



## Start of Last Cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is starting cleanup on the last portions of the Ottawa Radiation Areas Superfund site, the NPL-8 Landfill and Frontage Property, located at U.S. Route 6 and IL Route 71 in Ottawa, Illinois. Since the 1990s, the EPA has cleaned up the 15 other contaminated areas of the site.

The EPA will remove radium contaminated soil from the site in four phases over the next few years. The work will be done with minimal disruption to the community while meeting strict environmental and safety standards. The cleanup work will start this June and is expected to continue through winter 2027.



### Construction Near You!

This year the EPA will survey, drill monitoring wells, excavate soil, and dispose of waste off-site. There will be heavy trucking, and trucks will be offloaded onto rail cars at a nearby rail spur. Residents near worksites may notice noise and truck traffic. All work will be done during normal business hours. There will be a certain amount of disruption caused by these activities. Please contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Phil Gurley at the number below to discuss any concerns.

## Superfund Program

Thousands of contaminated sites across the nation exist because of hazardous substances that were mismanaged and released into the environment. Often, these sites were former manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills, or mining sites. Congress established the Superfund Program in 1980. This law authorizes the EPA to respond to these contaminated sites to protect human health and the environment.

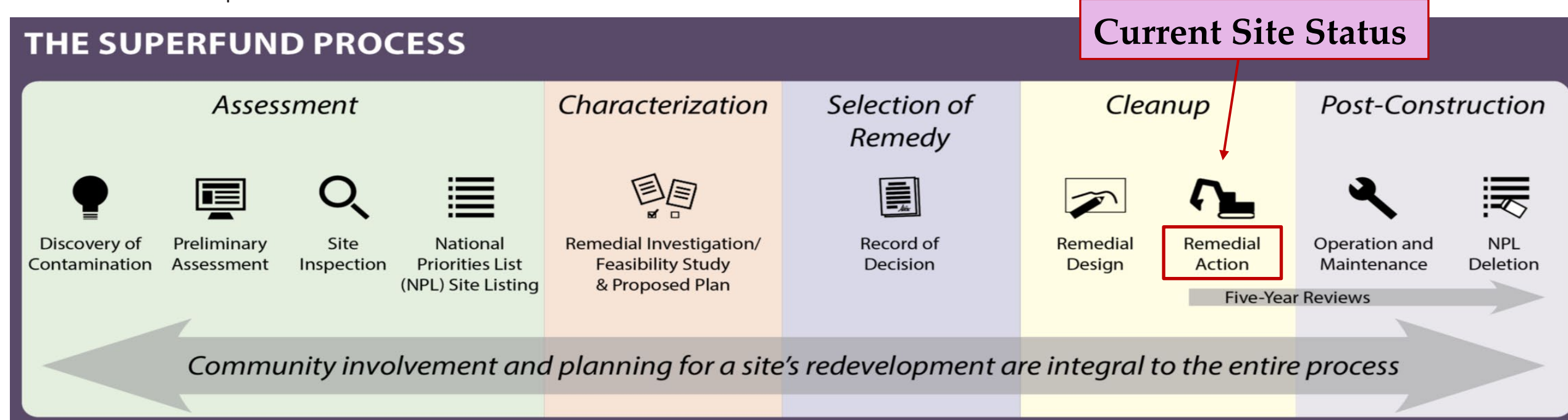


Figure 1 (header photo): Statue commemorating the radium girls. Source: dbarichello@shawmedia.com

