

An aerial photograph of Corning, New York, showing the Chemung River flowing through the town. A bridge crosses the river, and a large parking lot is visible. The background features rolling hills with autumn foliage. The sky is filled with dramatic, grey clouds.

# **Environmental Cleanup in the Greater Corning, NY area Steuben County**

## **COMMUNITY LIAISON PLAN**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

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## 1. PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY LIAISON PLAN

Any environmental project that involves remediation and restoration of local properties will naturally raise questions from the community on project activities. This Community Liaison Plan identifies the project, project team members, community, and stakeholders associated with the investigation and cleanup in the Greater Corning, New York area. It functions as a guide to project personnel and the community and includes ways to communicate project information. In short, it is a roadmap to the sources for information regarding the impacted sites and properties with ongoing remediation or investigations, as well as those project activities that may engender public interest and inquiries.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) along with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) have been overseeing the investigation and implementation of remedial activities associated with past disposal of waste materials from the historical glass producing industry in the greater Corning, New York area. Remedial activities were originally focused on an area within the City of Corning known as the Study Area, but subsequent reporting and investigation have identified numerous glass waste disposal sites and areas of concern have been identified throughout the greater Corning, New York area. The observed waste is collectively referred to ABG or ash, brick, and/or glass.

Questions from the public are natural and expected during the implementation of environmental investigations and clean-up activities in their community. This plan provides the community with a general description of the ongoing investigations and cleanup in the Corning area. For further technical details about the cleanup, please visit the DEC's Environmental Cleanup within the Greater Corning, New York area website:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/97180.html>

## 2. CONTACT INFORMATION

If you find ash/brick/glass on your property, if you have any questions after remedial activities have taken place on your property, if you would like to request an in-person meeting, or if you have any other comments regarding the work in the Greater Corning, New York area, please contact a member of the DEC team using the contact information provided below.

There are several ways to contact the DEC team to ask questions, to express concerns, or if you find ABG.

Email **[PublicAvailability.Corning@Parsons.com](mailto:PublicAvailability.Corning@Parsons.com)**

Call our hotline at the toll-free number **833-770-1716**

Or you can reach out to specific team members:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
<b>Samantha Salotto</b>	DEC Project Manager	518-402-9903	Samantha.Salotto@dec.ny.gov
<b>Scott Williams</b>	DEC Construction Manager	585-773-8034	Scott.Williams@dec.ny.gov
<b>Johnathan Robinson</b>	DOH Project Manager	518-402-7860	Johnathan.Robinson@health.ny.gov
<b>Matthew Vetter</b>	Parsons Project Manager	315-552-9742	Matthew.Vetter@parsons.com

### 3. IDENTIFYING ASH, BRICK, AND GLASS

The primary types of industrial wastes that have been identified throughout the Greater Corning, New York area include ash, brick, and glass, or ABG.

In 2012, workers encountered ABG in excavations while completing facility improvement projects at Corning-Painted Post (CPP) High School. Historically used to fill in low-lying areas and to address flood impacts, ABG represents a hazardous material, potential human health hazard and is considered a nuisance condition that requires evaluation per DEC's Commissioner's Policy (CP-51), Section G. This fill exceeds DEC Soil Cleanup Objectives, often fails Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) when sampled and/or contains ABG.

Results indicate the presence of metals, including arsenic, barium, chromium, and mercury, and elevated concentrations of lead and cadmium.

Since the initial discovery at the CPP High School, DEC has determined that Corning's former plants generated glass manufacturing wastes consisting of ABG and other areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, ABG have been identified throughout the Greater Corning, New York area.

This waste is usually uncompacted and loose and can appear as layers in the soil or as scattered bits.



