



# EPA Picks Cleanup Plan for Soil, Sediment and Ground Water

## Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront Site

Ashland, Wisconsin

October 2010

### Attend an information session

EPA and Wisconsin DNR will share details about the ROD, which explains the cleanup option for the Ashland site.

**Thursday, Nov. 4, 6:30 p.m.**

**Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center**

**29270 County High G  
Ashland**

### Contacts

For general questions or comments:

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Region 5 toll-free:

800-621-8431

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., weekdays

Region 5 address:

77 W. Jackson Blvd.

Chicago, IL 60604

*(See P. 3 for Wisconsin contacts)*

### For more information

The record of decision and other official documents are available on EPA's and WDNR's Websites:

[www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ashland](http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ashland)

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/cleanup/ashland.htm>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has selected a plan to clean up waste tar and oil through a combination of sediment and soil excavation, dredging, and a variety of techniques to manage contaminated ground water. EPA considered a number of cleanup options, reviewed public comments and consulted with state partner Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources before picking a cleanup plan.

The Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront Superfund site consists of several properties within Ashland. The properties include the area referred to as Kreher Park, the Upper Bluff/Filled Ravine, overlooking the park, the Copper Falls Aquifer under the ravine area and about 16 acres of sediment and surface water in Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay. The entire site is bounded by U.S. Highway 2 to the south, Prentice Avenue to the east, Ellis Avenue to the west, and Chequamegon Bay to the north. *See photo on page 2.*

The cleanup steps are described in greater technical detail in an EPA document called a "record of decision," or ROD, that is available on the Web and at information repositories listed on Page 3. This fact sheet is a plain language summary of the information contained in the ROD.<sup>1</sup> It also summarizes many of the public comments received on the cleanup plans.

### Contamination

The Ashland/NSP Lakefront site's soil, ground water and sediment are contaminated with waste from a former manufactured gas plant and other possible sources. At some places below ground, the waste exhibits an oil or tar consistency because of very high concentrations of groups of chemicals called polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds. In the bay some of the sediment is covered with wood waste which traps the contaminants. If wood waste and/or sediment are disturbed, contamination can be released into the water and form a visible slick and impact wildlife and swimmers.

### Cleanup plans

EPA compared numerous cleanup options developed for the Ashland site with nine criteria required by federal Superfund law. The criteria include: overall protection of people's health and the environment; compliance with state and federal regulations; short and long-term effectiveness; reduction of toxicity, mobility or volume through treatment; cost; and state and community acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup> EPA is conducting the Ashland cleanup under the authority of the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), better known as the Superfund law. The Ashland site is listed on the National Priorities List of hazardous public sites eligible for cleanup under EPA's Superfund program. Superfund requires public participation in the cleanup process. The ROD and other official documents are on file in the site repositories listed on P. 3 or at the Websites listed in the left-hand box.



*Aerial photo shows the Ashland/NSP Lakefront site. The Upper Bluff/Filled Ravine includes the location of the former manufactured gas facility that created much of the pollution on the site.*

The Agency then picked a package of cleanup actions that appear to be the most cost-effective while protecting human health and the environment. Each area has its own cleanup plan as follows.

**Chequamegon Bay Cleanup** – Remove all sediment that exceeds a contamination level of 9.5 parts per million in the sediment. Sediment removal will be accomplished using a wet/dry method. The bay would be blocked off approximately 200 feet offshore and drained of water so dry excavation could be performed. Beyond the dry excavation area, dredging in the water will remove contaminated sediment. The excavated and dredged areas will be covered with at least 6 inches of clean sand/fill mix while the removed sediment will be drained of water and stabilized at Kreher Park. Wastewater will be treated and discharged to the lake. Stabilized sediment will either be treated and disposed of or sent to an off-site landfill while wood debris would be dealt with separately.

**Kreher Park Cleanup** – This cleanup area is west of the current RV park and will involve limited soil removal followed by treatment and either off-site disposal or beneficial reuse as backfill. For ground water, engineered surface and vertical barriers to stop water movement may be installed, and partial caps would be placed over the area to limit rain and snowmelt from seeping through the ground and carrying pollutants to the bay. In addition, a containment structure will be built along the shoreline and ground water within the contained area will be treated on-site before discharging to the bay. A chemical agent might be injected into the ground water to help speed up the cleaning process.