Figure 2: The Superfund remedial process

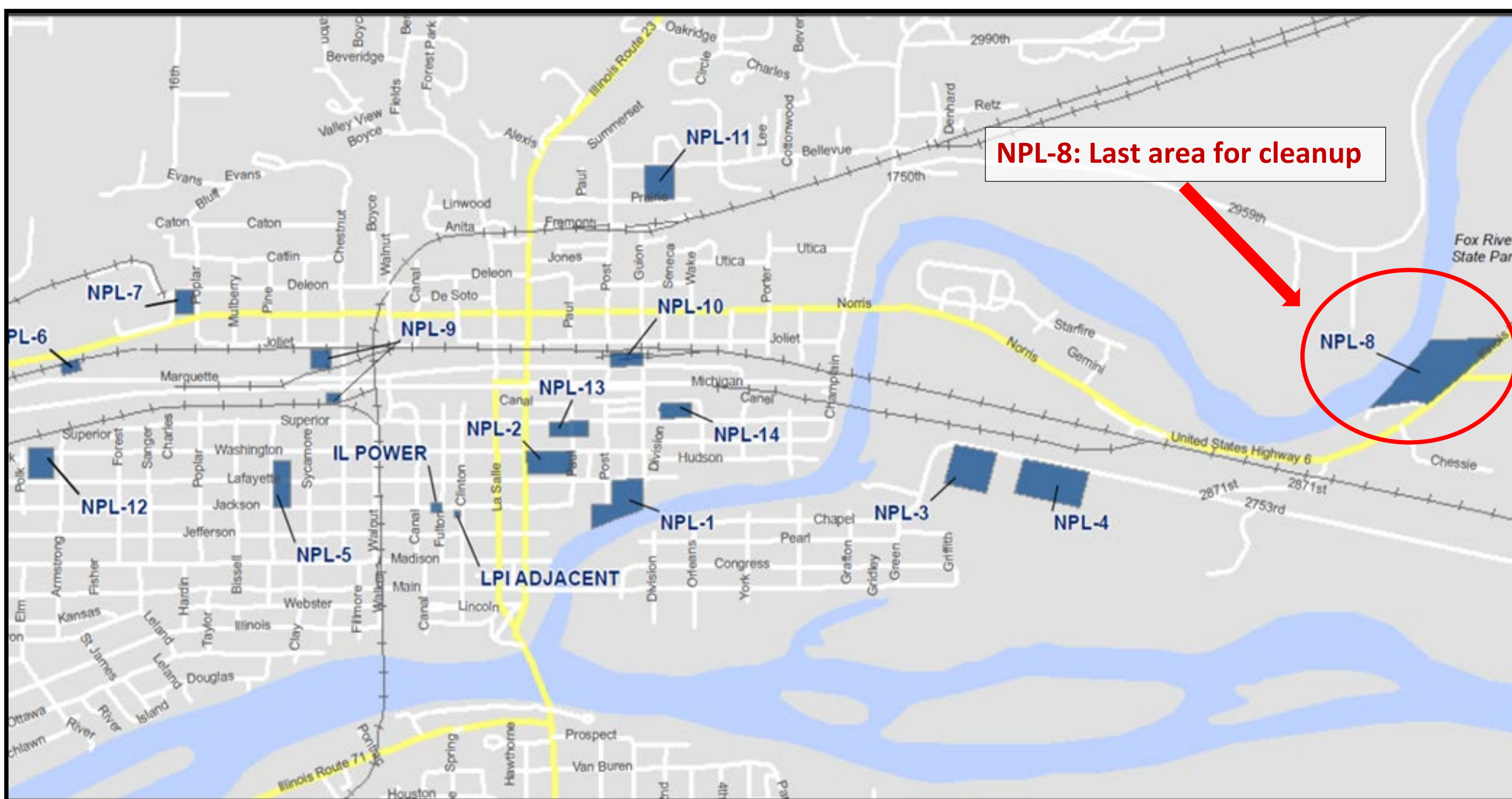


Figure 3: The Ottawa Radiation Areas Superfund site. NPL-8 is the last remaining cleanup area.



