



# Sites in Reuse

## Petersen Sand & Gravel Superfund Site

16400 West Buckley Road, Libertyville, Illinois 60048



*Views of the quarry lake and surrounding amenities at Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Lake County, Illinois.*

**Site size:** 120 acres of a larger 1,106-acre forest preserve

**Site Reuses:** Forest preserve/recreational area with reclaimed lake, visitor facilities, recreational trails, swimming and boating areas.



Libertyville,  
Illinois

At the 120-acre Petersen Sand & Gravel site, Chicago-area residents can enjoy a 115-acre man-made lake surrounded by a variety of natural and recreational amenities. Given the environmental restoration, it is almost impossible to tell that the site, now part of the Independence Grove Forest Preserve, was once a large sand and gravel quarry and waste disposal area.

The Independence Grove Forest Preserve is adjacent to the Des Plaines River near the Town of Libertyville in Lake County, Illinois. Owned and maintained by the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD), the 1,106-acre forest preserve provides a diverse natural resource, conservation, recreation, and education area. The preserve includes large areas of preserved and restored habitat, a network of recreational trails, a 19,000 square foot visitor center, a large picnic/event pavilion, and swimming, boating, and fishing areas. Many of these recreational features are located adjacent to a reclaimed sand and gravel quarry, which LCFPD purchased in 1979.

The Petersen Sand and Gravel Superfund site was an active sand and gravel quarry from 1952 to 1971. Quarrying operations altered the site's topography by stripping away most extant topsoil and leaving vertical walls up to 60 feet high along its edges. In the late 1970s, despite these

conditions, the LCFPD saw an opportunity to incorporate the site into its proposed Independence Grove Forest Preserve. Plans originally called for basic improvements to the site to allow for trails, picnicking, swimming, and boating, but later grew to include a visitor center, marina complex, cafe, event pavilion, amphitheater, and native plant garden.

In order to complete the redevelopment of the former sand and gravel quarry, the LCFPD signed a contract with Lake County Grading, a local mining firm. Lake County Grading agreed to extensively regrade and reclaim the property in exchange for mining any remaining gravel. In 1983, during these early mining and reclamation activities, several hundred waste drums and empty paint cans were unexpectedly encountered along the northern edge of the quarry.

### LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: THE REUSE PLANNING PROCESS

Following the discovery of this 20-acre waste area, the LCFPD paid for the removal of the waste drums, surrounding contaminated soil, and contaminated surface water. Soon afterwards, EPA and IEPA became



View of visitor center, quarry lake marina, and boat rental area.

concerned about ground water contamination and the potential presence of additional drums and contaminated soil. Therefore, the agencies began examinations of the quarry property to determine the nature and extent of on-site pollutants. The site was listed on the NPL in 1986. Throughout the EPA and IEPA investigations, the LCFPD and Lake County Grading were allowed to continue mining and reclaiming portions of the quarry.

In 1988, following extensive study of the quarry and its surrounding area, EPA and IEPA determined that no further action was needed to remediate the site. However, EPA was concerned that any remaining pollutants in the quarry might migrate into the recreational lake during its construction. In order to ensure the safety of aquatic life and future users of the lake, Lake County and the LCFPD agreed to monitor surface water and sediments in the quarry both before and after construction. The site was deleted from the NPL in 1991. There have been no further pollution issues at the site since its redevelopment.

Following the completion of site studies, LCFPD continued reclaiming the quarry, including completing all mining activities, regrading portions of the site, designing and filling the quarry lake area, and constructing all on-site buildings and amenities. LCFPD officially opened the forest preserve for general use in Spring 2001.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Site Contact:**

Mike Fenelon  
Director of Planning,  
Conservation, & Development  
Lake County Forest Preserve  
District  
32492 North Almond Road  
Grayslake, Illinois 60030  
Phone: (847) 968-3339  
Email: [mfenelon@co.lake.il.us](mailto:mfenelon@co.lake.il.us)

**EPA Region 5:**

Linda Howard  
Remedial Project Manager  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507  
Phone: (312) 886-0810  
Email: [howard.linda@epa.gov](mailto:howard.linda@epa.gov)  
Site Summary: [www.epa.gov/region5/superfund/npl/illinois/ILD003817137.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region5/superfund/npl/illinois/ILD003817137.htm)