



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Pittsburgh District

# Shallow Land Disposal Area Parks Township, Pennsylvania

## Authorization

The Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) was initiated by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1974 to identify and clean up contaminated sites used in the early years of the Nation's atomic energy program. Management of the program was transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the U.S. Department of Energy in 1997. Public Law 107-117, Section 8143, passed in 2002, directs the Corps of Engineers to clean up radioactive waste at the Parks Township, Pennsylvania, Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA) site, consistent with a July 5, 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Corps of Engineers for the coordination of clean up and decommissioning of FUSRAP sites with NRC licensed facilities and in accordance with Public Law 106-60, Section 611.

## Location and Description



### Shallow Land Disposal Area in Parks Township

*The Parks Township SLDA, encompassing 44 acres of privately owned land, is located approximately 23 miles east-northeast of Pittsburgh in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. It is on the right bank of the Kiski River, a tributary of the Allegheny River, near the communities of Apollo and Vandergrift.*

The site, currently owned by BMX Technologies, consists of ten trenches containing waste and soil contaminated with radiological waste materials. The volume of potentially contaminated waste material in the trenches is estimated at 24,300 cubic yards. Uranium, thorium, americium and plutonium contaminated waste has been identified. Uranium and thorium contaminated wastes consisting of process wastes, equipment, scrap and trash from the nearby Apollo nuclear fuel fabrication facility were disposed of in the SLDA trenches between 1961 and 1970. The uranium in the trenches is present at various levels of enrichment from highly depleted to highly enriched. Americium and plutonium, whose presence is attributed to storage of equipment used in the adjoining Parks Facility, have been detected in surface soils adjacent to a single trench. NUMEC - Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (predecessor of current owner BWX Technologies) previously conducted disposal of radioactive waste materials in accordance with Atomic Energy Commission (predecessor to the current NRC) regulations. BWX Technologies is licensed by the NRC to properly maintain the site to ensure the protection of workers and the public.

## Current Status

A Remedial Investigation; Feasibility Study; Proposed Plan; and the Record of Decision (ROD), which was approved in September 2007, for the SLDA have been completed. The ROD formally presents the clean up alternative that will be used at the site. In August 2003, April 2004 and January 2007 the Corps of Engineers held public information sessions to present and discuss the Remedial Investigation, the Feasibility Study that identified and provided an evaluation of potential alternatives to address the contamination at the site and the Proposed Plan that presented the alternative that is preferred based on the results of that evaluation for the Parks Township SLDA. As a result of input received from the public at these information sessions the recommendations were reviewed, further evaluated, and included in the ROD. The recommendation from the ROD is to excavate all contaminated material and transport the material out of state to an approved disposal facility. The ROD is available for viewing at the Apollo Public Library and the Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District Office.

These activities and subsequent work at the site are steps in the site investigation and cleanup process outlined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). Three of the CERCLA-required phases of the project – Remedial Design, Remedial Action and Project Closeout – remain to be completed following the now completed Record of Decision. An additional public information session will be held once preliminary work plans are completed.

## Other Information

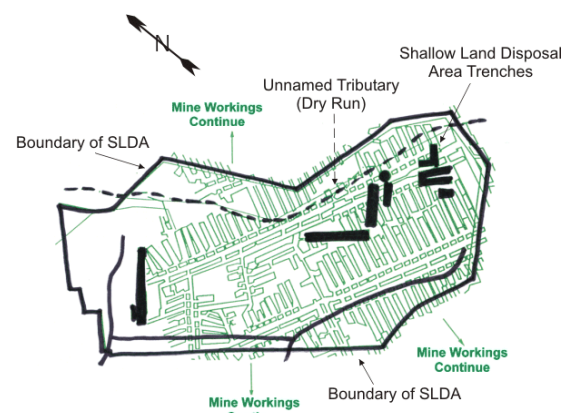
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pittsburgh District has been assigned Project Management responsibility for the Parks Township FUSRAP team and is taking the lead on the investigation and remediation work for this site. Buffalo District is the Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste Design Center assigned to perform the technical evaluations. The Corps team is working closely with the Pennsylvania regulatory agencies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the property owner and Parks Township.

## For more information contact:

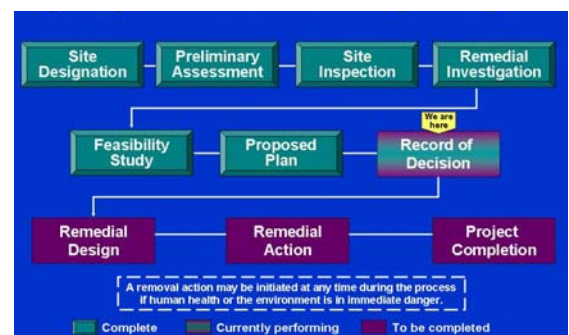
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Aerial view of the Parks Township Shallow Land Disposal Site.