**Ottawa Radiation Areas Site**

**Ottawa Site Status: Last Cleanup**

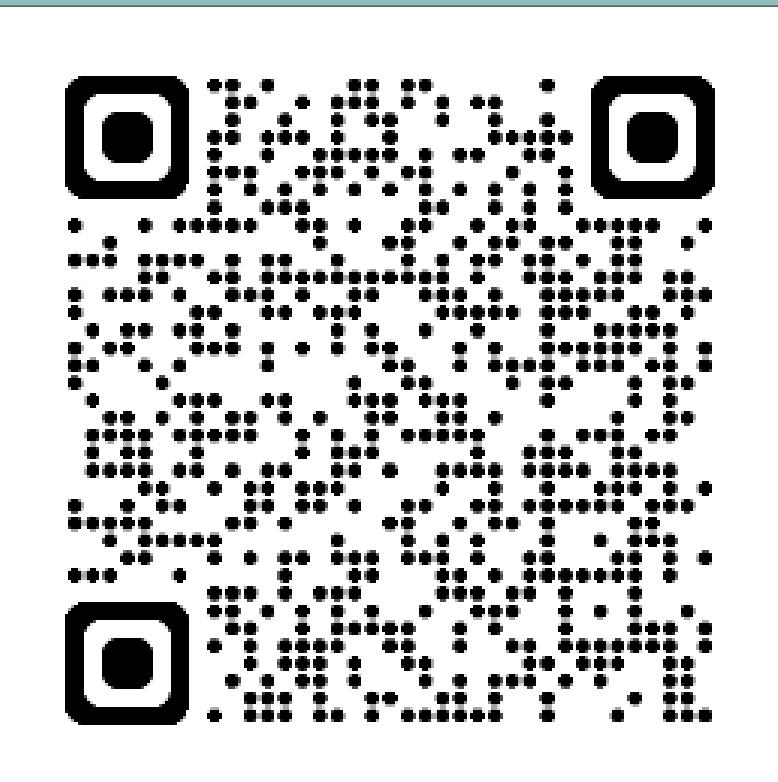
In 1995, the EPA began removing contaminated material in residential areas where radium-226 posed an immediate threat to public health. Since 1995, cleanups have continued as funding has become available. This year, the EPA is starting to clean up the last remaining contaminated area, known as NPL-8. The site is 21 acres and consists of two main areas, the frontage property (4 acres) and the landfill property (17 acres). The EPA completed phase one of the cleanup at the frontage property in 2020. It consisted of removing 3,100 tons of contaminated soil and placing it under a secure cap on the landfill property.

In 2021, the EPA’s sitewide review determined that the cleanups at NPL-1, NPL-4, NPL-8 Frontage Property, NPL-9, NPL-11, Illinois Power, and Luminous Processes, Inc. areas are protective of human health and the environment. Once the EPA cleans up the NPL-8 landfill, the entire site will be considered protective for people and the environment.

**Join us for an Availability Session on June 16 at City Hall**

Stop by anytime from **4:30 – 7:30 p.m.** to talk with the EPA about the cleanup planned for the last portion of the Ottawa Radiation Parts Superfund site!

**Where:** Ottawa City Hall 301 W. Madison St., Ottawa, IL



**Key Steps**

For each of the four cleanup phases, crews will follow similar steps to safely remove contamination from parts of the NPL-8 Landfill and Frontage Property.

- **Excavation Process:** Under the EPA’s oversight, crews will excavate, backfill, and restore the site. Soil will be dug up to a depth of 10 feet where necessary and transported via dump trucks to a nearby secure stockpile area.
- **Sampling and Stockpiling:** Excavated soil will be sampled and analyzed for radium-226. Soil stockpiles will be covered with protective sheeting until the soil is ready for off-site disposal.
- **Off-site Disposal:** Contaminated soil will be shipped to disposal sites licensed for radioactive waste.

**Work Schedule**

Estimated Timetable			
Phase	Timeframe	Focus Area	Additional Areas & Tasks
Phase 1	Spring 2025 to Winter 2025/26	Outer portions of the NPL-8 Landfill, moving inward toward staging areas.	Property boundary and the Bill Walsh property, including removal of fencing and asphalt.
Phase 2	Winter 2024/25 to Fall 2026	New staging areas within the NPL-8 Landfill, including areas under earlier Phase I staging, and building access roads.	Removal of soil stockpile from the 2020 frontage property cleanup.
Phase 3	Fall 2025 to Winter 2026/27	Frontage property, specifically around Area C (see map insert).	Excavation at the original construction entrance from E. Norris Drive
Phase 4	Fall 2026 to Winter 2026/27	Remaining areas, including underneath the haul roads, decontamination and dewatering pads, and soil staging areas.	Ending at the fence line between NPL-8 and the frontage property.



**Public Safety Measures**

To minimize any contamination leaving the site, the EPA will ensure that all heavy equipment, waste trucks, and materials leaving the work area are checked for contamination. The EPA will carefully inspect all equipment and vehicles to ensure they are clean. Strict rules will be followed to keep nearby roads and areas free from harmful substances, mud, or debris.

The EPA will also monitor radiation levels to ensure they stay below the protective limit of 100 millirem per year. Devices will be placed around the site to measure radiation in and around the work area.

**Get in touch!**

**EPA Contacts**

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**Learn More – Visit:**  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/ottawa-radiation](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/ottawa-radiation)



Figure 4: Radium Watch (1910s-1930s). Source: [www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah\\_85242](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_85242)