

SITE No. C915353 and 915055

Fall 2020

NYSDEC REGION 9

# RIVERVIEW INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS

## Cleanup Investigations To Start

Brownfield Cleanup & State Superfund Program 3875 River Road, Town of Tonawanda, Erie County

### WHO TO CONTACT



Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

#### PROJECT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

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NEW YORK'S BCP (SITE NO.  
C915353) and SSF (915055):

Visit [www.dec.ny.gov/  
chemical/37554.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/37554.html)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is strictly overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the former Tonawanda Coke Corporation facility. DEC's top priority is ensuring a thorough and careful cleanup that is fully protective of human health and the environment while continuing to keep the Tonawanda community informed of our progress and actions. Public involvement will be a critical part of the development and implementation of the former Tonawanda Coke's site cleanup. DEC will continue to work closely and transparently with the Tonawanda community throughout the cleanup process.

This update announces the upcoming start of Remedial Investigations on Operable Units (OU) 1 and 2 of the Tonawanda Coke State Superfund (SSF) site.

Remedial Investigation Work Plans (RIWPs) have been approved by DEC for these two OUs to define the nature and extent of contamination in soil, surface water, groundwater, and any other parts of the environment that may be affected. These SSF investigations will be performed by Honeywell International with strict oversight by DEC and the State Department of Health (DOH).



## Site Description and History

The former Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) facility is approximately 128 acres, located at 3875 and 3800 River Road, Town of Tonawanda. The facility is divided into the Riverview Innovation & Technology Campus (RITC) Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) site (approximately 86 acres) and the Tonawanda Coke State Superfund (SSF) site (about 41 acres). The area was used for more than a century as a coke manufacturing and byproducts recovery facility – most recently by TCC between the late 1970s and 2018.

In 2018, environmental violations involving air and water pollution, as well as faulty equipment, resulted in swift enforcement actions against TCC by DEC and the U.S. Department of Justice. These actions directly contributed to TCC's closure in October 2018.



Northwest portion of facility before Interim Site Management (top, DEC photo) and same area after substantial completion of site management activities (bottom, RITC photo).



Left behind at the former coke processing facility are numerous buildings, process equipment, piping and underground infrastructure. Most of these structures will be demolished as part of RITC's plans for redeveloping the site.

## Highlights of the State Superfund Cleanup Investigation

The key components of the investigation work plan expected to start on September 28, 2020 include:

- Collecting surface soil samples;
- Digging and sampling test pits to identify possible on-site sources of contamination;
- Installing and sampling groundwater wells across the OUs; and
- Implementing a Community Air Monitoring Program to ensure protection of air quality while work takes place.

The information collected during the investigation will be summarized in a report. After the site investigation is complete, Honeywell, with oversight provided by DEC, will conduct a "Feasibility Study." This study uses information developed during the site investigation to develop and evaluate potential ways to clean up contamination related to the site.

DEC will then develop a draft cleanup plan, called a "Proposed Remedial Action Plan," (PRAP) to ensure the site will be protective of public health and the environment. This plan describes the remedy preferred by DEC.

The draft cleanup plan explains the decision that led to the preferred remedy by discussing each alternative and the reasons for choosing or rejecting it. DEC will announce the draft cleanup plan in a future newsletter, and will present it to the public for its review and comment during a 30-day comment period and at a public meeting.

Access the RIWP and other project documents online through DECinfo Locator: [www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915055](http://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/915055).

## State Superfund Cleanup Actions

Outside of the BCP portion are three operable units (OUs) comprising the SSF portion of the former TCC facility. These three OUs were in

various stages of the remedial process when TCC declared bankruptcy.

Preliminary work at one of the areas, named OU3 (also known as site 108), was previously completed by Honeywell under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency oversight. Work included the demolition and removal of three above-ground tar storage tanks and piping along with asbestos abatement and excavation of impacted soil. All of the materials were disposed of at approved facilities off-site.

Further site investigations at the three operable units, including OU1 (also referred to as site 110) and OU2 (site 109) are scheduled to begin in fall 2020. Further investigation of OU3 (site 108) is anticipated to begin in late 2020 or early 2021. Refer to the diagram on Page 5 for OU locations.

The SSF identifies and characterizes suspected inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. Sites that pose a significant threat to public health and/or the environment go through a process of investigation, evaluation, clean-up and monitoring.

For more information about the State Superfund Program, visit:  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html>.

