EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Site Redevelopment Profile

Sutton Brook Disposal Area

Southwest of South Street and Regina South Drive
Tewksbury, Massachusetts

Property Overview

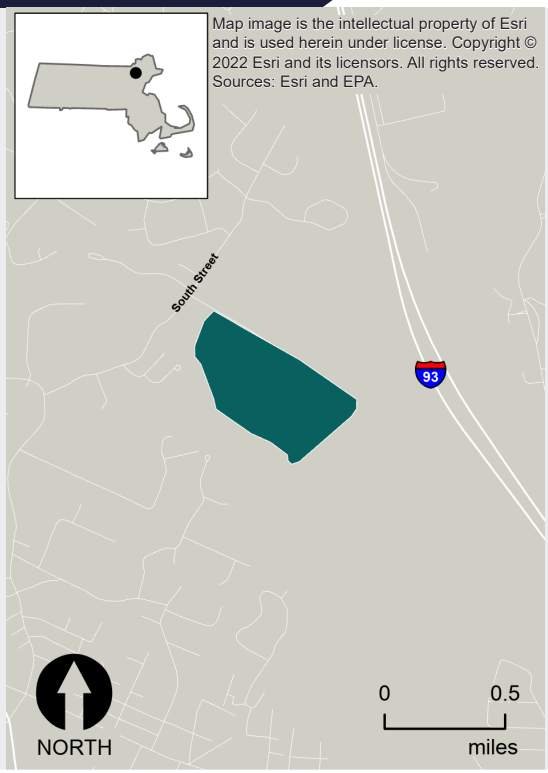

Figure 1. The location of the Sutton Brook Disposal Area site in Massachusetts

Size
100 acres

Current Site Uses
- Solar power generation
- Ecological habitat

Use Restrictions
- Restrictions limit groundwater use and protect the landfill cap.

Surrounding Population

1 MILE	3 MILES	5 MILES
3,809	41,361	108,538

Site History and Redevelopment Timeline

1950s-1982
A landfill operated on site. The state ordered the closure of the landfill in 1979. Official landfill operations ended in 1982.

1982
The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) began site investigations.

1999
MassDEP installed groundwater monitoring wells near an area that contained buried drums.

2000
EPA conducted short-term cleanup activities.

2001
EPA added the site to the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL). EPA held a meeting to share information with the public.

2002
EPA conducted community outreach with town representatives and community members. The Agency prepared a reuse assessment for the site.

2007
EPA selected the site's long-term cleanup plan.

2014-2016
The site's potentially responsible parties (PRPs) cleaned up the site.

2020
MassDEP, in consultation with EPA, approved plans for a solar project on site.

Present
A solar array operates on site, selling electricity in the region and providing revenue to the town of Tewksbury through lease payments. The site also provides wetlands and habitat for plants and animals.

History and Cleanup

The Sutton Brook Disposal Area Superfund site covers about 100 acres in eastern Tewksbury, Massachusetts, with a small part of the site extending into the neighboring town of Wilmington. The site is mainly surrounded by open space, agriculture, a composting operation and homes. Sutton Brook runs east to west across the former landfill, which was also alternately known as Rocco's Landfill and Tewksbury Town Dump. Waste disposal at the unlined landfill started in the 1950s, and included municipal, commercial and industrial waste. The Tewksbury Board of Health ordered the closure of the landfill in 1979, though waste disposal is believed to have continued until around 1988. Dumping and landfill practices contaminated soil and groundwater at the site with volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and pesticides. The main sources of the contamination were two landfill areas separated by Sutton Brook and an area where drums were buried. EPA added the site to the NPL in 2001.

In 2000, prior to listing the site on the NPL, EPA excavated and removed highly contaminated soils and drums. EPA selected a final cleanup plan in 2007. Cleanup was designed to protect unacceptable risks to people through contact with soil and groundwater. It also aimed to protect ecological risks to plants and animals in soil, Sutton Brook and site wetlands. With EPA oversight, the PRPs began cleaning up the site in 2014. Long-term cleanup at the site included removal of soils and sediments, consolidation of this material in on-site landfills, landfill capping, and wetlands restoration. The PRPs' cleanup also included groundwater treatment, restrictions on land and water use, and long-term monitoring. The PRP finished cleanup in July 2016.

