits in the visitors center depict the diverse history of the Fernald site and tell the story from the time of the Native Americans, through the arrival of settlers and farmers, to the uranium-processing years, and finally the environmental cleanup and legacy management period that continues today.

The visitors center was one of the first buildings in Ohio to receive Platinum certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, the nationally accepted standard for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings. Advantages to LEED-certified buildings are lower operating and maintenance costs, a high degree of energy and water efficiency, and a more healthy and safe working environment. Environmentally friendly features of the building include a ground-source heating and cooling system and a zero-discharge biowetland, where water, plants, microorganisms, and the environment interact to treat the building's wastewater.

Regulatory Setting

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act is the primary driver for environmental remediation at the Fernald site. Both EPA and Ohio EPA

enforce the environmental laws, regulations, and legal agreements, and both agencies have regulatory oversight of work at the Fernald site. For some programs, such as those under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act, EPA has authorized the state of Ohio to act as the primary enforcement authority.

Current Site Conditions

The Fernald Preserve is open to the public as an undeveloped park. The site's cleanup and ecological restoration has made the Fernald Preserve attractive to a diversity of wildlife including a large number of nesting and migrating birds, as well as locally rare species.

Legacy Management Activities

The DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM) manages the Fernald Preserve to ensure the continued effectiveness of the site's environmental remediation, the ongoing groundwater cleanup, and the status of the ecological restoration. Environmental monitoring of the groundwater and surface water continues, as do routine inspections, care, and monitoring of the On-Site Disposal Facility. The entire site is periodically inspected to identify areas of erosion, the presence of invasive plant species, and to ensure cleanup remedies remain protective of human health and the environment.

National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse Award

The Fernald Preserve was honored to receive the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2019 **National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse Award** in the National Priorities List category. This distinction recognized accomplishments in environmental remediation, revitalization, collaborative decision-making with regulators and local stakeholders on land use planning, conservation of natural resources and site-related environmental education, ensuring that future generations remember the history of the Fernald Preserve.



HOURS OF OPERATION

The **Fernald Preserve** is open daily from **7:00 a.m. to dusk**, and the **visitors center** is open **Wednesday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**, and **Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

The Community Meeting Room in the visitors center can accommodate up to 120 people; the Resource Room can accommodate up to eight people; and the outdoor Program Shelter can accommodate up to 58 people. All meeting spaces are available at no charge for noncommercial use by organized groups. Nature and history programs designed to meet the needs of your group can be scheduled with the Fernald Preserve staff.

www.energy.gov/lm/fernalld-preserve-visitors-center



CONTACT INFORMATION

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT THE SITE, CONTACT 911.

Site-specific documents related to the **Fernald Preserve, Ohio, Site** are available on the LM website at www.energy.gov/lm/fernalld-preserve-ohio-site

For more information about LM activities at the **Fernald Preserve, Ohio, Site**, contact:

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