

Site Redevelopment Profile

GE – Housatonic River

Lenox and Pittsfield
Massachusetts 01201

Property Overview

Size

254 acres

Current Site Uses

- Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC)
- Allendale Elementary School
- Residential properties
- Commercial properties
- City park
- Solar array

Surrounding Population

12,145
1 MILE

40,070
3 MILES

51,551
5 MILES

Within a 1-mile radius of the site, 34% of the population is considered low income compared to the state average of 22%.

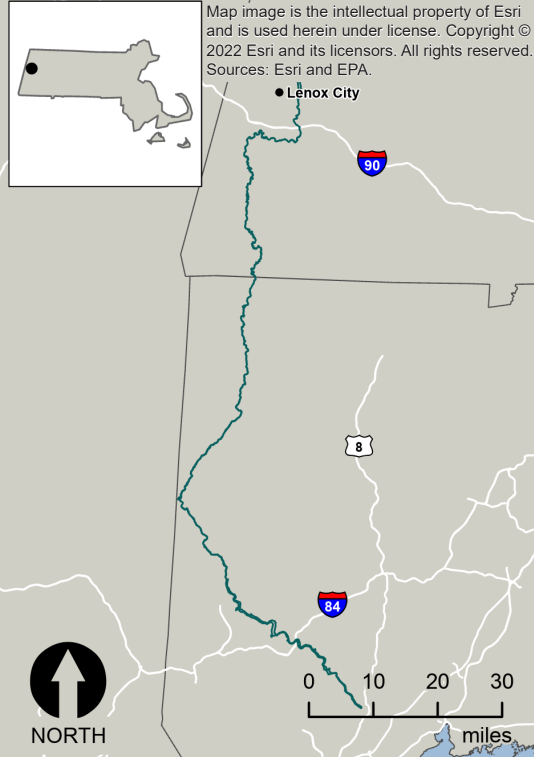


Figure 1. The location of the GE – Housatonic River site in Massachusetts

Site History and Redevelopment Timeline

Early 1900s-1977

General Electric (GE) operated a large-scale industrial facility that manufactured and serviced electrical transformers containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) on site.

1979

Production of PCBs banned.

2000

EPA, Massachusetts, Connecticut, the city of Pittsfield, the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority and GE entered into a Consent Decree that required cleanup for 20 contaminated areas along the river.

2004

GE built a 3-acre recreation facility on site for the community.

2010

Western Massachusetts Electric Company installed an 8-acre solar array using 2 acres of the site and 6 acres of an adjacent property.

2016

EPA issued a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit Modification that selected the remedial action for the Rest of River.

2020

EPA issued a Revised Final Permit accompanied by a response to public comments.

Present

The remediation of the 20 non-river cleanup areas and the first 2 miles of the Housatonic River are complete. GE is conducting all required post-removal site control activities, including inspection, monitoring and maintenance.

History and Cleanup

Beginning in the early 1900s, GE manufactured and serviced power transformers, ordnance and plastics, and used numerous industrial chemicals on site. Over 70 years of improper waste practices and disposal of electrical transformers led to contamination around the GE Pittsfield Plant and downstream along the Housatonic River.

In October 2000, EPA, Massachusetts, Connecticut, the city of Pittsfield, the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority and GE entered into a Consent Decree through the federal court that outlined the cleanup for 20 contaminated areas on site, not including the Housatonic River. During the cleanup of these contaminated areas, GE removed over 186,000 cubic yards of soil and sediment. Long-term monitoring is ongoing at three groundwater management areas (GMAs). At two of these areas, non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL) recovery is ongoing and is anticipated to continue into the foreseeable future. Future treatment of groundwater at some GMAs may also be required.

Currently, GE is in the process of completing all required post-removal site control activities, including inspection, monitoring and maintenance activities at these cleanups. The remediation of the 20 non-river cleanup areas and the first 2 miles of the Housatonic River are complete. EPA's cleanup plan for the Rest of River is currently under appeal. If the current EPA cleanup plan is upheld, its cleanup is estimated to take 13 years of active remediation.

Redevelopment

Under an agreement between GE and the city of Pittsfield, after each phase of cleanup was finalized, sections of the site were transferred to the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority for redevelopment. In 2000, EPA awarded PEDDA a Superfund Redevelopment Initiative grant to develop a reuse plan for the site. The plan outlined opportunities for community recreation and business development. In 2003, a 3-acre recreation facility was built on part of the site. The facility includes a baseball diamond, soccer field, jogging track, equipment storage, fencing and lighting.

Between 2005 and 2012, a 50-acre section of the site was developed into William Stanley Business Park. The business park provides commercial and industrial space for area businesses. In 2008, one tenant constructed a full service financial services building. In 2010, another tenant, Western Massachusetts Electric Company, installed an 8-acre solar array to provide solar energy to the community. The array



450,000+
cubic yards of soil and
sediment removed



1,000,000+
gallons of NAPL removed
from groundwater



Figure 2. EPA sampling macroinvertebrates in the Housatonic River



Figure 3. View of the Housatonic River after cleanup from Lyman Street

spans 2 acres of the site and 6 acres of an adjacent property, and generates 1.8 megawatts of electricity.

In 2012 and 2013, a 26-acre lake and associated banks and floodplain were remediated. The bank/floodplain remediation included the construction of walking path and benches and the extensive planting of native trees and shrubs.

In 2014, PEDAs received a \$9 million state grant to design and build the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC). The BIC facility opened for business in February 2020. It supports research, early-stage production and commercialization as well as workforce training for life-science companies and related businesses. The BIC will receive an additional \$1 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for establishing a manufacturing academy to spur economic growth and jobs.

GE maintains ownership of part of the site where industrial and manufacturing businesses operate. Continued uses on the non-GE-owned portion of the site include Allendale Elementary School, residential and commercial properties, and a city park.

Collaboration with stakeholders and potentially responsible parties helped facilitate the beneficial reuse of the GE – Housatonic River site into a growing community asset. To ensure that future reuse is protective of human health and the environment, EPA will continue to work with site stakeholders to monitor remediated areas and plan for appropriate future uses.



Figure 4. Berkshire Innovation Center opened on site in 2020



Figure 5. View looking west toward Lenoxdale and Crystal Street, with an active gravel pit and an asphalt plant to the left



Figure 6. Concept design for an area near the active gravel pit and asphalt plant that includes walking trails and access to Woods Pond

Contacts

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