Redevelopment

Throughout the cleanup process, EPA has worked for transparency and community involvement through efforts such as public meetings, fact sheets and other activities to gather feedback and share information. In 2002, EPA produced a reuse assessment report that synthesized information gathered from community members and town of Tewksbury representatives.

In 2018, the town of Tewksbury announced it had signed a letter of intent with Syncarpha Capital, a private equity firm with prior experience redeveloping landfill sites for solar projects. Town leaders expressed enthusiasm that the project

3,000
tons of carbon dioxide potentially offset each year by production of solar energy on site

Figure 2. This solar facility on site provides renewable energy in the region

would increase renewable energy use in the region and provide revenue for the town through a portion of the lease payments. In 2020, MassDEP approved a permit for the solar project, determining that it would not disturb the landfill cap and other site maintenance or monitoring activities. In 2022, the company announced it had received permission to operate the solar facility. The facility consists of three, ballast-mounted solar arrays that have a capacity of 3.6 megawatts and will provide power to the nearby city of Everett, Tufts University and National Grid, a private utility company that serves customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island.

Former landfills can provide ideal areas for renewable energy projects such as solar arrays, which require open space. The development of the Sutton Brook Disposal Area into a solar project has turned this former toxic landfill into a generator of renewable energy. The projected production of this solar facility is equivalent to offsetting more than 3,000 tons of carbon dioxide each year, or the greenhouse gas emissions of around 700 gas-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year. Cleanup has also allowed for the protection and restoration of wetland and stream habitat on site, which provides myriad local benefits, including habitat for plants and animals. Effective cleanup and collaboration among EPA, MassDEP, the town of Tewksbury and the developer have allowed for the beneficial reuse of the site and a step toward a greener future for energy production in the region.

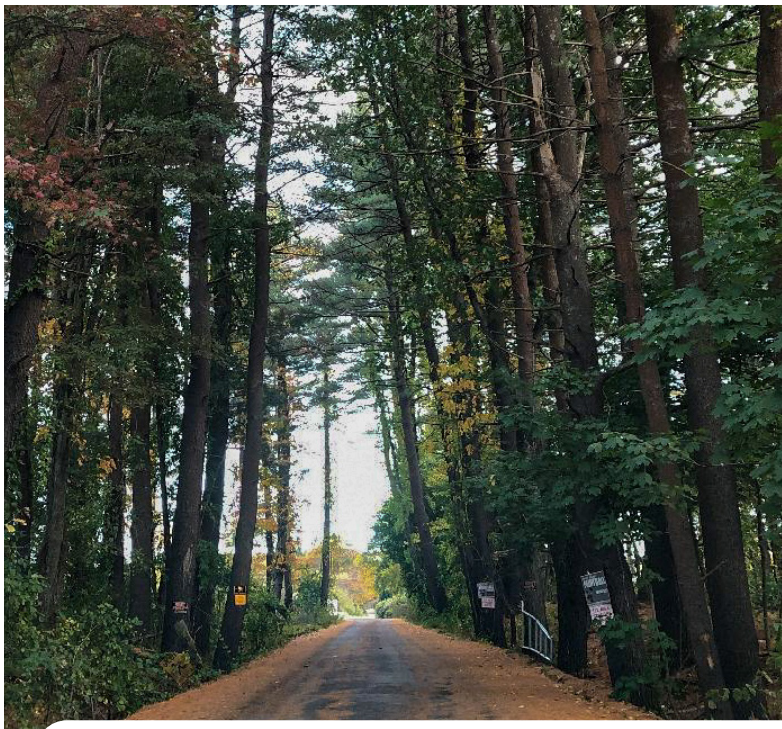

Figure 3. Cleanup at the site protects plants and animals as well as people

Contacts

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For more information, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment.

Figure 4. Healthy wetlands provide important habitat for a variety of animals, including great blue herons