

The Love Canal site includes the “original” canal that was excavated by William T. Love in the 1890s for a proposed hydroelectric power project that was never implemented. From 1942 until about 1953, Hooker Chemicals & Plastics Corp. (now Occidental Chemical Company) used the area as a landfill and disposed approximately 21,000 tons of various chemicals and hazardous wastes, including dioxins at the site. The property was acquired by the City of Niagara Falls and developed for homes and school. High precipitation events caused contaminants to rise to the surface, entering residential sumps, travel through sewers to nearby creeks and settle in the sediments.



Love Canal pre-1982

HISTORY:

Emergency Declarations and Habitability Decisions

- In August 1978, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Emergency Declaration of Love Canal that enabled residents in homes on 97th and 99th streets (Rings I and II) to be evacuated.
- In May 1980, President Carter Issued a second Emergency Declaration because of concerns of potential health risks to residents beyond Ring II. The second declaration included a 10-square block area consisting of about 650

private residences and 300 public housing units. The area affected by this declaration was termed the Emergency Declaration Area (EDA).

- In May 1982, EPA issued the Environmental Monitoring Study that evaluated more than 6,000 environmental samples. Based upon this study, the Department of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the New York State Department of Health, determined that the EDA was habitable. However, a subsequent review by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, critiqued the study, resulting in the state and federal government decision to develop a peer reviewed approach to determining the habitability of the EDA.
- In 1983/84, EPA developed Technical Review Committee composed of senior representatives of state and federal government to oversee the development of the new habitability study. An independent panel of scientists developed criteria for conducting a new habitability study. These criteria were peer reviewed; and, a pilot study was conducted to collect data in the EDA and in comparison areas in Niagara Falls to test the



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the full-scale habitability sampling program and evaluation.

- In July 1988, EPA issued the five-volume, peer-reviewed Love Canal EDA Habitability Study.
- In September 1988, using the results of EPA's Habitability Study, the NYS Commissioner of Health issued a Habitability Decision which identified appropriate land uses for the seven designated areas of the EDA.
- Areas 4 through 7 were deemed habitable and suitable for residential use. Areas 1-3 were deemed not to meet habitability criteria based upon the comparison with other neighborhoods (this was not a determination of a health risk, just a determination that levels of contaminants were higher than comparison areas). Areas 1-3 could be used for commercial and industrial use without remediation.
- The Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency, a New York State agency, managed the redevelopment of the EDA residential neighborhoods. In 2003, the Love Canal Area Revitalization agency was formerly disbanded.

REMEDATION

- The fenced 70-acre Love Canal site encompasses the original 16-acre hazardous waste landfill with a 40-acre clay/synthetic liner cap. Ring I and II homes located within the fence line were demolished. A barrier drainage system and leachate collection and treatment system is in place and operating.
- During 1986 and 1987, 68,000 linear feet of storm and sanitary sewers around the Love Canal site were cleaned of contaminated sediments. From 1987 until 1989, approximately 14,000 cubic yards of sediments were dredged from the nearby Black and Bergholtz creeks. The sewer and creeks' sediments were dewatered, stabilized and bagged. In February 1998, Occidental Chemical Corporation (OXY) began shipping the bagged Love Canal wastes from its storage facilities for thermal destruction or off-site land disposal.
- In April 1995, responsibility of the operation, maintenance and monitoring (OM&M) of the Love Canal site was transferred from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to OXY through federal and state consent decrees. On July 1, 1998, OXY transferred the OM&M responsibility to Glenn Springs Holdings, Inc. and its contractor to manage the day-to-day operations and associated remedial activities. NYSDEC oversees Glen Springs and the continued operations of the leachate collection and treatment system and the groundwater monitoring at the Love Canal site. Glen Springs submits annual OM&M reports to NYSDEC and EPA.
- The Love Canal site achieved construction completion status in 1999, and, in 2004, was deleted from EPA's National Priorities List of Superfund projects.
- EPA Region 2 continues to coordinate with NYSDEC and to perform five-year reviews of the Love Canal site operations. In January 2014, EPA issued the third five-year review report concerning the Love Canal site and determined that the containment remedy is operating as designed and continues to remain effective in protecting human health and the environment.

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the site, please contact one of the following:

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