## Brownfield Cleanup Actions

The RIWP for the BCP portion of the former TCC facility is being developed to investigate the primary production and storage areas at the facility.

Preliminary work has been completed as part of the BCP as a series of interim remedial measures (IRMs) to improve surface conditions and stormwater quality at the site.

All approved work plans and reports are available for public review at the document repositories.

The approved documents, to date, are the:

- Interim Site Management Plan;
- Light Oil Area Secondary Containment Testing Plan;
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan;
- Stormwater Sewer Interim Remedial Measure Work Plan;
- Mixing Pad Interim Remedial Measure;
- Powers Coke and Coal Excavation Work Plan;
- Drum and Container Management Work Plan; and
- Abandoned Pipeline IRM Work Plan.

The BCP has a proven track record of success in Western New York and statewide ensuring sites are cleaned up expeditiously and comprehensively and returning them to productive use and back on tax rolls to help strengthen local economies. The BCP encourages the voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties known as "brownfields" so that they can be reused and redeveloped. These uses may include recreation, housing, business or other uses. A brownfield site is any real property where a contaminant is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by DEC that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations. New York's brownfield cleanups must meet the same stringent standards as federal or state Superfund sites. For more information about the BCP, visit:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8450.html>.

## Community Working Group

DEC and the Town of Tonawanda are creating the Tonawanda Community Working Group (TCWG) to provide a forum for the Tonawanda community to receive input, make recommendations, and discuss the remediation of the former Tonawanda Coke site.

The TCWG will be led by the Town of Tonawanda. DEC solicited interested groups and/or individuals to participate on the TCWG and is evaluating letters of interest submitted and will make recommendations to the Town.

The full press release announcing the creation of the TCWG may be read here: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYS/DEC/bulletins/29c1c71>.

## Work Completed to Date

Immediately upon TCC's closure in 2018, DEC and federal partners secured the site and conducted emergency activities to stabilize the site and its contents. The site was turned over to RITC following the bankruptcy sale in 2019. RITC continues around-the-clock security of the site and remote site monitoring. On-site staff manage surface water, treat stormwater accumulating in process areas, and sample surface water and sewer discharges.

Additional work on the site includes:

- Coal and coke inventories left on-site from TCC's operations are being removed for reuse elsewhere;
- Asbestos materials abatement and proper off-site disposal from the BCP and SSF sites is ongoing;
- Interim remedial measures on the BCP site to manage wastes and materials left by TCC and to improve stormwater management systems; and
- Hazardous and non-hazardous wastes have been properly characterized and sent off-site for proper disposal.

