

Celebrating Success: Roebbling Steel Co. Site Florence, New Jersey



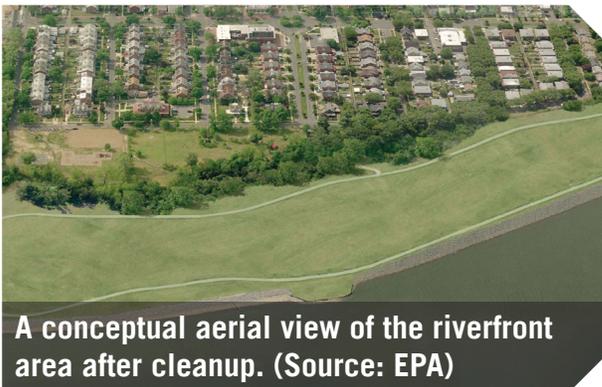
Superfund
Redevelopment
Initiative



EPA dredged portions of the Delaware River Back Channel in preparation for reuse. (Source: EPA)

“Having a park across the street versus what was an industrial setting for years will add tremendous value.”

Thomas Sahol, Florence Township
Assistant Administrator



A conceptual aerial view of the riverfront area after cleanup. (Source: EPA)

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New open space recreational area with walking trails and riverfront views. (Source: EPA)

For decades, a steel and wire products manufacturing plant operated on 200 acres in Florence Township, New Jersey. Following completion of cleanup activities, a significant portion of the Roebbling Steel Co. Superfund site (the Site) is now in reuse. These uses include a light-rail station, the Roebbling Museum and a 37-acre riverfront park.

The Roebbling Steel facility operated on site from 1906 to 1982. Wire rope and steel produced by the company supported construction of famous suspension bridges across the country, including the Brooklyn Bridge, the George Washington Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge. Decades of industrial use contaminated soils, groundwater, and river and creek sediments with heavy metals. In 1982, EPA added the Site to the Superfund program's National Priorities List for cleanup.

Cleanup began in 1987 with the removal of contaminated materials including drums, transformers and tanks throughout the facility. By 2011, EPA had demolished 70 buildings and removed underground sources of contamination such as oil and chemical pipelines. By 2013, EPA completed dredging sediments in Crafts Creek and the Delaware River Back Channel as well as wetlands restoration. EPA also stabilized and remediated the riverfront slag area, installing a revetment along the river, a two-foot thick soil cap and revegetating the area.

Redevelopment plans moved forward when the Florence Township Redevelopment Agency, with EPA's assistance, conducted a reuse assessment. Early discussions among the community, the site owner, the Township and EPA focused on how to celebrate the steel mill's historic significance while creating open space areas. EPA also coordinated with New Jersey Transit on its plans for a light-rail commuter station and parking lot, which opened in 2005. During cleanup, EPA restored the 7,000-square-foot Roebbling Steel Company Main Gate House following National Historic Preservation Act guidelines. Today, the building is home to the Roebbling Museum, which opened in 2009 and features exhibit space documenting the community's rich social and industrial history.

Building on earlier redevelopment achievements, the riverfront park opened in 2014 and is already a valued community resource. The 37 acres of green space expand on Florence Township's pre-existing Roebbling Park, which features recently upgraded playgrounds and basketball courts. Before cleanup and redevelopment, the riverfront was inaccessible. As a result of EPA's cleanup, area residents and visitors can now enjoy walks along the Delaware River and views of historic Roebbling.