This map shows the configuration of the ten trenches that collectively occupy about 1.2 acres of the total site. There is a small stream running across the site (flowing from east to west), as well as three natural gas lines. The site is fenced and posted with access controlled by BWX Technologies, owners of the site.



The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) process.

## Project website:

[www.lrp.usace.army.mil/fusrap/slda.htm](http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil/fusrap/slda.htm)



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### **Background**

This mailing is being provided to assist in the understanding of the Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA) Project in Parks Township, Pennsylvania. Additional mailings will be provided as the project progresses.

### **Questions and Answers**

The following are a summary composite of questions raised as a result of our public meetings and general correspondence. The responses are provided to aide understanding of the issues and concerns related to the project.

#### ***To what level will the site be cleaned and how will it be utilized after the project is complete?***

The Corps has developed cleanup goals in order to specify the requirements that the remedial action alternatives must fulfill to protect human health and the environment from exposure to contaminants identified at the site. Using the most recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) guidance, and in coordination with both the NRC and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Corps has confirmed that meeting these cleanup criteria will ensure that the Selected Remedy is fully protective of human health and the environment.

#### ***Why is it safer to remove and transport the contaminated materials than to just leave the material buried as it is now?***

The Corps intends to transport all soil, sediment and debris that can be classified as either low-level radioactive waste or mixed waste to a licensed and permitted facility or facilities outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This will permanently remove the present hazard risk. Every effort is being taken to insure that the cleanup process is conducted in a safe and secure manner. This will provide present and future area residents a clean and safe area to live and work. This method is the only alternative which would allow unrestricted future use of the site.

#### ***Other contaminants such as beryllium were buried with the radioactive materials. Will these other materials also be removed?***

The Corps' authority at the SLDA site requires that the radioactive waste and any other contaminants mixed with that waste be cleaned up. Results of remedial investigation sampling showed various chemical contaminants, including beryllium, which could be mixed with the radioactive waste. The Corps is aware of these contaminants. Waste materials which are not co-mingled with the radioactive waste will be stockpiled on site. The Corps will ensure the safe handling of all materials at the site during cleanup activities.

#### ***Describe what measures will be in place to insure the safety of nearby residents during cleanup operations?***

The safety and health of the local residents and workers at the site are the primary concern during operations. All Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Corps of Engineers safety requirements will be strictly adhered to. Environmental monitoring, including air sampling, will be conducted to insure that no contaminated releases occur. Dust suppression and collection of rainwater will be conducted as necessary. An enclosed facility will be built for loading materials for transport.

***As explained above, air monitoring devices would be in place for safety, but explain procedures in the event that contaminants are detected?***

As part of the continuing planning and design efforts a safety plan will also be developed. Once completed, this plan will be provided to local area residents. The plan will provide guidance in the very unlikely event of a problem such as contaminant release. The plan will be shared with all interested parties when it is completed. Future mailings will also address this topic.

***I believe that there are mines under the project site and they may not be stable. How will the Army ensure the safety of the residents in the immediate area should one of the mines collapse during removal?***

A review of site history indicates that in the early 1900s the Upper Freeport coal seam was deep-mined beneath the majority of the site. There are subsurface mine voids and residue coal upper trenches at a depth of about 60-100 feet below ground surface. This area is presently stable, with altering layers of subsurface shale, siltstone and sandstone. The minor construction activities should not change the condition and sudden collapse is viewed as very unlikely.

***How will the materials be removed from the site?***

Design plans and specifications for construction methodology will be completed as part of future requirements. All work will be completed in accordance with Corps of Engineers, NRC and OSHA regulations and standards. The methodology will be shared with all interested parties when it is completed. Future mailings will also address this topic.

***How do you propose to keep radioactive material that is being transported out of the site from being expelled into the environment?***

Dust suppression and collection of rainwater will be conducted as necessary. An enclosed facility will be built for loading materials for transport. All equipment transporting waste material will be outfitted in accordance with OSHA standards for transportation of radioactive materials.

***Will an alternate road be constructed for the residents?***

The construction of an alternate road for truck traffic was part of the conceptual design presented in the Feasibility Study and Proposed Plan. At the present time, however, no additional residential roads are planned. A construction haul road will be constructed on site which will eliminate haul vehicles from using and congesting local streets.

***Will any of our properties be purchased as part of the project?***

No houses will be purchased as part of this project. The only additional property that would be required for this project involves the relocation of an existing gas line which presently runs through the site. A new pipeline will be installed outside the southeastern perimeter of the SLDA site. Necessary right-of-way for this pipe relocation will be obtained. No houses or other additional property requirements are necessary for the cleanup. A future meeting will be held with affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition in more detail.

***How long will it be until completion and what are the additional steps?***

The actual cleanup effort is scheduled to begin in fall of 2008 and culminate in 2013. This will be preceded with the preparation of design work plans and real estate acquisition for the above mentioned pipe relocation as well as the actual pipe installation.

***Will any other sites be considered as part of this project?***

No other sites may be considered under the present authority which provides for the cleanup of this site.