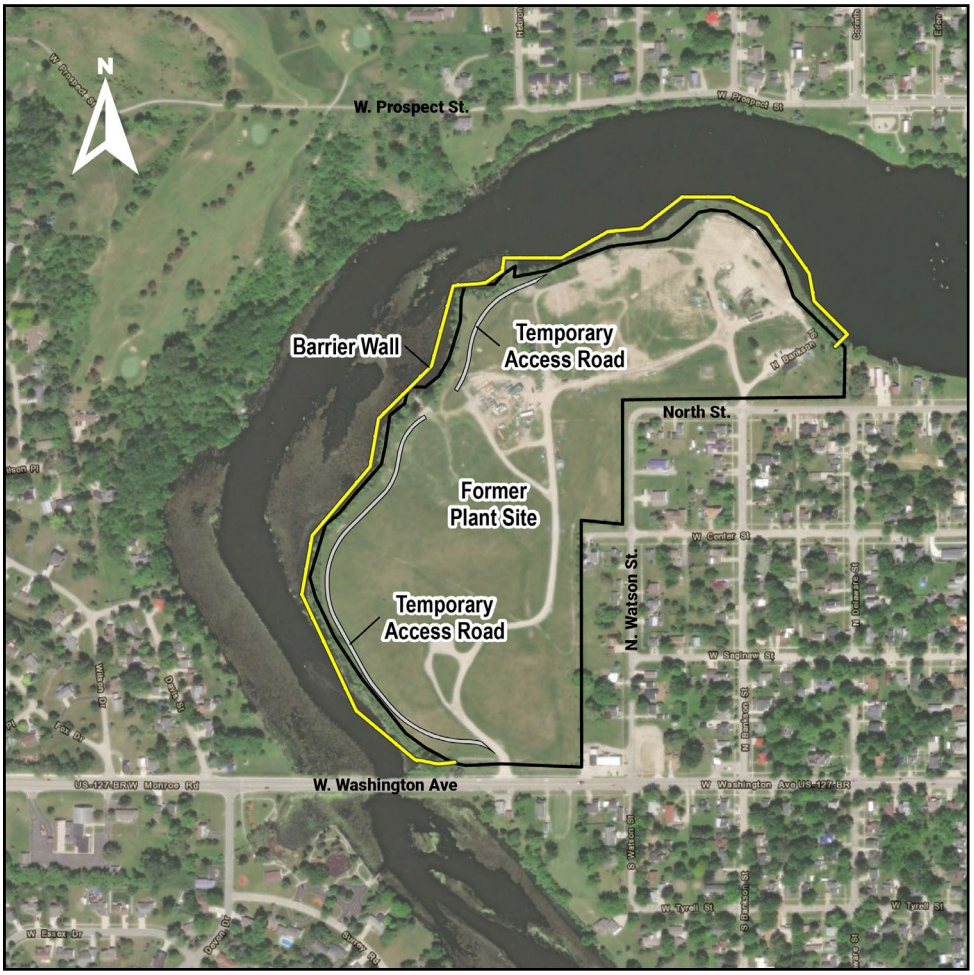
Barrier Wall Construction Begins this Spring

Velsicol Chemical Superfund Site
St. Louis, Michigan — February 2025

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will install a barrier wall between the Pine River and the former Velsicol plant site starting this spring. This barrier wall is one of several components of the cleanup plan for the former plant site, which also includes onsite groundwater treatment and a soil cap.

How will construction affect the community?

Construction of the barrier wall will result in increased truck traffic and noise. EPA and their contractors will take steps to reduce overall noise. Construction work in the area will occur during normal business hours. See following pages for additional information.



Velsicol site map showing where the barrier wall will be installed.

You are invited

EPA will host an availability session[1] to give the public an opportunity to discuss the upcoming barrier wall installation at the Velsicol Chemical Corp. Superfund Site.

The availability session will be held on Tuesday, March 18, from 4 to 7 p.m., at City Hall, Community Room, 300 N. Mill St., St. Louis.

For more information

For any questions or further information about the site, contact these EPA staff:

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[1]*For the most up-to-date information about upcoming meetings, including schedule changes, please visit our website: www.epa.gov/superfund/velsicol-chemical-michigan.*

Barrier Wall Construction
Frequently asked questions

EPA has provided answers to questions you may have about the upcoming barrier wall construction.

What is the purpose of the barrier wall?
The barrier wall will reduce the risk that contaminants in site soil and groundwater will flow directly into the Pine River.

What will the wall be made of?
The barrier wall will be made out of metal sheets and metal cylindrical king piles surrounding the riverbank at the former plant site, as shown on Page 1. An example of what the wall will look like is shown in the photo below.

Photo of a sheet wall that looks similar to the one that will be installed at the Velsicol Site.

How deep into the ground will the wall be placed?
Site crews will drive the king piles about 5 to 15 feet below the riverbed surface and into a hard rock layer called till. Crews will use a crane and a moderate-sized vibratory hammer, similar to the machinery in the photo shown below.

Photo of a vibratory hammer used to install sheet piles.

How long will construction last?
Construction will begin this spring and is expected to be completed this year.[1]

During what hours will construction take place?
Normal working hours will be 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays.

Will there be a lot of noise during construction? What will the noise be from?

Machinery and equipment such as the vibratory hammer may cause some nuisance noise outside the construction boundaries. However, construction will follow the City of St. Louis's noise ordinance, *Section 62-7: Noise and smoke from motor vehicles*. EPA will develop a Noise Control Monitoring Plan to manage and monitor the noise levels during construction in accordance with this ordinance. The thermometer (right) gives you an idea of how loud some common sounds are compared to the vibratory hammer. The noise levels (in decibels) are approximate as measured at a typical listener's distance.

