

## Site Redevelopment Profile

# Lower Darby Creek Area

Darby Creek Between Cobbs Creek and Delaware River  
Darby Township, Pennsylvania 19023

### Property Overview

#### Size

The site includes the 64-acre Clearview Landfill and associated groundwater, the 47.5-acre Folcroft Landfill, the 16.5-acre Folcroft Annex, and aquatic environments in the creeks, marsh and larger John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge that may be impacted by contaminants from the Clearview or Folcroft landfills

#### Current Site Uses

- John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge
- Residential properties
- Recreation areas

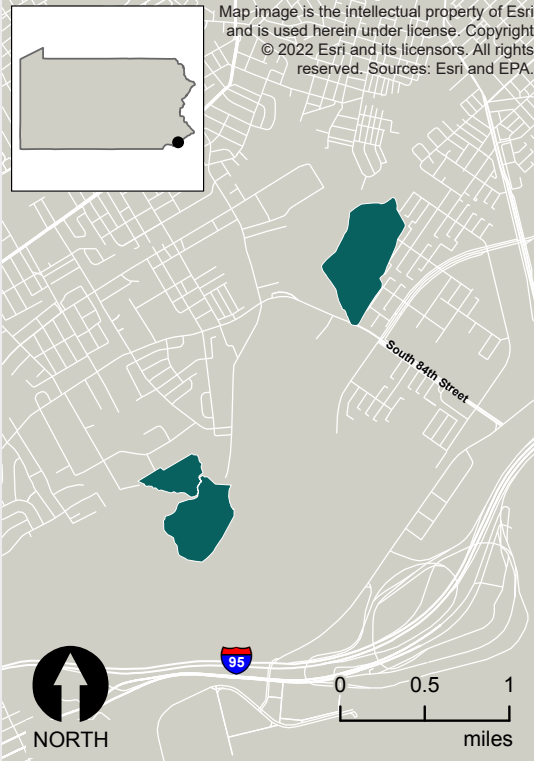
#### Surrounding Population

**7,367**  
1 MILE

**115,951**  
3 MILES

**342,601**  
5 MILES

Within a 1-mile radius of the site, 68% of the population is people of color, compared to the state average of 24%, and 41% of the population is considered low income compared to the state average of 28%.



**Figure 1.** The location of the Lower Darby Creek Area site in Pennsylvania

### Site History and Redevelopment Timeline

#### 1950s-1970s

Clearview Landfill and the Folcroft Landfill and Annex operated at the site. During operations, they disposed of a variety of wastes, including municipal, demolition and hospital wastes.

#### 2001

EPA added the site to the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL).

#### 2010-2011

EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Program (SRP) supported a reuse planning project at the site that resulted in a reuse assessment outlining potential future use opportunities for the site.

#### 2011-2012

EPA began short-term cleanup by removing and disposing of almost 4,000 tons of highly contaminated waste containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

#### 2016

EPA began cleaning up residential yards affected by the Clearview Landfill under a removal action.

EPA addressed contaminated soil in Eastwick Regional City Park.

#### 2017

EPA began cleanup of remaining residential properties not addressed by the removal action.

#### 2018

EPA began cleanup of Eastwick Regional City Park and Clearview Landfill.

#### Present

EPA is continuing to clean up Clearview Landfill. Funding received from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2022 has accelerated the cleanup by over 12 months. Construction is scheduled to finish by the end of 2023.

A group of potentially responsible parties (PRPs) are addressing Folcroft Landfill, located within the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. The feasibility study to address the landfill and groundwater contamination is scheduled to finish in 2023.

## History and Cleanup

The Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site is in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, along Darby and Cobbs creeks. The site consists of Clearview Landfill and Folcroft Landfill, which both operated from the 1950s to the 1970s. The facilities accepted municipal, demolition and hospital wastes and disposed of them along the edges of the creek. These waste disposal practices contaminated the adjacent creeks, wetlands, soil and wildlife with hazardous chemicals.

