NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

SITE No. C915353 and 915055 | Spring 2021 | NYSDEC REGION 9

RIVERVIEW INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS

Project Update: Demolition of Stacks Planned

Brownfield Cleanup & State Superfund Programs | 3875 River Road, Tonawanda, Erie County

WHO TO CONTACT

Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

PROJECT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

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NEW YORK'S BCP (SITE NO. C915353) and SSF (915055):

Visit www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/37554.html

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is strictly overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the former Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) facility. DEC's top priority is ensuring a thorough and careful cleanup that is fully protective of human health and the environment, while continuing to keep the Tonawanda community informed of our progress and actions. Public involvement is a critical part of the former Tonawanda Coke site cleanup and DEC will continue to closely and transparently work with the Tonawanda Community Working Group (TCWG) and other members of the public throughout the cleanup process.

This newsletter updates the Tonawanda community about the various cleanup activities completed at the site and upcoming plans for this summer.

Especially notable is the scheduled demolition of TCC's three stacks. An implosion of the stacks is tentatively scheduled for early June 2021. DEC is working closely with Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus (RITC) and the Town of Tonawanda to ensure the stack demolition is completed safely and without negative impacts to the surrounding community.

Site Description and History

The former TCC facility is approximately 127 acres. The property is located at 3875 and 3800 River Road in the Town of Tonawanda. The facility is divided into the Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) site (approximately 86 acres) and the Tonawanda Coke State Superfund (SSF) site (approximately 41 acres). The area was used for more than a century as a coke manufacturing and byproducts recovery facility – most recently by TCC between the late 1970s and 2018.

In 2018, environmental violations involving air and water pollution, as well as faulty equipment, resulted in swift enforcement actions against TCC by DEC and the U.S. Department of Justice. These actions directly contributed to TCC's closure in October 2018.

Left behind at the former coke processing facility are numerous buildings, process equipment, piping and underground infrastructure.

Highlights of the BCP Remedial Investigation

The Remedial Investigation (RI) fieldwork was completed in October and November 2020 and consisted of:

- Collecting 27 surface soil samples;
- Excavating 40 test trenches to identify possible on-site sources of contamination;
- Installing and sampling 41 groundwater monitoring wells;
- Collecting 27 samples from surface materials left on-site from former operations;
- Collecting 8 water samples from former process sumps, basements, or pits;
- Collecting 8 sediment samples; and
- Radiological screening of slag/slag-like materials.

A Community Air Monitoring Program (CAMP) was in place to monitor air quality during the ground intrusive RI activities to proactively alert site personnel if corrective actions were necessary. CAMP results are available on RITC's website: http://www.riverviewtechcampus.com/health-and-safety/#map.

The fieldwork phase of the RI is complete. DEC is awaiting a report from RITC summarizing the results of the RI. DEC will review the RI report and require the applicant to make any necessary revisions. The RI report will be made available for public review.

The proposed cleanup plan, called an "Alternatives Analysis Report" will be developed based on the RI results. This cleanup plan will include evaluating and selecting the best site remedy that is protective of public health and the environment. DEC will make this proposed cleanup plan available to the public for review and comment during a 45-day comment period.

Access the RI Work Plan and other project documents online through DECinfo Locator: www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C915353.

Brownfield Cleanup Actions

Interim remedial measures (IRMs) are ongoing at the site to improve surface conditions, and to investigate/remediate discrete areas of concern.

All approved work plans and reports are available for public review at the document repositories and through the link provided above.

Approved documents to date include:

- Interim Site Management Plan;
- Light Oil Area Secondary Containment Testing Plan;
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan;
- Stormwater Sewer Interim Remedial Measure Work Plan;
- Mixing Pad Interim Remedial Measure;
- Powers Coke and Coal Excavation Work Plan;
- Drum and Container Management Work Plan;
- Abandoned Pipeline IRM Work Plan;
- Placement of Unrecovered Coal Yard Stockpiles;

- Building Demolition Work Plan
- Aboveground Storage Tank Management Work Plan;
- Chemical and Petroleum Bulk Storage Tank Management Work Plan;
- Box Culvert Lining Work Plan; and
- Secondary Containment Closure Work Plan.

Top: Mixing Pad prior to cleaning (September 2020)
Bottom: Mixing Pad post cleaning of tar and coal residuals (April 2021).

Highlights of the State Superfund Cleanup Investigation

The majority of the RI work was completed in October and November 2020, and consisted of:

- Collecting 46 surface soil samples;
- Excavating 29 test pit clusters to identify possible on-site sources of contamination;
- Installating and sampling 17 groundwater monitoring wells;
- Collecting 5 surface water samples;
- Collecting 30 sediment samples from an on-site drainage ditch and the Niagara River; and
- Collecting 9 samples from miscellaneous waste material encountered during field work.