The barrier wall installation will also result in vibrations near the construction site. The level and frequency of the vibrations will depend on the location of the installation and the depth of the materials used to construct the barrier wall. The level and frequency of the vibrations are not anticipated to result in cosmetic or structural damage to private property close to the site.

What happens to the areas around the wall?

Site crews will implement erosion and sediment control measures before construction activities start. Crews will excavate contaminated soil along the shoreline, and will restore the area surrounding the newly installed barrier wall with clean soil. This resoration will support future construction of the engineered cap and stormwater management. Restoration of disturbed areas will include seeding with native plants.

What is backfill material? How do you know if the backfill material is clean?

Backfill material will fill in excavated areas and around structures at a construction site, to provide stability and support. The backfill and topsoil materials will be tested in a laboratory prior to placement. The testing will meet acceptable standards as defined by Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

Will there be an increase in trucks on the roads? Any road closures?

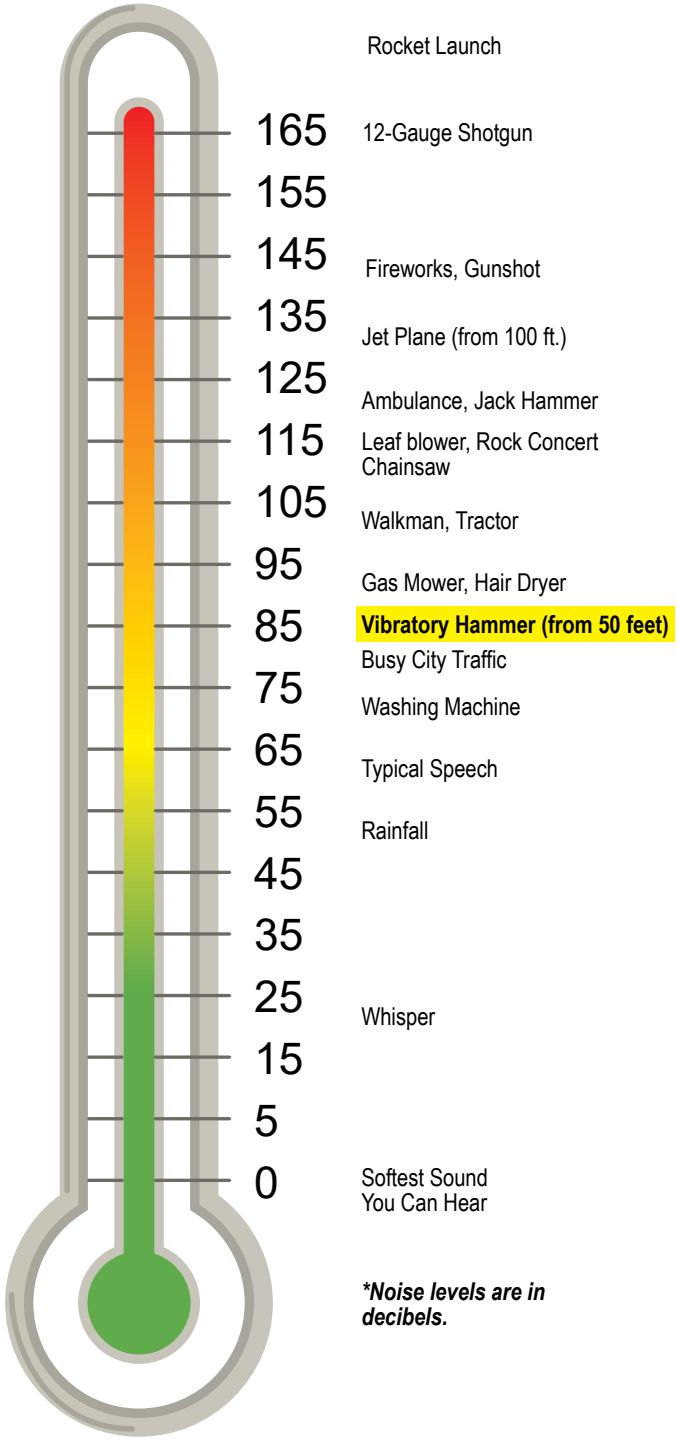
Large trucks delivering road building materials and metal sheeting will enter and depart the site at the gate on M-46. Site crews will set up temporary access roads made of gravel and staging areas onsite. The roads will be gravel and will remain in place after construction activities are complete to support future site work.

How will the Pine River be affected during construction? Will water levels have to be lowered or changed?

Site crews will instal special curtains designed to prevent disturbed river sediment and bank material from affecting water quality downstream of the project. The elevation of the Pine River will not change during construction.

Will fishing be impacted?

Installation of the barrier wall will not adversely impact the fish in the river.



For the contamination that is left in place, how will the public be protected?

The barrier wall is one of several components of the cleanup plan for the former plant site that EPA finalized in 2012. In addition to the barrier wall, the cleanup plan includes a perimeter drain to collect shallow groundwater, and a groundwater extraction system to collect deeper groundwater, for onsite treatment. The cleanup plan also includes an engineered cap to prevent water infiltration at the site. Also, after EPA installs these systems, we will monitor them to ensure that they are functioning as designed.

EPA to Host Availability Session on Velsicol Chemical Superfund Site

Tuesday, March 18
4 to 7 p.m.

City Hall, Community Room
300 N. Mill St.
St. Louis

For more information:

Webpage

For more details about the site, visit EPA's webpage at: www.epa.gov/superfund/velsicol-chemical-michigan

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