

## FORMER BETHLEHEM STEEL SITE, LACKAWANNA, NY Investigation & Remedy Selection

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of Health (DOH) are committed to a thoughtful and thorough cleanup of the former Bethlehem Steel site ("Site") and to keeping the Lackawanna community informed of our actions. We encourage you to sign-up for our LISTSERV to continue receiving updates on these actions and future public information sessions (see last page for information on how to sign up).

Our top priority during the cleanup process is ensuring that public health and safety is protected. DEC and DOH are issuing a proposed cleanup remedy for the site in documents called Draft Proposed Statements of Basis (SBs). This proposed remedy will be presented to the public for review and comment via the following Virtual Public Information Meeting:

### **Virtual Public Information Meeting:** May 18<sup>th</sup>; 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

NYSDEC invites you to attend a public meeting to discuss the remedy proposed for the site.

You are encouraged to provide comments at the meeting,  
and during the 45-day comment period described in this newsletter and NYSDEC website.

**For more information and instructions on how to attend and RSVP to the meeting, visit:**  
[www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com](http://www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com) or call our hotline at 833-578-2019

## WHO TO CONTACT:

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. Please direct these to the following contacts:

### **Project Related Questions:**

**Stanley Radon**

NYSDEC Div. of Environmental Remediation  
270 Michigan Avenue; Buffalo, NY, 14203-2915  
(716) 851-7220;

[Stanley.Radon@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Stanley.Radon@dec.ny.gov)

### **Site-Related Health Questions:**

**Sara Bogardus**

NYSDOH Bureau of Env. Exposure Investigation  
Empire State Plaza - Corning Tower,  
Room 1787, Albany, NY 12237  
(518) 402-7860; [beei@health.nyg.gov](mailto:beei@health.nyg.gov)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

State Superfund Program DEC  
Bethlehem Steel Website (Site #915009):  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009.html)

## EMAIL INQUIRIES OR COMMENTS:

[BethlehemSteel@parsons.com](mailto:BethlehemSteel@parsons.com)

PUBLIC INFORMATION  
& HOTLINE WEBPAGE:

[www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com](http://www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com)

## Highlights for 2021 & Proposed Remedy

In August 2019, DEC accepted Tecumseh Redevelopment Inc.'s Final Corrective Measures Study Report. Tecumseh Redevelopment Inc. ("Tecumseh") then - signed an Order agreeing to implement the final corrective measures/remedial actions chosen by DEC for areas of the site that have not been addressed by previous remedial actions. Tecumseh also agreed to continue to operate and maintain the remedial systems already in place in several areas of the former Bethlehem Steel site.

Proposed remedies aim toward restoring the former Bethlehem Steel property in a manner that is sustainable and protective of human health and the environment. The remedy must be cost-effective, comply with other statutory requirements, and utilize permanent solutions, alternative technologies, or resource recovery technologies to the maximum extent practicable while attaining all remedial action objectives identified for the site. Sustainable restoration will advance the goals of preserving, restoring, and connecting the natural resources and resiliency features of New York's Lake Erie Shoreline and increases waterfront access to Lake Erie, a key economic development strategy.

The former Bethlehem Steel site is listed as a Class "2" site in the State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites (list of State Superfund sites). Thus, it represents a significant threat to public health or the environment. Investigations have been completed at the site to evaluate soil, groundwater, sediment, and surface water. DEC, in consultation with DOH, have issued Draft Proposed Statements of Basis (SBs) to select remedial actions to address contamination at the site (specifically three SBs, one sitewide and two that cover specific portions of the site). These decision documents will lay the groundwork for predesign investigations (if applicable), the design phase, and remedial actions tailored to the contamination and conditions found in specific areas of the site.

A public comment period is required before these documents are finalized. Any feedback received will be taken into consideration for further modifications of the proposed remedy. An overview of these documents will be discussed during the Virtual Public Information Meeting announced on the front page, including information about remedial elements. The proposed remedies include:

- Pre-Design Investigations (PDI)
- Remedial Design Program
- Sustainable Restoration Plan
- Climate Resiliency Plan
- Corrective Action Management Unit (CAMU)
- Soil Cover System
- Sediment Dredging
- Site-wide Groundwater Treatment
- Financial Assurance
- Institutional and Engineering Controls
- Site Management Plan

Comments will be summarized and addressed by DEC in the responsiveness summary that will accompany the Department's final selection of the remedy for this site. After this, detailed designs of the selected remedies will then be prepared, and the cleanup will be performed.

**How to Comment: DEC welcomes comments about the SBs for 45 days, from May 5<sup>th</sup> through June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.** All comments can be submitted to Stanley Radon ([Stanley.Radon@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Stanley.Radon@dec.ny.gov)), by calling the site hotline at 833-578-2019, or by submitting an online form found at [www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com](http://www.BethlehemSteelCleanup.com). To view documents related to the site, including the Draft SB documents that are open for public comment, please visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915009/>.

**Who to Contact with Questions:** For more information, details, and/or questions on any of the items included, please visit the NYSDEC Bethlehem Steel site remediation website ([www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009.html)), submit your questions to [bethlehemsteel@parsons.com](mailto:bethlehemsteel@parsons.com), or call the site hotline at 833-578-2019.

