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Hyde Park

Landfill removed from list of contaminated sites

By Aaron Besecker / News Niagara Reporter / [@AaronBesecker](#) / [Google+](#)
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A toxic landfill in the Town of Niagara containing four times the amount of waste that's buried under Love Canal – including dioxin – has been removed from a federal list of contaminated sites.

But as concerns over the safety of residents who live in Love Canal have been rekindled with new legal battles, federal regulators say the Hyde Park Landfill just outside the city line is no longer a threat to the environment or to public health.

Love Canal was removed from the same federal list nine years ago.

The move to take Hyde Park off that list comes a decade after site cleanup was completed.

The Hyde Park Landfill, a 15-acre site located east of Hyde Park Boulevard and close to the border with Lewiston, was used by Hooker Chemical and Occidental Chemical to bury chemical waste from 1953 to 1975, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

An agency spokesman described the “de-listing” move as administrative.

“The federal government has a responsibility in perpetuity to ensure that the remedy continues to be protective of human health and the environment, whether it is on the list or not,” EPA spokesman Michael Basile said.

The 80,000 tons of waste buried at Hyde Park Landfill include dioxin, which is found at Love Canal, as well as substances known as volatile organic compounds.

There also is more dioxin buried at Hyde Park than there is at Love Canal, Basile said.

But unlike Love Canal, where the federal government evacuated families in the 1970s after it was forced to face the serious health effects experienced by residents, there aren't people living right on the Hyde Park site.

Cleanup activities at Hyde Park started after 1983, when it was put on the first list of Superfund sites, also known as the National Priorities List.

The cleanup was conducted by Occidental with EPA oversight, according to the agency.

Some volatile organic compounds were removed in 1993.

About 47,000 tons of contaminated sediment was removed from Bloody Run Creek, which runs through the site.

Cleanup also was done at the face of the Niagara Gorge, where contaminated water, after flowing through a sewer system, had been released into the Niagara River. That work was completed in 2003.

The site is fenced in and was outfitted with a system to treat what regulators described as "the contaminated oily substance," known as non-aqueous phase liquids, that was coming out of the landfill.

When collected, that substance is sent to a facility in Texas to be incinerated.

Groundwater is pumped toward the middle of the site and treated, a move aimed at preventing contamination from spreading to surrounding bodies of water, according to the EPA.

The federal agency will keep monitoring conditions; the state Department of Environmental Conservation receives monthly monitoring reports; and the site "remains eligible for cleanup work in the event that a change in site conditions should warrant such an action," the EPA said.

The agency estimates about 400 million gallons of groundwater will need to be treated at the site over the next three decades.

When Love Canal was **removed from the Superfund list in October 2004**, Lois Gibbs, the activist who led the push when a federal emergency was declared there, said at the time of the delisting that 20,000 tons of chemicals remain buried there.

"It's really foolish to say Love Canal can be de-listed and life can go on," Gibbs said in 2004. "The neighborhood is a ticking time bomb."

Last month, **Gibbs visited the Love Canal area** to mark 35 years since the first families were evacuated.

Members of the public who have questions about the Hyde Park Landfill may call EPA spokesman Michael Basile at 551-4410 or email him at **basile.michael@epa.gov**.

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