Photo 1: Ash in a soil boring



Photo 2: Ash in the ground

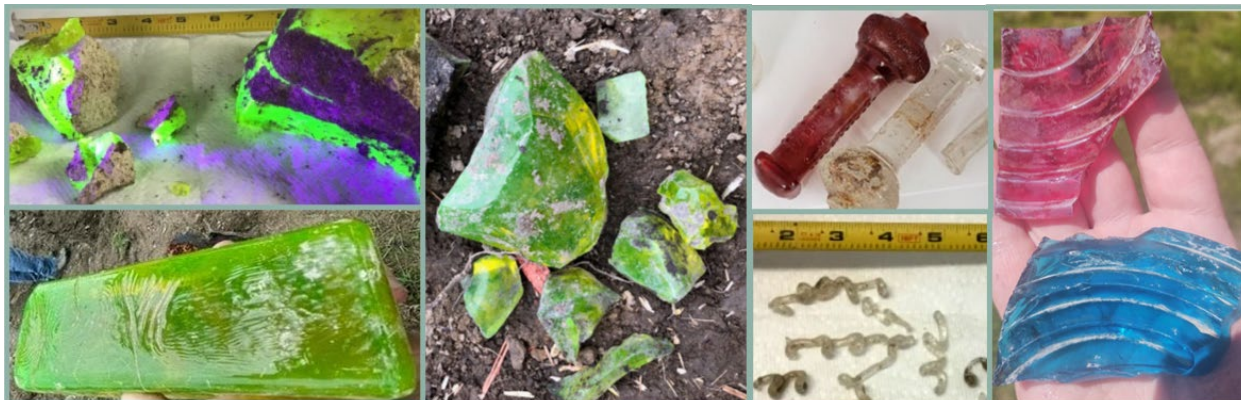


Photo 3: Brick waste

Photo 1 shows soil borings taken in the Greater Corning, New York area, and Photo 2 shows ash as it was uncovered by machinery. The colors of ash vary and could include black, gray, orange, or white. Photo 3 provides an example of brick waste, which can include red construction brick, white or yellow refractory brick, and puzzle-piece-shaped brick.

The types of glass waste, shown below, that may be encountered vary in size, shape, and color. You may find fragments of finished products, tubing, lenses, electrical ware, uranium glass (this seems to glow under an ultraviolet light).





A comprehensive identification guide is available on the DEC website to help identify ABG wastes. If public works departments, utility companies, contractors, residents, or others encounter industrial waste material like material described above, they should contact NYSDEC immediately using the contact information provided at the beginning of this community liaison plan.

People may have incidental contact with constituents present in soils through home maintenance and recreational activities. Maintenance of a grass or mulch cover will help prevent direct contact with the soil. Unnecessary digging in the dirt should be avoided, and children and adults should wash hands after outdoor activities. The use of doormats and periodic damp mopping of floors can help reduce exposure to outdoor soil that might be tracked indoors.

## 4. INVESTIGATING SITES IMPACTED BY ABG

The Greater Corning, New York area investigation began in an area known as the Houghton Plot after workers found ash, brick, and glass at the Corning-Painted Post high school during routine facility improvement work. It was later discovered that this material was used throughout the Greater Corning, New York area to fill in low lying areas and to help reduce flooding risk. Because this material was known to be more widely distributed beyond the bounds of the high school, investigations continued at residential properties near the school. The DEC now refers to this as the Study Area (Site Number 851046). The Study Area is under site management, with generally only a small number of properties still requiring remediation by Corning.

Because ABG has now been identified at areas throughout the Greater Corning, New York area, the DEC is expanding its investigations. Field teams will assess the nature and extent of ABG with a variety of methods that could include a thorough visual inspection and reporting of the materials encountered, collecting surface and subsurface soil samples, collecting surface water and sediment samples for analytical testing, and installing and sampling groundwater monitoring wells.



## 5. PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

In the context of any environmental project, a "stakeholder" refers to any person, group, or organization that has an interest in, or could be affected by, activities and decisions. This includes property owners, residents, utility providers, businesses, government agencies, environmental groups, and even future generations who will inherit the outcomes of the cleanup work. Community involvement is crucial because it ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in planning and decision-making.

Your elected officials are also concerned about issues that may impact their constituents and the community they live in. Inquiries by elected officials are handled by DEC Legislative and intergovernmental staff.

## 6. NEW YORK STATE'S MISSION AND REMEDIAL TEAM

The mission of the DEC Division of Environmental Remediation, in consultation with the New York State Department of Health, is to protect public health and the environment in the State of New York by preventing releases to the environment through the regulation of petroleum and chemical bulk storage facilities, and responding to, investigating, and remediating releases of contaminants that have occurred. The laws and regulations that have jurisdiction over these issues are within the scope of DEC's Counsel.

The goal of the Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site Remedial Program, also known as the State Superfund Program, is to identify and characterize suspected inactive hazardous waste disposal sites (sites) and to ensure sites, which pose a significant threat to public health or the environment, are properly addressed.

