



**SUPERFUND**

# W.R. Grace & Co. (Acton Plant) Superfund Site Acton and Concord, MA



**THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM** protects human health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up often-abandoned hazardous waste sites and engaging communities throughout the process. Many of these sites are complex and need long-term cleanup actions. Those responsible for contamination are held liable for cleanup costs. EPA strives to return previously contaminated land and groundwater to productive use.

## UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE

Please join us for an Open House event, where residents and community members can learn about the history of the Site, current activities occurring on site and get to know members of the Site Team, including EPA's Remedial Project Manager, Community Involvement Coordinator, and representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and W.R. Grace & Co.

**Tuesday, November 12, 2024**

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Acton Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Faulkner Room (Room 204)

## BACKGROUND

The W.R. Grace & Co. (Acton Plant) Superfund Site (Grace Site) is located in the towns of Acton and Concord, Massachusetts and has been used for industrial purposes since the 1800s. The Grace Site is comprised of approximately 1,110 acres of land in both towns and includes several surface water bodies and wetlands. The Site includes approximately 180 acres of property currently owned by W.R. Grace & Co. (Grace) and 80 acres of land formerly owned by Grace, now owned by the town of Concord. Grace acquired the property in 1954 and produced materials used to make concrete additives, organic chemicals, container sealing compounds, latex products, and paper and plastic battery separators. Discharged wastes from these operations flowed into several unlined lagoons and were placed or buried in the on-site Industrial Landfill and several other waste sites. These site-related activities resulted in the contamination of soil, sediment, and groundwater. In 1980, discharges to the on-site lagoons and on-site disposal ceased at the Grace facility. The Site was listed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1983.

## KEY CONTACTS:

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Environmental Protection

Project Manager

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## GENERAL INFO:

### TOLL-FREE

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-888-EPA-7341

## LEARN MORE AT:

[www.epa.gov/superfund/graceacton](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/graceacton)

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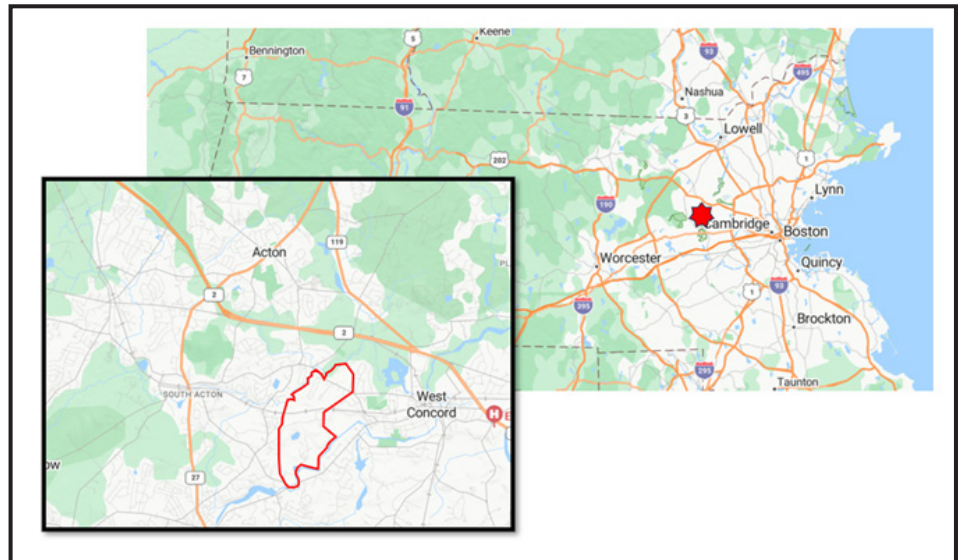


### **IS THE DRINKING WATER SAFE?**

Yes. The Acton Water District continues to closely monitor, sample, and treat the town's drinking water to ensure that safe drinking water standards are maintained, and to ensure that clean drinking water continues to be provided to all residents. The EPA, MassDEP, and Acton Water District will continue to provide oversight at the Site while the groundwater remedy is in progress. EPA is monitoring the extent of the contaminated groundwater plume, which is not migrating to the public water supply. Originally in 2002 and reinstated in 2023, the Acton Board of Health placed an administrative hold on all proposed wells within 500 feet of the contaminated groundwater plume. Similarly, in 2024 the Concord Board of Health approved regulations that prohibit wells within 500 feet of the groundwater plume.

