EPA

Superfund Redevelopment Program

SITE REDEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Atlantic Wood Industries Superfund Site

Portsmouth, Virginia

Aerial view of the Atlantic Wood Industries Superfund site after cleanup. (*Source:* EPA)

Site Location: 3904 Burtons Point Road, Portsmouth, Virginia 23704

Size: 50 acres

Existing Site Infrastructure: Easy access to interstate, electric and fiber optic connection, water and sanitary sewer, and storm sewer.

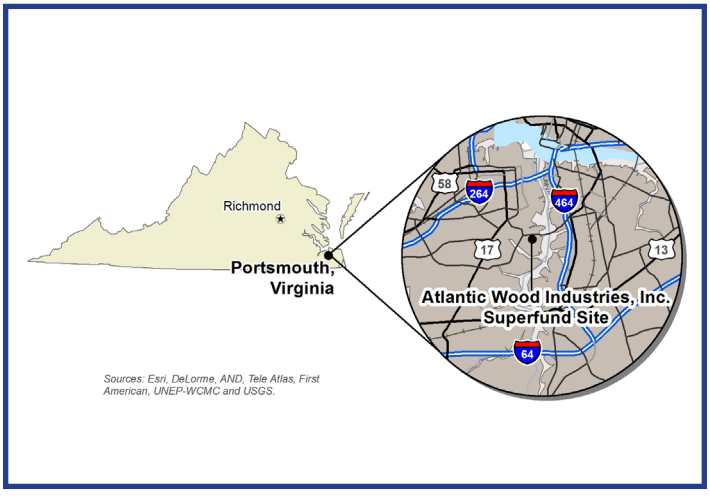
Current Site Uses: Restored wetlands, South Norfolk Jordan Bridge (private toll bridge), Atlantic Metrocast's precast concrete manufacturing business and a port facility are located on site.

Use Restrictions: Residential land uses are prohibited. Institutional controls restrict land and groundwater use on site.

Surrounding Population: within 2.5 miles, 55,872 people; within 4 miles, 153,767 people; within 6 miles, 322,868 people. Within one-mile of the site, 59% of the population is considered low-income compared to the state average of 25%.

At the Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc. Superfund site in Portsmouth, Virginia, cleanup and effective partnerships resulted in the removal of contaminated sediments from the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. Redevelopment on portions of the site led to expedited cleanup and new infrastructure for the community, while cleanup of the rest of the site both preserved and helped create jobs.

The 50-acre site is an industrialized waterfront area on the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. From 1926 to 1992, Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc. (AWI) operated a wood-treating facility on site using creosote and pentachlorophenol. During World War II, the United States Department of the Navy (Navy) leased part of the property from AWI, disposing of waste created during sand blasting of naval equipment. The Navy also disposed of contaminated sludge in a wetland on site. AWI's wood-treating operations and waste disposal



Location of the site in Portsmouth, Virginia.

activities by the Navy contaminated soil and groundwater on site as well as sediments in the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River with heavy metals and visible creosote. EPA added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1990.

SITE HISTORY AND REDEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

1926-1992	AWI treated wood at the facility.
1987	AWI agreed to clean up site.
1990	EPA added the site to the NPL.
1992	AWI shifted operations to manufacture pre-cast concrete at the facility.
1995	EPA selected cleanup activities.
2003	Navy restored wetland.
2007	EPA selected final cleanup activities.
2010	EPA began construction of the remedy.
2010-2012	FIGG constructed a soil cap and South Norfolk Jordan Bridge.
2011-2013	USACE conducted riverbank stabilization and on-site soil treatment.
2011-2013	EPA's SRP provided support to develop a future use plan for the area.
2015-2017	USACE dredged the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River.
2020	EPA completed cleanup activities.
Ongoing	Groundwater and river water monitoring.

"EPA has brought significant resources and expertise to complex sites like Portsmouth and others throughout Virginia. DEQ and EPA will continue to work hard to ensure that Virginians have waters and lands that are safe and sustainable for decades to come."