New York State is committed to supervising a careful and thorough cleanup of all impacted sites identified in the Greater Corning, New York area. DEC's foremost priority is ensuring the public does not come in contact with site-related constituents of concern including heavy metals (primarily arsenic, cadmium, and lead) and PAHs.

Team Member	Role
DEC	The NY State Department of Environmental Conservation is the lead regulatory agency for the cleanup and is responsible for ensuring that the cleanup is conducted according to New York State Environmental Conservation Law.

<b>DOH</b>	The NY State Department of Health is responsible for identifying potential impacts to public health from the cleanup.
<b>Parsons</b>	Parsons is a consultant to DEC retained to assist DEC by providing third-party oversight during remedial investigations and construction.

The following are the primary DEC staff working on the Environmental Cleanup in the Greater Corning, New York area:

**Samantha Salotto**, P.E., NYSDEC Project Manager

**Scott Williams**, NYSDEC Construction Inspector.

**Johnathan Robinson** is the DOH Project Manager.

The DEC has contracted with Parsons Corporation to provide standby engineering services for a variety of projects throughout New York State. Parsons has a focus on environmental, infrastructure, security, and construction projects, with experience in environmental planning, compliance, quality, technology, remediation, and restoration. In this role, Parsons has performed site characterizations and remedial investigations, implemented interim remedial measures (IRMs), developed remedial designs, assisted with construction oversight, and has provided third-party consulting and support.

Parsons has been retained by DEC to provide third-party oversight on behalf of DEC during remedial investigation and construction activities, conducting project data reviews, quality assurance/quality control activities, site characterization and investigation activities support and reporting, and public outreach participation.

## 7. COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Town of Corning

The first settlement in Corning was established in 1796, and the Town of Corning was established in 1852 as a farming community. The Town of Corning (Steuben County, New York) is 37.3 square miles and is bordered on the east by the Town of Big Flats, on the north by the Town of Hornby, on the south by the Town of Caton, and west by the Town of Erwin. The Chemung River runs through the town east to west, cutting through the City of Corning. The Town of Corning surrounds the City of Corning and the Village of South Corning.

According to the 2020 census there were 5,983 people in 2,574 households living in the Town of Corning. Just under 80 percent of the total population were adults and 18 percent were



seniors. The overall median age was 44.4 years. Racial make-up was 94.2% white, 3.9% Black or African American, 1.1% two or more races present, 0.5% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.5% other. The median household income was \$66,656.

The Town of Corning is governed by the Town Council, which is made up of the Town Supervisor and four elected council members. The Town Council's regular meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

### **City of Corning**

The City of Corning is in Steuben County, New York, was founded in 1890. Corning was named after Erastus Corning, a railroad executive and financier. The city is 3.26 square miles and is located within the Town of Corning, along the Chemung River. With the Chemung River running through the city, the City of Corning's first industry was lumber. Logs were transported by barge up and down the river. In the 1880s Corning became a railroad town. The City of Corning is best known for its glass industry and became known as the Crystal City as a result of the booming glass industry.

According to the same census, there were 10,551 people in 5,026 households living in the City of Corning. 79.8 percent of the total population were adults and 15.8 percent were seniors. The overall median age was 37.7 years. Racial make-up was 93.2% white, 2.7% Black or African American, 1.7% Asian, and 1.5% two or more races present. The median household income was \$49,539.

The City of Corning is governed by the City Council, which is made up of the Mayor and eight elected council members. The City's charter identifies the Council's roles and responsibilities. These include setting policy as a body, appointing a City Manager, and adopting the City's annual budget. Each councilperson is elected to a four-year term. The City Council's regular meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. (if the meeting falls on a holiday, the Council will meet the following day). Times and locations of the Council's meetings are provided to the *Corning Leader* at least 72 hours in advance and are posted on the City's website.

### **Village of South Corning**

The Village of South Corning is in Steuben County, New York. The village is 0.6 square miles and is bordered on the north by the City of Corning, and bordered on the east, south, and west by the Town of Corning.

Finally, the census shows that there were 1,108 people living in the Village of South Corning. Just over 80 percent of the total population were adults and 23 percent were seniors. The overall median age was 44.8 years. Racial make-up was 88.7% white, 5.78% two or more races present, 2.89% Black or African American, 1.71 Asian, and 0.9% other. The median household income was \$55,061.