### **WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO CLEAN UP THE SITE?**

Contamination at the Site has been addressed through federal, state and Grace's actions. The first phase of the long-term cleanup included the excavation and disposal of contaminants in the Site's lagoon/disposal areas, treatment (as needed), and the placement and capping of contaminated soils and sludges in the former Industrial Landfill at the Site. The second phase of the cleanup addressed on-site and off-site contaminated groundwater, surface water, sediments, and wetlands. Sediment cleanup at Sinking Pond and the North Lagoon Wetlands has been completed. The wetlands areas that were disturbed by the cleanup activities were replanted and restored.



A groundwater treatment system, referred to as the Aquifer Restoration System (ARS) was installed in 1983 on the southern area of the site. The system pumped contaminated groundwater and removed volatile organic compound (VOC) contaminants, then discharged treated water to Sinking Pond. The 2005 cleanup plan required groundwater extraction from different locations to be more effective and required additional groundwater treatment to remove metals (inorganics) before discharging the treated water to Sinking Pond. The original 1983 Aquifer Restoration System was replaced with a new Landfill Area Treatment System in 2012.

Much of the groundwater on the Site is being addressed by monitored natural attenuation (MNA). Monitored natural attenuation relies on natural processes to decrease or "attenuate" concentrations of contaminants in soil and groundwater. Scientists monitor these conditions to make sure natural attenuation is working. Monitoring typically involves collecting soil and groundwater samples to analyze them for the presence of contaminants and other site characteristics.

### **WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITE STATUS?**

Planned soil and sediment work in the former disposal areas at the Site is complete. Groundwater contamination has been greatly reduced across the Site through the operation of multiple groundwater extraction and treatment systems. The remaining

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groundwater contamination is being addressed through a combination of monitored natural attenuation (MNA), and operation of the Landfill Area Treatment System, which extracts and treats contaminated groundwater downgradient of the former industrial landfill. Site groundwater is sampled annually to monitor the progress of the groundwater remedy. Water levels and sediment conditions are also monitored in Sinking Pond to assess the protectiveness of the sediment remedy in the pond.

## **FIVE-YEAR REVIEW SUMMARY**

On June 13, 2024, the EPA completed the sixth Five-Year Review report for the Site. The purpose of the Five-Year Review is to determine if remedies at a site remain protective of human health and the environment. If any issues that may affect protectiveness are found during the five-year review, recommendations are made to address them. The first Five-Year Review was completed in 1999.

The sixth Five-Year Review can be found on the Grace Site profile page at [www.epa.gov/superfund/graceacton](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/graceacton). The review found the Site to be “short-term protective”, which means that the site remedies are currently protective, but actions are needed to ensure long-term protectiveness. To ensure the remedy remains protective in the long-term, EPA identified several issues to focus on moving forward, including:

- consider an institutional control to require soil characterization or a soil management plan prior to redevelopment to ensure site-related contamination is not present in uncharacterized soils;
- properly abandon the groundwater extraction well installed by the town of Concord at their bus facility (Note, this work was completed by the town of Concord on June 19, 2024);
- continue investigating the increasing concentrations of VOCs observed in the OSA-13 well cluster area, and identify the source of that contamination; and
- add sampling and analysis for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) into the groundwater monitoring program.

EPA will work with MassDEP, the Town of Acton, the Town of Concord, and Grace to address these issues prior to the next five-year review, which is due in June 2028.

## **SITE REDEVELOPMENT**

Grace ended manufacturing operations at the Acton property and does not intend to move operations back to the property. As the Site cleanup continues, multiple reuse options are being evaluated for the parcels owned by Grace.