## Project History and Status

The former Bethlehem Steel site was originally developed by Seneca Steel in 1902 and enjoyed a long history of iron and steel production throughout much of the 20th century. The site changed ownership to Bethlehem Steel in 1922. It quickly became the third largest steel plant in the United States. At its peak, the property stretched over 2.5 miles of Lake Erie shoreline, from Woodlawn Beach to Buffalo's Inner Harbor and reached one mile inland. Slag, the primary byproduct of the steel production process, was dumped into Lake Erie. Excess slag was disposed of and used to extend the shoreline into Lake Erie up to one-half of a mile and, in some areas, is over 90 feet thick. Of the 1,000+ acres of former Bethlehem Steel property, the approximate 489-acre Corrective Measures Study (CMS) Area, as defined below, is the subject of this community update.



**Aerial Photograph of Bethlehem Steel Site (circa 1980s [no windmills])**

## Past Investigation and Actions

A Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) was initiated by Bethlehem Steel Corporation (BSC) in 1990. Site investigations were conducted primarily by BSC before that company filed for bankruptcy in 2001. Tecumseh acquired the site in 2003, years after steel-making operations had ceased, and then subsequently completed the RFI in January 2005. Tecumseh is a wholly owned subsidiary of ArcelorMittal USA LLC.



**Dredging sediment from lower reach of Smokes Creek**

Based on the RFI results, areas of the former Bethlehem Steel property were identified as requiring remediation or further assessment. Tecumseh conducted further investigation and assessment of remedial alternatives in a Corrective Measures Study (CMS) Report (2019). A supplemental Comprehensive Groundwater Quality Report (2019) was also prepared that summarized and assessed the groundwater data collected during both the RFI and CMS. The RFI identified approximately 40 areas on the Site that exhibited soil, fill, groundwater, sediment, and/or surface water contamination.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEC determined that these locations required further investigation and/or clean-up.



These areas include the former coke plant, former fuel storage area, and slag fill along the western part of the site, where solid and/or hazardous waste from former steel-making operations were spilled or disposed by BSC. Contaminated sediment was also found to be present in several watercourses, including Smokes Creek. The CMS Report and the Comprehensive Groundwater Quality Report, both issued in 2019, summarize the comprehensive investigation activities that were conducted by Tecumseh after the completion of the RFI.

Several cleanup actions have been undertaken by Tecumseh since 2005 to mitigate the migration of contamination from the site, including:

- Installation and operation of a groundwater collection and treatment system in the coke oven battery adjacent to the Ship Canal;
- Installation of a slurry wall, interior and exterior groundwater collection system, leachate/groundwater treatment system, and cover system at the Acid Tar Pits located near Smokes Creek;
- Collection, treatment, disposal, or recycling of residual wastewater and tar from various pipes, tanks, vessels, and containment areas; and,
- Sediment removal from the lower reach of Smokes Creek to reduce the potential for upstream flooding.

## Related Properties

### Tecumseh Business Park

Tecumseh signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Erie County and the City of Lackawanna to promote and implement redevelopment of the former BSC property following cleanup. A portion of the Redevelopment Master Plan incorporates a Business Park area along NYS Route 5. The property is divided into multiple sites to facilitate remediation and redevelopment under the New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program. (BCP). Current development in this area includes:

- Steel Winds I (approx. 29 acres) wind farm;
- Welded Tube USA (45 acres) manufacturing of steel tubing;
- Sucro Sourcing (12 acres) storage of raw sugar with future plans for the development of a sugar refinery; and,
- Buffalo and Erie County Industrial Land Development Corporation (ILDC) (148 acres) purchased for redevelopment into a manufacturing commerce park that now includes:
  - Time Release Properties (28 acres) for the manufacturing of cleaning products including the Magic Eraser;
  - Uniland Development (9.2 acres purchase agreement) for the building of a 150,000 sq. ft. manufacturing spec building; and,
  - Erie County Shoreline Trail (6.7 acres) Public Bike Path.



Brownfield Cleanup Program Overview: New York's Brownfield Cleanup Program encourages the voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties known as "brownfields" so that they can be reused and redeveloped.

These uses may include recreation, industrial or other commercial uses that are compatible with the current conditions at this former industrial site. A brownfield site is any real property where a contaminant is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by DEC that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations.

For more information about the BCP, visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8450.html>

## Next Steps

DEC has issued the Draft Proposed Statements of Basis (SBs) to present the remedial alternatives and proposed remedial actions to the community. The draft SBs summarize the decisions that led to the recommended remedial actions by discussing each alternative proposed by Tecumseh and the reasons for choosing or rejecting it. The public is encouraged to review the SBs and make comments at either the meeting or during the public comment period. The comments will be reviewed and compiled in a Responsiveness Summary and modifications to the draft SBs may be made based on the comments received.

Following selection and finalization of the remedial actions, final Proposed Statements of Basis will be issued after which remedial design and construction will begin.

## Receive Site Fact Sheets by Email

Have site information such as this fact sheet sent right to your email inbox. DEC invites you to sign up with one or more contaminated sites email listservs at:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html)

It's quick, it's free, and it will help keep you better informed. As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information and announcements for all contaminated sites in the county(ies) you select.

## WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

Project documents are made available at the

- Lackawanna Public Library: (716 823 0630)
- Region 9 NYSDEC Office  
Headquarters: (716 851 7220)

However, repositories may be temporarily unavailable due to COVID 19 precautions.

If you cannot access the online repository, please contact the NYSDEC project manager listed on the front page for assistance. Other options to request information include inquiring via the NYSDEC hotline 833 578 2019, sending an email to the inquiries email [bethlehemsteel@parsons.com](mailto:bethlehemsteel@parsons.com), or submitting an online request form at the public availability website:  
[www.bethlehemsteelcleanup.com](http://www.bethlehemsteelcleanup.com).

Project documents are available on the NYSDEC website at:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/915009)  
or through the DECinfo Locator at:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915009](http://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915009)