The Village of South Corning is governed by the Village Board, which is made up of the Mayor and four trustees. The Village Board's regular meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

## Potential Environmental Justice Area

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair and meaningful treatment of all people, regardless of race, income, national origin, or color, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Potential EJ Areas are U.S. Census block groups of 250 to 500 households each that, in the Census, had populations that met or exceeded at least one of the following statistical thresholds:

1. At least 52.42% of the population in an urban area reported themselves to be members of minority groups; or
2. At least 26.28% of the population in a rural area reported themselves to be members of minority groups; or
3. At least 22.82% of the population in an urban or rural area had household incomes below the federal poverty level.

The federal poverty level and urban/rural designations for the above census block groups are established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The thresholds are determined by a statistical analysis of the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data, which is the most recent data available as of the time of the analysis in 202

Environmental justice allows for disproportionately impacted residents to access the tools to address environmental concerns across all of DEC's operations. The DEC Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) works to address environmental issues and concerns that affect primarily low income and minority communities through grant opportunities, enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, consultation, guidance, and enhance public participation.

## 8. PROTECTING COMMUNITY HEALTH

The DEC has been working closely with DOH to ensure that public health considerations are a priority in every aspect of the cleanup. Drinking water provided to the residents of Corning is supplied by the City of Corning Water Department. (Groundwater is not used as a public water supply.) The City of Corning Water Department complies with strictly enforced standards established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and DOH.

The investigation and remediation are being completed to address potential exposure to constituents above the NYS residential soil cleanup objectives (SCOs) (primarily arsenic, cadmium, lead, and PAHs).

The public may contact DOH for information, questions and/or concerns about human health in relation to the investigation and remediation of any of the sites under the program in the Corning area. In addition, DEC and DOH are also working with the Steuben County Department of Health to ensure that all the agencies involved are informed and able to provide timely responses to community concerns about health issues.

## Minimizing Dust During Field Work and Cleanup Activities

A DEC-approved Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) will be used to measure airborne particulate matter wherever soils may be disturbed during construction and excavation. Data from the CAMP is posted at the following website (starting at the beginning of construction and PDI investigation activities): [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/97180.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/97180.html). Upwind and downwind air monitoring stations are required during all excavation and backfilling activities to ensure no dust is released to adjacent properties or the environment during cleanup. These stations will monitor for dust particulates using real-time monitoring equipment. Results will be compared to the airborne particulate action level. The equipment has an audible alarm that sounds if there is an exceedance of the action level. In addition, there is a requirement for no visible dust during all work activities (i.e., no visible dust emissions will be allowed outside the work zone). Monitors are set close to the work zone to ensure that should any dust be generated, it will be recorded by the monitors right away, and corrective measures (such as wetting down the area) can be taken immediately, well before the dust has a chance to reach down-gradient receptors.

Exposed soil piles (that is, excavated soils or materials staged for backfill) will be covered, and truck loads will be covered with tarps to mitigate dust potential. The public should note that onsite workers will have protective clothing and equipment on, and that pedestrian corridors will be separated from these work areas by a chain link fence/gate system.

## Working Safely at Local Schools and in Neighborhoods

DEC has been working closely with the schools in the Greater Corning, New York area to keep them informed of project plans and to minimize impacts to students and staff. DEC has held numerous meetings with the schools and stays in regular contact, so all concerns raised are dealt with quickly and diligently. The safety of students and school staff is tantamount to all involved with the project, and all will be working to ensure that there are not threats to either safety or health.

## Local Street Closures, Traffic, and Parking Issues Related to Construction

To ensure public safety during construction and landscaping activities property owners, residents, local businesses, and schools will be informed throughout the life of project and construction activities. Any changes to traffic routes, street closures, or impacts to parking and



school routes will be communicated as soon as their details are available. Truck routes will be clearly marked and areas in which heavy equipment is being used will be posted with signage and the presence of flag personnel.

## 9. MINIMIZING EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINANTS

You can also help. To reduce the chances for exposure to these contaminants you can take reasonable and practical steps to minimize direct and repeated contact with bare soils (particularly by young children). Here are some things you can do:

1. Maintain grass or mulch covers.
2. Avoid unnecessary digging.
3. Wash hands after outdoor activities.
4. Use doormats and a damp mop to reduce the amount of soil that might be tracked indoors.