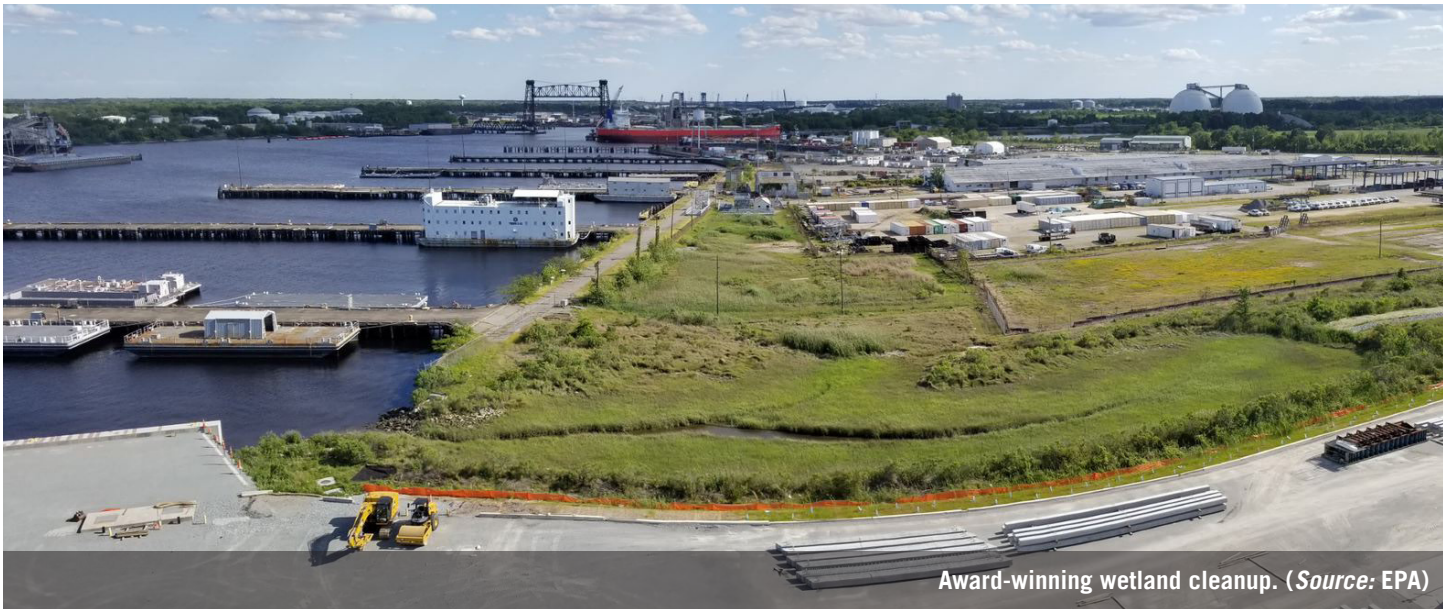
– David K. Paylor (2020), Former Director, VADEQ

AWI, one of the site's potentially responsible parties (PRP), began conducting site investigations to assess the contamination in 1987. EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in 1995 for cleanup activities, which included treating the contamination on site with bioremediation. While conducting further site investigations, EPA determined that bioremediation activities outlined in the 1995 ROD would not be sufficient to clean up the high levels of heavy metal contamination. In 2002, EPA began to reevaluate cleanup options for the soil and began evaluating contamination of the groundwater and the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River.

In 2003, EPA, the Navy, and AWI partnered to remove contaminated sludge and soil from the adjacent wetlands. The Navy's removal action restored 1.5 acres of wetland area on site. The wetland restoration earned the Coastal America Partnership award.

EPA issued a new ROD in 2007. Cleanup activities included construction of an offshore sheet pile wall, dredging and capping of contaminated sediments, treatment of contaminated soils, monitoring natural attenuation of groundwater, monitoring natural recovery of remaining contaminated sediments, capping all the contaminated land, operation and maintenance of the remedy, and land use controls. EPA began cleanup in 2010, a year earlier than expected due to funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

From 2011 to 2013, EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Program (SRP) supported a future use planning process for the site and surrounding area. EPA, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ), the City of Portsmouth and the Elizabeth River Project (a local NGO) organized a focus group of key stakeholders to identify goals and strategies to



