

EPA ANNOUNCES PROPOSED CLEANUP PLAN FOR LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD SUPERFUND SITE LEROY, NEW YORK

FALL 2023



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized its plan to address the groundwater, bedrock, soil, soil vapor, and surface water at the Lehigh Valley Railroad Derailment Superfund site in LeRoy, New York.

The final decision of the cleanup plan, documented in a Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on September 28, 2023. For the groundwater contamination, which consists of an approximately 4-mile trichloroethylene (TCE) plume, EPA has determined that no existing treatment methods can clean up the groundwater to meet standards in a reasonable time. EPA will monitor the groundwater and use institutional controls to limit its use and protect people's health over the long term. The cleanup plan also includes digging up and disposing of contaminated soil off-site at a permitted disposal facility; in place or in-situ treatment of contaminated surface water with streambed cover in a section of Mud Creek; monitoring the groundwater, surface water, soil vapor and indoor air; maintaining the existing vapor mitigation systems and installing new systems, as needed, for impacted properties; and connecting new homes that may be constructed over the groundwater plume to the waterline that was connected to existing homes in 2003 to the municipal water supply system. Institutional controls (ICs) including easements in the spill area, public notices and publications to limit exposure to contaminated groundwater and soil vapor are also components of the cleanup plan.

The plan also includes changes to the 1997 state cleanup plan which includes eliminating bedrock vapor extraction as a measure to control the source of contamination, updating the surface water standard for trichloroethylene (TCE) and addressing soil contamination beneath Gulf Road by implementing institutional controls to restrict access, and to require proper soil management if the roadbed is disturbed in the future.

Site Background

The site is located in a rural area in Genesee, Monroe and Livingston counties. In December 1970, there was a train derailment at the Gulf Road railroad crossing in LeRoy, New York. The train was operated by the Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR), the party responsible for the contamination. Two tank cars ruptured and

THE SUPERFUND REMEDIAL PROCESS



Discovery of Contamination



Preliminary Assessment



Site Inspection



**National Priorities List (NPL)
Site Listing**

ASSESSMENT



**Remedial Investigation/
Feasibility Study &
Proposed Plan**

CHARACTERIZATION



Record of Decision

SELECTION OF REMEDY



Remedial Design



Remedial Action

CLEANUP



**Operation and
Maintenance**



POST-CONSTRUCTION

NPL Deletion

Community involvement and planning for a site's redevelopment are integral to the entire process

Five-Year Reviews

spilled 30,000 gallons of TCE onto the ground. A third car containing a crystalline form of cyanide also partially spilled. The cyanide was recovered shortly after the derailment, however, the TCE infiltrated into the ground and was not recovered. In early 1971, residents near the site complained of TCE odors in homes that impacted their drinking water wells. Studies by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) in the early 1990s revealed TCE in private wells. In 1991, EPA installed carbon filters on several private wells to remove the TCE from drinking water. NYSDEC selected a cleanup plan in 1997 for the site under state law to address TCE-contaminated soil and bedrock, as well as provide clean drinking water. NYSDEC constructed a waterline extension in 2003 and is providing drinking water to about 70 affected residences.

EPA added the site on the Superfund National Priorities List in 1999. EPA and LVRR entered into a settlement agreement in 2006 to perform a comprehensive investigation and study in the area. EPA issued an Administrative Order in 2014 to LVRR to clean up the soil addressed in the NYSDEC cleanup plan. LVRR installed a system to treat the contaminated soil but after two years, EPA determined that the system was not effectively removing the TCE.

Additionally, since 2008, EPA sampled thirty-five properties for vapor intrusion and found that twelve of the properties needed vapor intrusion mitigation systems. EPA installed the mitigation systems that have been effective in controlling the indoor TCE vapors. EPA will continue to monitor structures above the groundwater plume for vapor intrusion issues.



Information Repositories

EPA keeps site project information and reference materials for the public to read at local information repositories.

Copies of cleanup documents for Lehigh Valley Railroad Superfund site are available at:

Caledonia Public Library, 3108 Main Street, Caledonia, NY
Woodward Memorial Library, Wolcott Street, LeRoy, NY

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For general information or questions about EPA's Superfund program, please contact the EPA Regional Public Liaison Office: James Haklar, Haklar.james@epa.gov or (732) 906-6817 or toll free at (888) 283-7626.