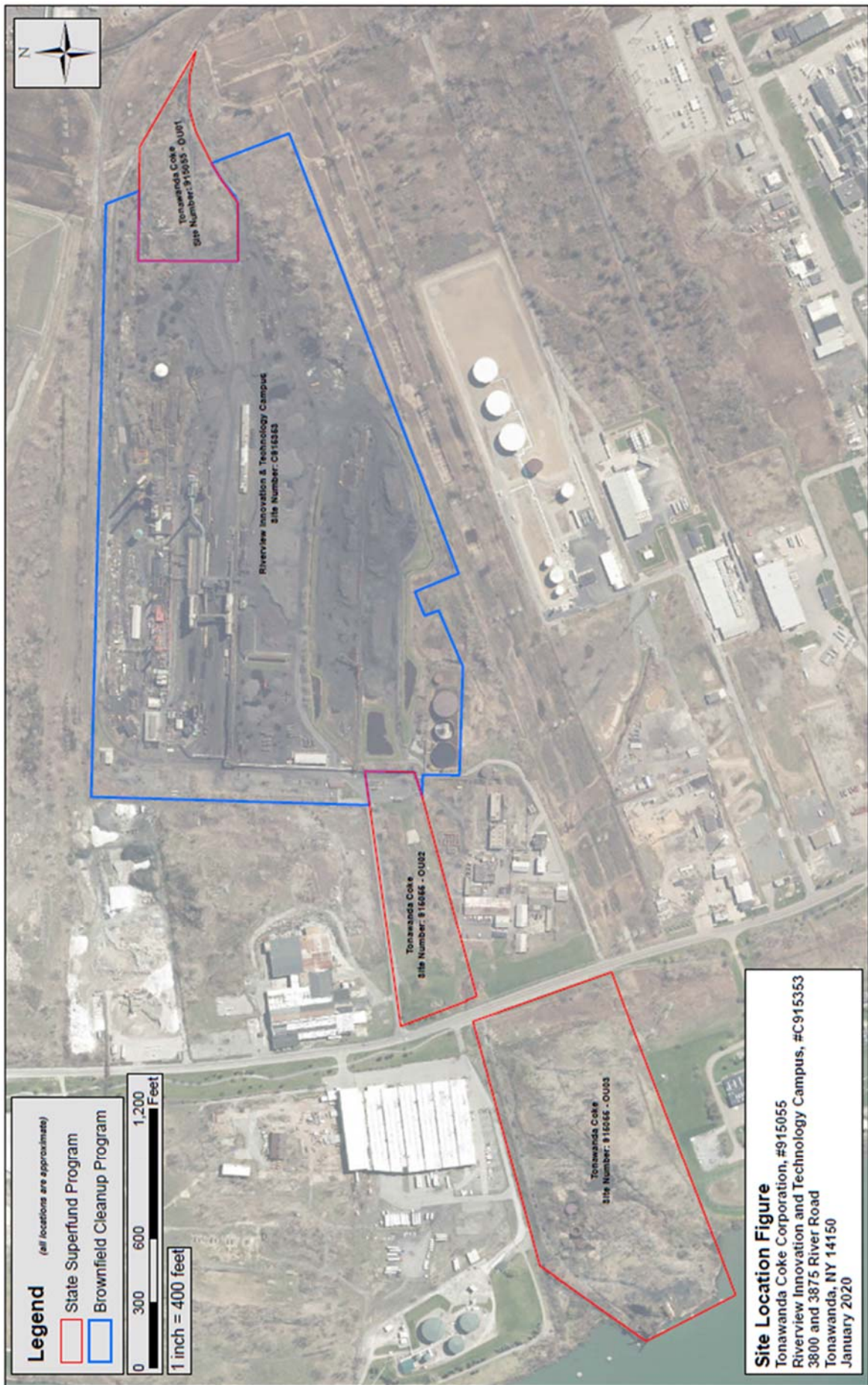


*Coal and coke inventories being removed for reuse elsewhere. (RITC photo)*

A licensed surveyor created a topographical map for the property to provide a baseline for site-monitoring activities. Baseline air quality and weather data are also being collected and will supplement RITC's Community Air Monitoring Plan.

Additional site details, including environmental and health assessment summaries, are available on DEC's Environmental Site Remediation Database (by entering the site ID, C915353 (BCP site) or 915055 (SSF site) at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/xtapps/derextern/index.cfm?pageid=3>.

RITC/Honeywell International maintain an independent website about the BCP/SSF cleanup. Housed there are various public documents associated with the ongoing projects. This website is not updated or maintained by DEC but can be accessed at: <http://www.riverviewtechcampus.com/>.



**Legend** (all locations are approximate)

State Superfund Program

Brownfield Cleanup Program



1 inch = 400 feet

**Site Location Figure**  
 Tonawanda Coke Corporation, #915055  
 Riverview Innovation and Technology Campus, #C915353  
 3800 and 3875 River Road  
 Tonawanda, NY 14150  
 January 2020

## WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION



Project documents are available at these locations to help the public stay informed.

Document Repositories:  
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Central Library  
One Lafayette Square  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library – Kenmore Branch  
160 Delaware Road  
Kenmore, NY 14217

*\*\* Note: Repositories are temporarily unavailable due to COVID-19. If you cannot access the online repository, contact the DEC project manager listed for assistance.*

NYSDEC Region 9 Office  
270 Michigan Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
(716) 851-7220  
Contact: Benjamin McPherson  
(Please call for an appointment)

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<https://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/derexternal/haz/details.cfm?pageid=3&progno=C915353>

For more information about the State Superfund, visit:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8439.html)

## SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED



Have site information such as this fact sheet sent right to your email inbox. NYSDEC invites you to sign up for one or more email listservs at: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html)

As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information/ announcements for all contaminated sites in the counties you select. If you already have signed up for the listserv for the county in which the site is located, you need do nothing.

If the listserv is not an option, call or write to the DER project manager identified in this newsletter and indicate that you need to receive fact sheets through the U.S. Postal Service. Include the site name in your request. The option to receive paper is available to individuals only. Groups, organizations, businesses, and government entities are assumed to have email access.