

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Operable Unit 2 of the Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Superfund Site Cumberland and Lincoln, RI

U.S. EPA | SUPERFUND CLEANUP PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM protects human health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up often-abandoned hazardous waste sites and engaging communities throughout the process. Many of these sites are complex and need long-term cleanup actions. Those responsible for contamination are held liable for cleanup costs. EPA strives to return previously contaminated land and groundwater to productive use.

DESCRIPTION:

The US EPA and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management are announcing today its final decision on the cleanup of the Operable Unit 2 (J. M. Mills Landfill/Nunes Parcel/Unnamed Island) of the Peterson/Puritan, Inc. Superfund Site in Cumberland and Lincoln, RI. The final remedy generally includes consolidation of waste material from the Unnamed Island onto both the Nunes Parcel and the J. M. Mills Landfill, followed by capping, with substantial consideration given to anticipated future use of these areas, aesthetics, habitat quality and meaningful public input into the final cap design.

On August 7, 2014, EPA issued a Proposed Plan for the cleanup of OU 2, initiating a 30-day public comment period. In order to ensure that all stakeholders had sufficient opportunity to submit meaningful public comments, EPA extended the public comment period until January 23, 2015.

EPA received many public comments and appreciate the time and effort that community stakeholders have spent reviewing and commenting on this important cleanup decision. Although EPA is also releasing a detailed Responsiveness Summary that includes responses to all comments, the public comments generally had a few overarching messages, including:

- Ensure that the remedy protects public health and the sensitive river environment.
- Show flexibility in the design of the engineered caps.
- Incorporate into the design the aesthetic and habitat qualities of the Blackstone

River Valley National Historical Park and Heritage Corridor, and allow for future access to the remediated site in the form of scenic paths and/or river access points.

- Make certain that emergency vehicles continue to have access through the Nunes Parcel to the Blackstone River and Pratt Dam.
- Involve all stakeholders in the process leading up to the final design and during construction of the landfill caps.

EPA took local community input very seriously, and listened to and considered all comments prior to making this final cleanup decision. EPA took the additional step of providing the Town of Cumberland technical assistance with the review of the Proposed Plan. On November 1, 2010, EPA also awarded a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) to the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone to involve the community more fully in the decision making process.

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First and foremost, EPA is charged with selecting a remedy that is protective of human health and the environment and complies with both State and Federal regulations, and this final decision is consistent with that foundation. In addition to assuring those protections and regulatory compliance, EPA has made several modifications and/or clarifications in the Record of Decision which we think are responsive to the other important public comments noted above. Some highlights include:

- EPA wishes to clarify that under the regulatory requirements, and those recommendations found in EPA's Region 1 guidance documents, there is flexibility in designing a protective cap that meets regulatory performance standards. The multi-layered engineered cap recommended by EPA's guidance, and included in our original Proposed Plan, has already been deemed to meet the performance standards spelled out in regulations. In EPA's Record of Decision, however, EPA adds flexibility by committing to consider alternative cap designs as long as they meet the following performance standards for caps set out in the regulations:
 1. Provide long-term minimization of migration of liquids through the closed landfill;
 2. Function with minimum maintenance;
 3. Promote drainage and minimize erosion or abrasion of the cover;
 4. Accommodate settling and subsidence so that the cover's integrity is maintained; and
 5. Have a permeability less than or equal to the permeability of any bottom liner system or natural soils present.
- In addition, other requirements, such as wetland and floodplain regulations and requirements for landfill gas management, will also be used to guide the design of the remedy. The specific design of the cap will be worked out at a later date.
- EPA has consistently expressed a desire to implement a remedy that will ultimately restore the natural habitat, ecological functions, and the aesthetic qualities of the Blackstone River Valley, and the Record of Decision clearly reflects that sentiment. The final cleanup design will allow for future recreational use of the site and can accommodate pedestrian access, as appropriate.
- The Record of Decision now allows for some landfill material to be disposed of off-site in order to properly shape and resize the landfills, to address riparian protection/restoration concerns, and to minimize the loss of flood storage for the Blackstone River.
- The Record of Decision reflects the fact that access for emergency vehicles is necessary, and will need to be addressed in the design.
- The Record of Decision incorporates a proactive public outreach effort which is intended to engage local, state and federal officials, and other key stakeholders as we prepare the final design for closure of the landfills.

EPA is confident that the final remedy, including the modification and clarifications outlined above, will result in a final landfill design that will protect public health and the environment, fit nicely into the vision of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and the Heritage Corridor, and open up opportunities to turn this blighted disposal area into a community asset.

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