EPA added the site to the NPL in 2001. EPA conducted a time-critical removal action along the southern part of the landfill to remove high levels of contamination. During this process, almost 4,000 tons of waste was excavated and taken off site for disposal. In 2014, EPA selected the final cleanup plan, and the site was broken into operable units for phased cleanup. The plan included construction of a cover to contain landfill waste. A remedial investigation of the groundwater near the Clearview Landfill, determined it was determined too toxic for human interaction. During the entire cleanup, EPA supplied residents with clean water and prohibited the use of groundwater in the area.

EPA's cleanup plan also called for residential soil removal. To date, EPA has cleaned up and restored 195 properties by removing 25,000 tons of contaminated soil in the Eastwick neighborhood. Cleanup is incomplete in several areas due to lack of funding. In 2022, EPA received funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to complete the cleanup and it is underway.

## Redevelopment

Residential soil cleanup allowed for the safe use of residential areas throughout the Eastwick Neighborhood. Cleanup of the Clearview Landfill part of the site has addressed nearly 20 acres of Philadelphia parkland and open space. Activities established over 40 acres of habitat on the landfill cover.

The city of Philadelphia plans to expand the East Coast Greenway trail through Eastwick Regional City Park, which will connect the Eastwick neighborhood to John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manages Folcroft Landfill as part of John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. This is the first urban wildlife refuge established in the U.S. and it is a major tourism hub for the area. The refuge provides interactive education opportunities, fishing, canoeing and hiking. It is home to hundreds of species of plants, trees, birds, insects and mammals.



**26,000**

tons of contaminated soil removed from 195 residential properties



**1,000**

trees and shrubs planted

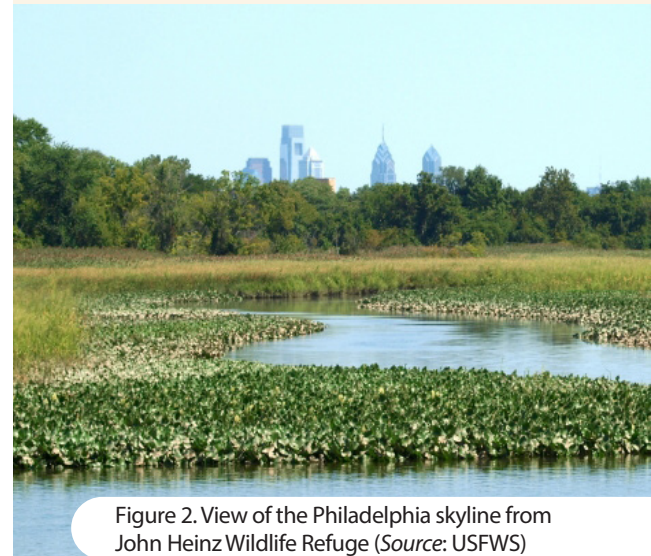


Figure 2. View of the Philadelphia skyline from John Heinz Wildlife Refuge (Source: USFWS)



Figure 3. Cleanup of Clearview Landfill



EPA worked with the PRPs for the Folcroft Landfill and Annex area of the site to sign an agreement to conduct the site's remedial investigation and feasibility study. The investigations help determine the nature and extent of contamination and evaluate potential risks to people and the environment. The results of these investigations will be used to determine long-term cleanup options for the site.

Cobbs and Darby creeks have been stabilized next to Clearview Landfill using natural materials, plantings and stabilization features such as mounds, crib walls and log vanes to prevent future exposure and erosion of landfill contaminants. EPA continues to work closely with the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area Community Advisory Group and technical assistance grantee the Darby Creek Valley Association.

EPA collaboration with stakeholders and PRPs helped facilitate the beneficial reuse of the Lower Darby Creek site into a natural asset. To ensure that future reuse is protective of human health and the environment, EPA will continue to work with site stakeholders to support their vision and reflect changing community needs.



Figure 4. Part of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge



Figure 5. View from the landfill, looking toward Eastwick Regional City Park

## Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Revives Stalled Cleanups

In 2022, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to initiate cleanup and clear the backlog of 49 previously unfunded Superfund sites across the nation, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The federal government's new Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool (CEJST) identifies disadvantaged areas across the United States. Due to the site's status and location in a disadvantaged community, EPA received funding to continue cleanup activities at the site.

## Contacts

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