Award-winning wetland cleanup. (*Source:* EPA)

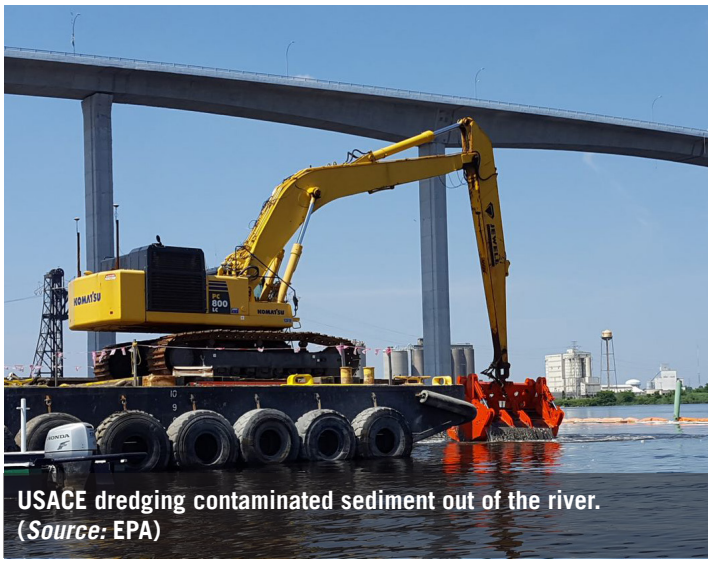
guide cleanup activities and local investments. The planning process resulted in a reuse framework for the Paradise Creek Industrial Corridor and outlined a concept plan for industrial, transportation and habitat goals.

On behalf of EPA, the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) conducted dredging activities in the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River from 2015 to 2017. USACE dredged nearly 24 acres of the worst area of contamination, which flows to the Chesapeake Bay, removing almost 360,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment. Most of the sediment was mixed with cement. A large portion of the sediment was put behind the sheet pile wall covering contaminated sediments in the former river bottom, which were then capped thus creating seven acres of new land. EPA completed most of the cleanup of the site in 2020 and operations and maintenance activities are ongoing.

Collaboration between EPA, Atlantic Metrocast and private developers allowed for the successful continued use and reuse of the site during cleanup. When AWI ceased wood treating operations in 1992, it shifted on-site operations to manufacturing pre-cast concrete to preserve area jobs. Throughout cleanup, Atlantic Metrocast (a subsidiary of AWI) produced pre-cast concrete products at the site and continues operations today.

In 2010, as a result of EPA's cleanup operations, PER Properties purchased an unused property at the north end of the site. PER has built two ready-mix concrete plants, operates a concrete recycling facility and is planning to build a port facility to export agriculture products. Since EPA removed the river contamination in front of this property, PER plans additional dredging to handle deep-draft vessels.

As the cleanup started, AWI sold the northern portion of the site to FIGG Bridge Engineers, Inc. (FIGG) for construction of the mile-long, 169-foot-high concrete South Norfolk Jordan Bridge. FIGG conducted part of the cleanup on the land it bought and was able to construct the bridge simultaneously with cleanup. FIGG constructed the bridge with precast parts produced on site by Atlantic Metrocast, replacing a decaying bridge that was no longer functional at no cost to taxpayers. FIGG completed construction in 2012.



USACE dredging contaminated sediment out of the river. (*Source:* EPA)

Due to a required landfill expansion at the site, an adjacent Portsmouth property that had been abandoned due to flooding was elevated above the floodplain. Today, the City is marketing this five-acre property for private redevelopment.

The successes at the Atlantic Wood Industries Superfund site are an example of how effective partnerships and collaboration between diverse site stakeholders can transform formerly contaminated Superfund sites into areas that provide significant social, economic and environmental benefits. Partnerships allowed for cleanup to happen simultaneously during continued use and redevelopment of the site, safeguarding the economic vitality of the industrial waterfront while also protecting human health and the environment.

1967 aerial photograph of the site. (*Source:* EPA)

South Norfolk Jordan Bridge during construction. (*Source:* EPA)

Atlantic MetroCast manufactures pre-cast concrete products on site. (*Source:* EPA)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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