**Upper Bluff/Filled Ravine Cleanup** – This area will have the same soil and ground water cleanup methods as Kreher Park. Contaminated soil around the filled ravine will be removed. Because parts of the former gas plant still lie on the Upper Bluff/Filled Ravine, gas plant structures will also be removed. Ground water within the ravine will be removed through a pumping system and/or will migrate to the containment area in Kreher Park and then be treated before discharge to the bay.

**Copper Falls Aquifer Cleanup** – Plans for ground water cleanup are to install wells, pump the ground water to a treatment system for cleaning and then discharge the water into the sanitary sewer or lake. A chemical agent may be injected into the ground water to help speed up the cleanup process.

Long-term maintenance and monitoring are part of the cleanup plan. Kreher Park will be used as a staging area for sediment removal activities and possibly for the location of a long-term wastewater and ground water treatment facility. The existing former wastewater treatment plant that sits next to Kreher Park could be used for some of these activities.

**Cleanup timetable, costs and future use**

Cleanup actions will not start at least until summer 2011 because EPA will have to negotiate a cleanup agreement with those legally responsible for the pollution and design work must be completed. Cleanup of contaminated soil and ground water at Kreher Park and the area known as the Upper Bluff/Filled Ravine will likely come first because it will need

to be completed before the sediment cleanup to avoid re-contamination. It is anticipated that overall cleanup will take several years to complete.

Sediment removal is the major expense in this cleanup plan and the total project costs are estimated between \$83 million and \$98 million. The wide price range can be accounted for by several variables in the cleanup plan that won't be settled until the final design phase is completed.

The city of Ashland has adopted a Waterfront Development Plan that includes an expansion of the marina and a new harbormaster building at the Superfund site. Local officials hope the currently underutilized waterfront area can be a central attraction in the city's comprehensive plan for mixed residential and commercial use of the upper bluff area. Residents and city officials told EPA they like the idea of the cleanup fitting into the city's vision for the bay and shoreline.

### **Cleanup comments and concerns**

The public was able to comment on the various cleanup options proposed. The comments were summarized and answered in a document called a "responsiveness summary" that is part of the record of decision.

Some of the public comments received suggested the dry excavation method in the bay was unnecessary and too costly. EPA believes its selected dry/wet cleanup plan is the best option but may conduct a pilot test in the bay to determine if dredging alone can clean up the free product

and contaminated wood waste to meet established cleanup goals.

A majority of the comments expressed support for the cleanup of the Ashland/NSP Lakefront site and indicated the need to protect human health and the environment from exposure to the pollutants. The public also expressed a desire that the cleanup be "done right the first time" so later corrective measures will not be needed.

Some residents also worried about the effect of cleanup costs on the utility rates they pay to Northern States Power Co. of Wisconsin, a subsidiary of Xcel Energy. EPA does not determine how costs are handled by the responsible party. This would be a matter for the utility and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission to decide.

Some comments expressed concern about air pollution stirred up during the cleanup work. EPA will require the cleanup contractor to submit a comprehensive air management plan that will include air monitoring.

### **Community involvement**

A Community Advisory Group is a tool for community involvement and can serve as a focal point for the exchange of information among EPA, DNR and the local community. Communities like Ashland, with a high level of interest and concern about site activities, are good candidates for a CAG. Over the next few months EPA and WDNR will talk to residents and learn if there is an interest in forming a group.

### **Information repositories**

These locations contain the record of decision for the Ashland/NSP Lakefront site as well as other official documents. The files are open for review by the public.

#### **Vaughn Public Library**

502 W. Main St.  
Ashland

#### **WDNR Spooner Service**

**Center**  
810 W. Maple St.  
Spooner

#### **Bad River Public Library**

100 Maple St.  
Odanah

#### **Red Cliff Environmental Protection Office**

37295 Community Road  
Bayfield

### **Wisconsin contacts**

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**EPA Selects  
Cleanup Plan  
for  
Soil, Sediment, and Ground Water**

**Ashland/NSP Lakefront Site  
Ashland, Wisconsin**

**(details inside)**

Attend an information session to find out more about the selected cleanup plan.

**Thursday, Nov. 4, 6:30 p.m.  
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29270 County High G  
Ashland**

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**ASHLAND/NSP LAKEFRONT SITE: EPA Picks Water, Soil Cleanup Plan**

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Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
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