A CAMP was in place to monitor air quality during ground intrusive RI activities to proactively alert site personnel if corrective actions were necessary to prevent off-site transport of volatiles or particulate matter. CAMP results are available on RITC's website: http://www.riverviewtechcampus.com/health-and-safety/#map.

Further investigation of the eastern portion of Operable Unit 1 (OU1) (also referred to as Site 110) and eastern portion of OU3 (Site 108) are currently planned. The investigation of OU2 (Site 109) is now complete. Refer to the diagram on Page 6 for OU locations. Sampling on OU1 and OU3 is anticipated to resume during Summer 2021.

The information collected during the RI will be summarized in a report made available to the public. After the site investigation is complete, Honeywell, with oversight by DEC, will complete a "Feasibility Study." This study uses information collected during the RI to identify, screen, and evaluate cleanup alternatives to address site-related contamination.

DEC will then develop a draft cleanup plan, called a "Proposed Remedial Action Plan" (PRAP), that describes the remedy preferred by DEC.

The PRAP will present the basis for the preferred remedy by discussing each alternative and the reasons for choosing or rejecting it. DEC will announce the PRAP in a future newsletter, and will present it to the public for its review and comment during a 30-day comment period. A public meeting will also be held during this comment period.

Access the RIWP and other project documents online through DECinfo Locator: www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915055.

State Superfund Cleanup Actions

The SSF site is comprised of three operable units (OUs). These three OUs were in various stages of the cleanup process when TCC declared bankruptcy in 2018.

Preliminary work at one of the areas, named OU3 (also known as Site 108), was previously completed by Honeywell under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency oversight. Work included the demolition and removal of three above-ground tar storage tanks and piping along with asbestos abatement and excavation of impacted soil. All of the materials were disposed at approved facilities off-site.

The additional investigation being completed by Honeywell in all of the OUs will be used to determine what additional cleanup actions are needed at the SSF site. Honeywell has also agreed to investigate the area of the facility's historic settling ponds.

For more information about the State Superfund Program, visit: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html.

Community Working Group

The Town of Tonawanda is leading the Tonawanda Community Working Group (TCWG), an organization that provides a forum for community leaders, groups and citizen representatives to receive input, make recommendations, and discuss the remediation of the former Tonawanda Coke site.

Five TCWG meetings have been held since the formation of the working group in September 2020.

For more information on the TCWG please contact Town of Tonawanda Development Director James Hartz: jhartz@tonawanda.ny.us or (716) 871-8847.

Work Completed to Date

Immediately upon TCC's closure in 2018, DEC and federal partners secured the site and conducted emergency activities to stabilize the site and its contents. The site was turned over to RITC following the bankruptcy sale in 2019. RITC continues around-the-clock security of the site and remote site monitoring. On-site staff manage surface water, treat stormwater accumulating in process areas, and sample surface water and sewer discharges.

Additional work completed on the sites includes:

- Coal and coke inventories left on-site from TCC's operations were removed for reuse elsewhere;
- Asbestos materials abatement and proper off-site disposal from the BCP and SSF sites is nearing completion;
- IRMs on the BCP site to manage wastes and materials left by TCC and to improve stormwater management systems;
- Sampling of on-site tanks to determine closure requirements and identify permitted treatment/disposal facilities; and
- Demolition of site buildings has commenced. Demolition must comply with all Town of Tonawanda requirements. Buildings and structures impacted by site contaminants also have additional sampling and disposal requirements from DEC.

Demolition of the gas holder that was used to store excess coke oven gas prior to use in the coking process or being sold for off-site use (February 2021).

