

Celebrating Success: Diamond Alkali Newark, New Jersey



Superfund
Redevelopment
Initiative



Area residents enjoying the new 800-foot boardwalk. (Source: nj.com)

Since the industrial revolution, area manufacturing operations resulted in contamination of the Passaic River, part of the Diamond Alkali Superfund Site (Site), and adjacent lands. Contaminated land and sediments prevented access to this urban waterway, limiting recreational opportunities for residents. However, 30 years of dedication and collaboration among the City of Newark, Essex County, The Trust for Public Land and Newark residents transformed part of the banks of the Passaic River into a community asset. Cooperation between EPA and state and federal agencies, the potentially responsible parties (PRPs), and the Community Advisory Group (CAG) led to successful cleanups of the land area of the Site and an adjacent 2-acre area of the river. This cooperation has also led to the ongoing investigation of contamination in the rest of the river, helping to pave the way for additional cleanup along the Passaic River and for redevelopment of this property into the Newark Riverfront Park. Today, the park provides an open green space and recreational area for Newark residents to enjoy.

“Thanks to the Mayor and the County Executive, the voices of Newark’s residents have been heard and decades of activism have been materialized as a new civic space for our city.”
-Nancy Zak, member of SPARK-Friends of Riverfront Park

The Site includes the location of a former pesticide manufacturing plant and the surrounding properties at 80 and 120 Lister Avenue, a 17-mile tidal stretch of the Lower Passaic River and Newark Bay. Over the years, dioxin, pesticides and other hazardous substances contaminated all three portions of the Site. From 1951 through 1969, Diamond Alkali Company manufactured pesticides at the land part of the Site. Manufacturing continued under subsequent owners until 1983 when EPA and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) sampling detected dioxin contamination at the land part of the Site and in the Passaic River. EPA and NJDEP removed contaminated soils through initial cleanups and EPA added the Site to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1984. EPA selected an interim remedy for the land part of the Site in 1987, including containment of contamination and a ground water pump-and-treat system. A removal action in 2012 included removal and disposal of dioxin-contaminated sediments from the river adjacent to the land part of the Site.



The ribbon cutting ceremony at the Newark Riverfront Park. (Source: CBS New York)

Since the addition of the Site to the NPL, Newark residents and various organizations have worked towards cleanup of the Site and redevelopment of the riverfront into an open green space for the community. The Newark Planning Office and The Trust for Public Land spent four years attending meetings and public sessions and fundraising to transform a portion of the riverfront into the Newark Riverfront Park. The City of Newark, Essex County and The Trust for Public Land worked together to raise the \$9 million from over ten sources to fund the community’s vision.

For more information, please contact Melissa Friedland at friedland.melissa@epa.gov or (703) 603-8864 or Frank Avvisato at avvisato.frank@epa.gov or (703) 603-8949.

The efforts of these organizations granted the community of Newark access to the Passaic River, a recreational amenity that many avoided for decades. The first 12-acre segment of Newark Riverfront Park opened in 2012 and a second 4-acre segment of the park finally opened to the public on August 3, 2013. The park features several walking and biking paths, a floating dock and an 800-foot-long orange boardwalk. New sports fields for soccer, football, tennis and basketball and a playground are also located in the park. The new Newark Riverfront Park is a vital step in transforming the formerly blighted riverfront area, restoring community access to this urban waterway and providing the community with new recreational amenities.



The new park provides plenty of space for Newark residents to enjoy. (Source: Newark Riverfront Revival)