## 10. QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPERTY VALUES AND TAXES

Impacts to property values and taxes are often a concern for property owners near a cleanup site. The state agencies overseeing the cleanup have no authority or control over property values or property taxes, however site cleanup and restoration may increase property values. Specific questions about possible impacts on local taxes are a local issue and should be deferred to the City of Corning Finance Department (<https://www.cityofcorning.com/finance>).

### **Value Assurance Program**

A Value Assurance Program (VAP) is a strategic initiative designed to protect and potentially enhance the property values of residential properties that may be affected by nearby environmental remediation projects. These programs are typically implemented by companies or organizations responsible for the remediation to address concerns from property owners about potential negative impacts on property values due to the remediation activities. Although there is no VAP in place for the Greater Corning, New York area, a recent VAP was put in place at a similar site. The VAP booklet for that site is available at [www.corningnyvap.com](http://www.corningnyvap.com).

## 11. KEY MESSAGES

As the remedial and investigation work proceeds at locations in the Greater Corning, New York area, it is important that the community engage with DEC in a dialogue that is open and enhances two-way understanding of both the community needs and concerns and the requirements of the work to be conducted.

Remediation work is by its nature, impactful, whether on private property, school property or on public streets. Investigation work ongoing at multiple sites can drive questions from the public, and both DEC and DOH are invested in resolving these inquiries as they arise. Therefore, it is important that, in addition to the commitment of public sensitivity by DEC staff and involved parties, the community keep in mind the following:

- Because some of the work and staging of construction and excavation are taking place on residential properties and near local schools, there may be community concern about the safety of residents, including property owners and their families, students, staff, and other children who live and play in and around the construction zone. DEC will continue to work with the residents, property owners, and school districts, to ensure that any concerns are heard, acted on, and met. Public health and safety are primary goals of DEC and DOH.
- The community has an open line to DEC, its staff, and contractual teams, who are able and willing to work with them throughout the life of the project.
- DOH recommends best practices that can be followed to reduce the potential for exposure anytime people are concerned that soil may contain artificial or naturally occurring contaminants.
- Links to web resources on exposure, lead, safety when gardening:
  - <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/about/exposure>
  - <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>
  - <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1301.pdf>
- There will be no cost to individual property owners for any investigation or remediation activities that may be undertaken at their property. However, the property owner will be requested to consent to access.

## 12. LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

DEC and DOH staff are always available to provide updates or answer any questions community members or faculty have. Information on how to contact them is provided in Section 2 of this plan, and the DEC maintains a web page with additional information:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/97180.html>

Complete copies of the documents listed on the dec web page and other documents, are available in hard copy for public review at the following locations:

Southeast Steuben County Library  
300 Nasser Civic Center Plaza, Suite 101

Corning, NY 14830  
607-936-3713

DEC, Region 8 Office Headquarters  
6274 East Avon-Lima Rd.  
Avon, NY 14414  
For appointments, 585-226-5324

### **Keeping up to date**

DEC and DOH will continue to keep the public informed as this work progresses. Sign up for the contaminated sites county email listserv to receive site-related information and announcements for all contaminated sites in the county (including site fact sheets and newsletters) at the following web page: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html>

### **A digital tour of the Glass Manufacturing Waste Disposal Area**

For a digital tour of the work going on in and around the greater Corning, New York, area, use your phone or computer to view a StoryMap. Find this StoryMap by visiting <https://arcg.is/OP1jSvO> or scan this QR code:



### **Other online information**

<https://dec.ny.gov/maps/interactive-maps/decinfo-locator>

The link above takes you to the DECinfo Locator, which is an interactive map that lets you access DEC documents and public data about the environmental quality of specific sites in New York State. After launching DECinfo Locator, click Environmental Cleanup under DEC Information Layers and check Remediation Parcels. You can then type “Corning” into the “Search by Location” box to see all of the remediation sites in the Corning area. You can then select one of the sites to learn more.

<https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/cfm/extapps/derexternal/index.cfm?pageid=3>

The link above takes you to the DEC’s Environmental Site Remediation Database. You can search by the site name or site number (if you know it) or search for sites in Steuben County to narrow your selection.

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/97180.html>

The link above takes you to the project website. You can find links to the DEC Document Repository, learn more about the history of the area, and see details of the remedial process.