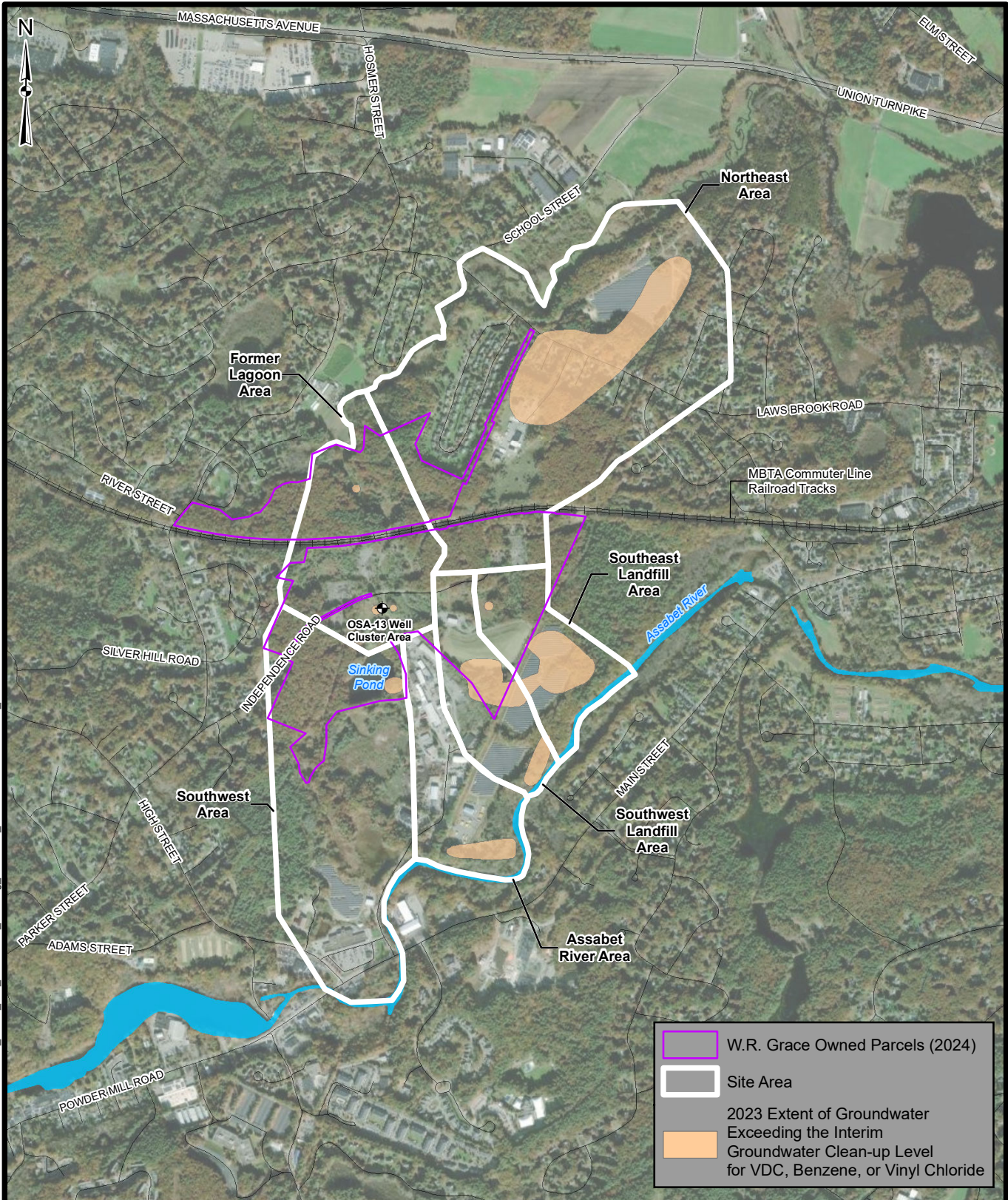
In 2015, the town of Concord took ownership of the parcel of the Grace property located in Concord by eminent domain. The 80-acre parcel is located between the Assabet River to the east and the Concord/Acton Town border to the west. Concord constructed a solar array on the northern part of this property and a bus maintenance facility on the southern part.

A new 5-megawatt solar array is expected to be installed on the Grace property in 2024–2025. The array will be located south of the MBTA commuter rail line and north of the Industrial Landfill. A figure is included at the end of this fact sheet showing the layout of the Acton solar facility. Grace and the town of Acton are also actively looking into reuse opportunities for the Site, including the potential for residential use on parts of the Site.

## **NEXT STEPS**

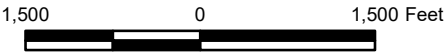
EPA and MassDEP will continue to oversee all Superfund related operations, including treatment plant maintenance and groundwater sampling, at the Site. Grace will continue to operate the Landfill Area Treatment System, monitor the groundwater remedy, maintain the landfill, and generally manage the Grace owned parcels. Grace is continually looking for opportunities to redevelop portions of the Site to bring the property back into productive reuse.