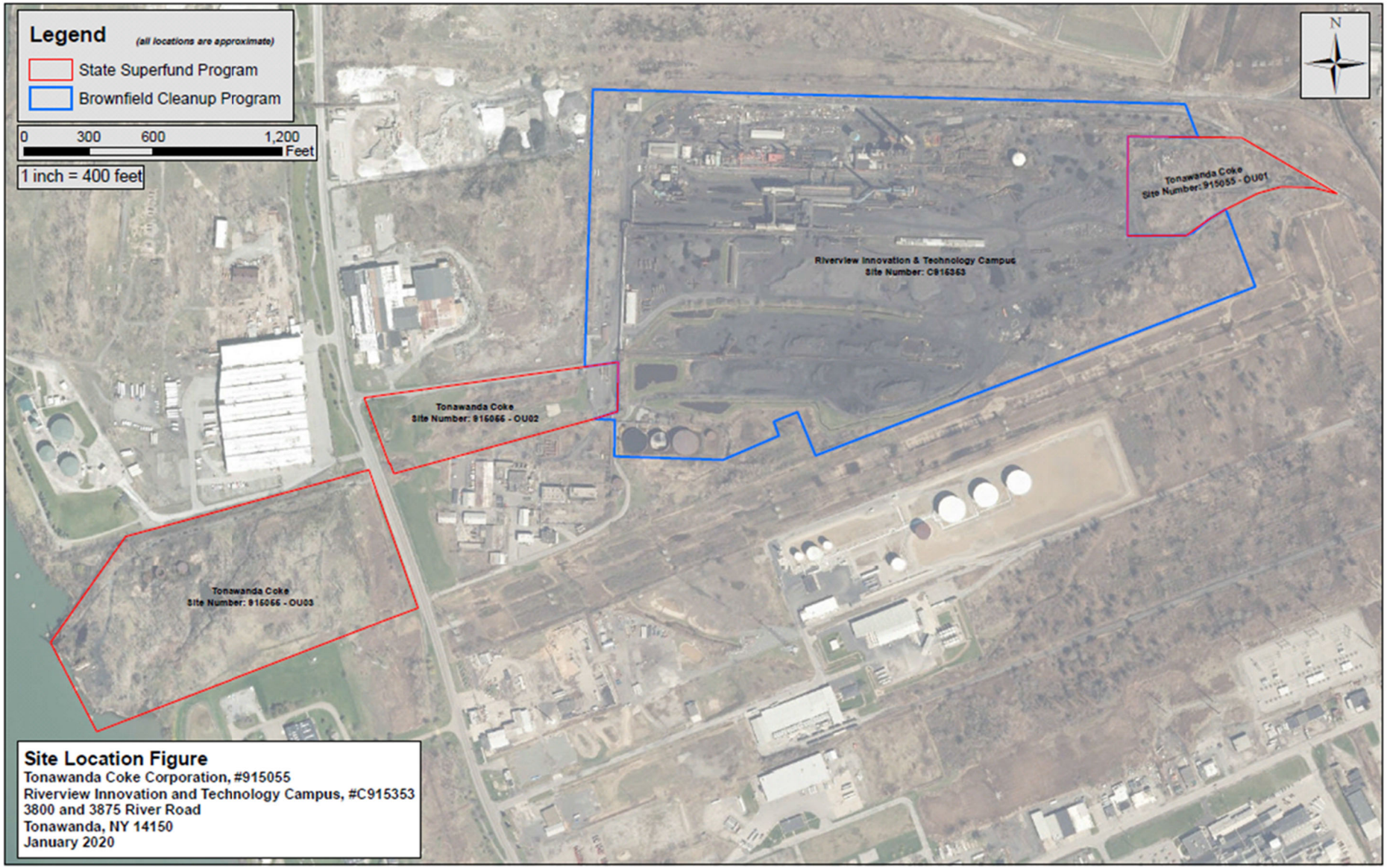
Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's Environmental Site Remediation Database by entering the site ID C915353 (BCP site) or 915055 (SSF site) at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/derexternal/index.cfm?pageid=3.

RITC/Honeywell International maintain an independent website about the sites that includes various documents associated with the ongoing projects. This website is not updated or maintained by DEC but can be accessed at: http://www.riverviewtechcampus.com/.

Asbestos panels being removed from the coal breaker building (March 2021).

Side view of the "Mansion" office building prior to demolition (March 2021).

The two boiler house stacks (forefront) and the top of the waste heat stack (center-back), looking south. All three stacks will be demolished during Summer 2021 (March 2021).



Site Location Figure
Tonawanda Coke Corporation, #915055
Riverview Innovation and Technology Campus, #C915353
3800 and 3875 River Road
Tonawanda, NY 14150
January 2020

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

Project documents are available at these locations to help the public stay informed.

Document Repositories:
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Central Library
One Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Kenmore Branch
160 Delaware Road
Kenmore, NY 14217

***** Note: Repositories are temporarily unavailable due to COVID-19. If you cannot access the online repository, contact the DEC project manager listed for assistance.***

NYSDEC Region 9 Office
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 851-7220
Contact: Benjamin McPherson
(Please call for an appointment)

Project documents also are available through DECinfo Locator at:

https://gisservices-dev.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/index.html?rs=C915353

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's Environmental Site Remediation Database at:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/derexternal/haz/details.cfm?pageid=3&progno=C915353

For more information about the State Superfund, visit:
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html

SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED

Have site information such as this fact sheet sent right to your email inbox. NYSDEC invites you to sign up for one or more email listservs at:
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html

As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information/ announcements for all contaminated sites in the counties you select. If you already have signed up for the listserv for the county in which the site is located, you need do nothing.

If the listserv is not an option, call or write to the DER project manager identified in this newsletter and Indicate that you need to receive fact sheets through the U.S. Postal Service. Include the site name in your request. The option to receive paper is available to individuals only. Groups, organizations, businesses, and government entities are assumed to have email access.