



# Review of Cleanup Options Done; Selection of Plan Is Next Step

## Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront Site

Ashland, Wisconsin

November 2008

### Public meeting

EPA and WDNR invite you to an update session on the Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront site on **Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008**. The meeting is an opportunity to learn about the cleanup options being considered and how the project may affect you.

The session will begin at **6:30 p.m.** at the **Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center auditorium, 29270 County Highway G**.

Representatives from EPA and WDNR will be available before and after to talk with community members.

Selection of cleanup options are based on the established EPA criteria of:

- Protecting human health and the environment.
- Complying with state and federal regulations.
- Long-term effectiveness.
- Short-term effectiveness.
- Implementability.
- Cost.
- State agency (in this case WDNR) acceptance.
- Community acceptance.

For questions about the session, or if you need special accommodations to attend, please contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator **Patti Krause** at 800-621-8431, Ext. 69506, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., weekdays, or [krause.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:krause.patricia@epa.gov).

Cleanup of the Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront site is closer to completion since U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have completed review of what is called the “feasibility study,” which is a detailed analysis of cleanup options for the site.

EPA and WDNR are hosting an information meeting to talk about the cleanup options considered for soil, ground water (underground water supplies), and lake sediment (mud) on Dec. 10.

Cleanup options were developed based on what was learned in the “remedial investigation,” a study of the nature and extent of contamination at the site. The remedial investigation built upon 13 years of studies conducted by Northern States Power of Wisconsin, EPA and WDNR. A review of the remedial investigation along with a summary of the key points from an October 2007 workshop will be discussed at the information session.

Community members were invited to participate in the workshop held a year ago and asked to identify outcomes or features of a cleanup that would make the process most acceptable. Doing it right the first time for a permanent cleanup and maximizing future use opportunities with the city’s waterfront development plan were rated highest with those attending the workshop. Other factors considered high priorities were speed of the cleanup, minimizing disruption to marina operations and residents, cost, future recreational use, and beauty and aesthetics. The results of the workshop were evaluated in preparing the feasibility study.

### Site history

The Ashland/NSP Lakefront site includes several properties within the city of Ashland and about 10 acres of sediment and surface water in Chequamegon Bay. The properties include those owned by NSPW, Canadian National Railroad, a portion of the city-owned property including Kreher Park and the former wastewater treatment plant, an inlet of Chequamegon Bay, Our Lady of the Lake Church and School, and private residences.

The NSPW property, located on a bluff overlooking Kreher Park, is the site of a former manufactured gas plant that began operation in 1885, producing gas for street lighting and other residential and commercial uses. It ceased operation in 1947 when it switched to propane distribution.

Kreher Park did not exist before the late 1800s as the Chequamegon Bay shoreline was much closer to what is now the Canadian National Railroad corridor. The park was created by placement of various fill materials into the bay through the decades. The eastern portion was filled with sawdust, wood waste and other material from local sawmills that operated until the early 1930s. Solid waste, primarily demolition debris, was disposed of along the western side of the property in the 1940s.

Contaminants of concern at the site include tar, oil and other materials. This waste was generated at the former manufactured gas plant. Waste material moved from the former manufactured gas plant to the park through a ravine, and later through a 12-inch clay tile pipe laid inside the ravine. Later, after Kreher Park was formed from fill, additional pipes and a ditch may have conveyed waste to the bay. Other activities in the area, including possible wood treatment and construction in the 1950s of the former wastewater treatment plant in what is now Kreher Park, may have added to the contamination.

Site pollution was discovered in 1989 while the city was preparing to expand the former wastewater treatment plant. During excavation, workers encountered tar. This discovery led to a series of investigations by WDNR and NSPW to assess the nature and extent of contamination at Kreher Park, NSPW property and Chequamegon Bay.

Two interim measures have been implemented to date. NSPW began pumping ground water in 2000 from the Copper Falls aquifer, a thick water-bearing formation composed of layers of sand and gravel lying beneath the area. The pumped water is treated at the NSPW plant and discharged into the city's sanitary sewer. Up to now, more than 1.7 million gallons of contaminated water has been pumped out, yielding about 10,000 gallons of a coal tar and water mix. This has reduced contaminant

mass in the Copper Falls aquifer. In 2002 NSPW dug out contaminated soil and waste at a seepage point at the base of the bluff and removed much of the 12-inch clay pipe in the ravine. This area was then covered with clean material and fenced.

In response to a citizen's petition and to address long-term issues, EPA added the site to the National Priorities List. The NPL is a roster of waste sites eligible for cleanup under EPA's Superfund program. NSPW subsequently signed a legal agreement in 2003 to conduct a remedial investigation and feasibility study. The remedial investigation was completed and approved by EPA and WDNR in October 2007.

### **Next steps**

EPA will recommend a cleanup plan using the established criteria mentioned earlier in this fact sheet. The plan will be reviewed and analyzed by EPA's Remedy Review Board because the cost is expected to be more than \$25 million. The goals of the Remedy Review Board are to enhance consistency in Superfund cleanup selections, improve cost-effectiveness, confirm that proposed cleanup actions at high-cost sites are technically sound and ensure decisions follow current law. EPA Headquarters officials and regional staff serve on the board. After remedy review, EPA will schedule a meeting and comment period to give the public an opportunity to offer their opinions on the proposed cleanup plan. After evaluating the public comments EPA will select a final cleanup plan for the Ashland/NSP Lakefront site. A document called a "record of decision" that explains the selected cleanup plan will be issued. This is followed by a design phase where specific features and action steps are finalized and cleanup activities can begin.

### **For more information**

The remedial investigation and feasibility study and other documents are available on EPA and WDNR Web sites and at information repositories:

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

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/cleanup/ashland.html](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/cleanup/ashland.html)

Vaughn Public Library  
502 W. Main St.  
Ashland

WDNR Spooner Service Center  
810 W. Maple St.  
Spooner

Bad River Public Library  
100 Maple St.  
Odahan

Red Cliff Environmental Protection Agency Office  
86395 Hwy. 13, Brood Stock Building  
Bayfield

EPA and WDNR team members are listed below:

**Patti Krause**

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator  
77 W. Jackson Blvd. (P-19J)  
Chicago, IL 60604  
krause.patricia@epa.gov  
800-621-8431, Ext. 69506  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., weekdays

**John Robinson**

WDNR, Northern Region Team Supervisor  
107 Sutliff Ave.  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
john.robinson@wisconsin.gov  
715-365-8976

**Scott Hansen**

EPA Remedial Project Manager  
77 W. Jackson Blvd. (SR-6J)  
Chicago, IL 60604  
hansen.scott@epa.gov  
800-621-8431, Ext. 61999  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., weekdays

**Jamie Dunn**

WDNR, Project Manager  
810 W. Maple St.  
Spooner, WI 54801  
james.dunn@wisconsin.gov  
715-635-4049

**Henry Nehls-Lowe**

Wisconsin Department of  
Health Epidemiologist  
1414 W. Washington Ave.  
Madison, WI 43703  
nehls@dhfs.state.wi.us  
608-266-3479



## **Public Meeting – Information Update Session**

EPA and the WDNR invite you to an information update session about the cleanup options for the Ashland/NSP site.

**Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center  
29270 County Highway G  
Ashland**

**SEE INSIDE FOR  
DETAILS**



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Region 5  
Superfund Division (P-19J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

**ASHLAND/NORTHERN STATES POWER LAKEFRONT SITE:  
Review of Cleanup Options Complete**