

Revitalization

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On the Waterfront

Army Corps of Engineers helps clean up site for new development

by JOANNE CASTAGNA, E.D.D.

Recently, on a cool, breezy morning overlooking the water in Glen Cove, New York, the city's mayor enthusiastically faced a crowd of public and media. As she stood before them, she announced that the last truckload of radioactive waste was being hauled from the property, a portion of the Li Tungsten Superfund Site, clearing the way for a new waterfront development.

Standing alongside her at the podium were members of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District; and state and local agencies that had played major roles in making this milestone a reality for the small community.

The City of Glen Cove is located on the north shore of Long Island, approximately 28 miles east of New York City. The Long Island Sound lies to its north and the Hempstead Harbor to its west. Running inland from the harbor is the Glen Cove Creek, a one-mile federal navigation channel that is dredged by the Corps every few years to ease boat travel. The city has eight miles of waterfront, one mile of which has been used by industry.

Li Tungsten Superfund Site

For decades, the one-mile industrialized portion of the Glen Cove waterfront was occupied by various industries and a portion was used as a dumping ground. All of this occurred before the establishment of the strict environmental laws in place today.

Wah Chang Corp. and Wah Chang Smelting and Refining Company were two of these companies. (Wah Chang ironically means "great development" — in part — in Chinese.) These companies, along with others such as the Li Tungsten Corp., ran a facility on different portions of the site from the 1940s to the mid-1980s.

The facility processed tungsten, a material used in industry to harden steel. The facility received tungsten ores from around the world and smelted them to produce such things as tungsten carbide powder, tungsten wire, and welding rods. The heavy metals and radioactive ore residues from this production process contaminated the property.

In the mid-1980s, the Li Tungsten Corp., the last in a series of site operators, went bankrupt, and the property was purchased by the Glen

Cove Development Corp. (GCDC).

New York State asked the EPA, Region 2, to investigate the property's land and nine buildings and remove any contaminated waste left by the company.

The EPA found large quantities of hazardous materials, such as laboratory chemicals and PCB-contaminated waste, in hundreds of rusted drums and in above and underground tanks. In addition, it also discovered asbestos, transformers, and gas cylinders containing compressed liquids and gases and elemental mercury spilled on the property. An EPA contractor had the site remediated, and the most serious chemical and



Left and Above: An aerial photograph looking eastward at the Li Tungsten Captain's Cove Site in 2001, prior to the Corps' remedial action construction work.

radioactive hazards at the former facility were removed.

The EPA's investigation also found low-level radiation and heavy-metal contamination — posing

a public health risk — in the soil throughout the 26-acre Li Tungsten facility, as well as in the nearby 23-acre Captain's Cove property that was long used as a dumping ground by area businesses and residents.

Corps assists EPA

In spring 2005, the EPA issued an Interagency Agreement with the Corps' New York District to perform remediation work at the Captain's Cove portion of the Li Tungsten Superfund Site. The work was awarded to and performed by the Corps' Kansas City District.

"Our responsibility was to excavate the soil, separate the radioactive and metal-contaminated soil from the non-contaminated soil, and transport the contaminated soil to appropriately licensed disposal facilities," said Richard Gajdek, project manager, New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Gajdek also said that throughout the construction period, the public has been protected from any potential health threats. "The public is prohibited from the site that is fenced off and guarded. Also, we continually monitor the air quality and inspect and clean the trucks that enter and leave the property."

The construction contractor, Conti Environmental Services, began the remediation work in spring 2005 and most of the work has since been completed. Approximately 87,500 tons of radioactive soils and 35,000 tons of metal-contaminated soils have been removed from the site and transported to disposal facilities. This clean-up, along with the future clean-up of other areas of the site, will clear the way for the new waterfront redevelopment.

New waterfront development

The Li Tungsten Superfund Site properties are the centerpiece for the community's plans to revitalize 214 acres of the city's waterfront.

Glen Cove Industrial Development Agency's goal is to link the city's nearby downtown shopping area with the waterfront. Thirty percent of the development will be comprised of parks, public squares, nature walks, and botanical gardens. Pedestrian-friendly walking paths will be lined with restaurants, art galleries, stores, and hotels. In addition, there will be luxury condominiums and various modes of public transportation, including trolleys, electric carts, water taxis, and ferry service to New York City.



Richard D'Amico, USACE

Above: Contractors supervise an excavator loading radioactive soil for off-site removal and disposal.

The new waterfront development is expected to create as many as 1,700 new full-time jobs and bring in new businesses that will generate an estimated \$200 million in annual sales. The Glen Cove waterfront development is expected to be completed in a decade.

To learn more about the waterfront development, visit www.glencove-li.com. For information about Superfund, visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/superfund.

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