

Remediation work at NFSS slated to begin

Army Corps awards \$40 million contract

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, reports work toward a complete remediation of the nearly 10-acre Interim Waste Containment Structure at the Niagara Falls Storage Site is now underway. The Army Corps awarded a \$40 million contract to Enviro-Fix Solutions LLC of Delaware for remedial and site services to begin at the 191-acre location in Lewiston.

According to the Army Corps, the first task order was awarded Aug. 4 for \$11,984,341.90, which includes remediating contaminated media in accordance with the record of decision for the balance of plant and groundwater operable units at the NFSS that comprises the IWCS. This work is being carried out under the Army Corps' Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP).

Located on the northwest parcel of the 191-acre NFSS on Pletcher Road in Lewiston, the underground IWCS was constructed by the federal government in the mid- to late-1980s. The IWCS contains a wide variety of World War II-era radioactive contaminated materials that were transported the NFSS site in the decades following WWII for storage, along with the foundations of a number of structures on the site that were demolished over past decades.

Record of Decision

The latest Army Corps activity follows its record of decision reached earlier in the 2000s covering the balance of plant and groundwater operable units at NFSS. It includes the complete removal of contaminated media and off-site disposal at a properly permitted or licensed facility. Following completion of excavation and off-site disposal, the NFSS would be remediated to levels suitable for industrial use (i.e., protective of construction, industrial and maintenance workers, as well as adolescent and adult trespassers).

The major components of the selected remedy for the NFSS BOP and groundwater OUs include:

- √ Removal and off-site disposal of radionuclides of concern (ROCs) ROC- and/or chemicals of concern (COC)-contaminated soil, road bedding, and Building 401 foundation/utilities.

- √ Removal and off-site disposal of impacted foundations and underlying soil, including but not limited to buildings 430 and 431/432 and Building 433, as determined by the results of the contract line-item number-01 mobilization and preparatory work investigation; and,

- √ Removal and off-site disposal of a chlorinated volatile organic compound (CVOC)-impacted soil and groundwater plume and placement of clay backfill into the excavation.

Next Steps/Anticipated Schedule

- √ Fall – BOP work plan development and finalization.
- √ February 2024 – USACE anticipates hosting a public information session to describe BOP site remediation activities.

- √ Spring 2024 – BOP mobilization.

- √ Fall 2024 – Anticipate remedial actions to be complete.

Site Services

In the future, the USACE intends to utilize available contract capacity to support ongoing NFSS IWCS remedial design activities. Activities may include environmental and geotechnical data collection and site infrastructure construction.

NFSS project information website: All documents (fact sheets, reports, video, etc.) related to the Niagara Falls Storage Site project can be found at: <https://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/Missions/HTRW/FUSRAP/Niagara-Falls-Storage-Site/>.

Higgins: Extended deadline for PACT Act retroactive benefits

Program provides benefits to veterans exposed to toxics

Congressman Brian Higgins announced the U.S. Veterans Administration extended the deadline for veterans and their families to apply for retroactive benefits under the PACT Act. The new deadline to apply for backdated benefits is 11:59 p.m. Monday.

A press release explained, "The PACT Act makes nearly 3.5 million veterans across the country eligible for the care and benefits they earned, without having to go

through an arduous process of proving their illness is connected to their service. Veterans with 23 classified conditions are presumed to be eligible. The legislation ensures veterans who were exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and radiation are eligible for benefits."

Higgins said, "This is one of the largest expansions of veteran benefits in a generation. We encourage local eligible veter-

ans to apply."

The congressman, who pushed for approval of the law, recently held an event to remind Western New York veterans and their families to apply. A surviving spouse, dependent child, or the parent of a veteran who died from a service-connected condition may also be eligible for benefits.

His team noted, "Those who submit a claim or an intent to file a claim by the new

Aug. 14 deadline will be eligible for benefits dating back to Aug. 10, 2022. Individuals can continue to apply after Aug. 14, but won't be eligible for backdated benefits."

Veterans and their families can find more information on PACT Act benefits by visiting VA.gov/pact or by calling 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411 // TTY: 711).

The previous deadline for retroactive benefits was Wednesday, Aug. 9.

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