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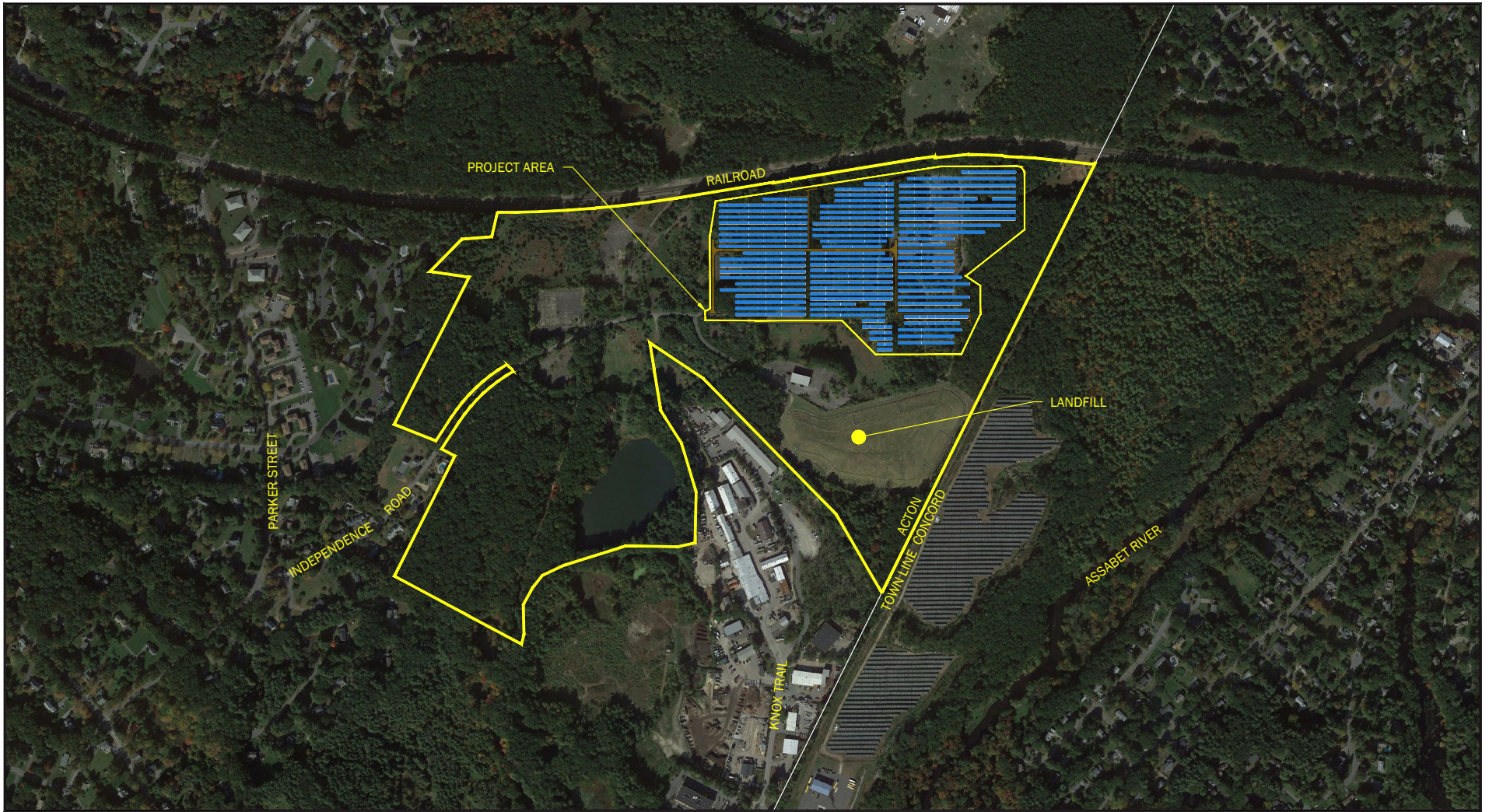


Source: ESRI World Street Map

	W.R. Grace Owned Parcels (2024)
	Site Area
	2023 Extent of Groundwater Exceeding the Interim Groundwater Clean-up Level for VDC, Benzene, or Vinyl Chloride



	<p align="center">Site Detail Map W.R. Grace &amp; Co. (Acton Plant) Superfund Site Towns of Acton and Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts</p>	<p align="center">FIGURE 1</p>
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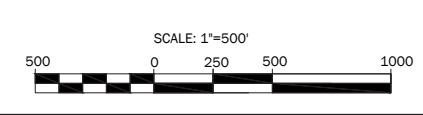
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**GRACE**  
 syncarpha

**Syncarpha Acton  
 Solar Project**  
 Independence Road  
 Acton, MA



Sheet Title:  
**Economic  
 Profile Sketch**

Sheet No:  
**SK.1**  
 Date:  
 May 8, 2024