

# Mohawk Tannery Superfund Site

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE 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.

## SITE DESCRIPTION:

The former Mohawk Tannery, located at Fairmount Street and Warsaw Avenue, operated from 1924 to 1984. During its 60 years of operations, the Mohawk Tannery, also known as Granite State Leathers, produced sludge and acidic residues from the tanning process, much of which was disposed of on site. The privately owned property has been vacant since 2006, and has been severely impacted over the years by vandalism and fire.

## CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN:

In an effort to make the former tannery property safer for the community, the City hired a licensed abatement contractor to remove and dispose of the asbestos containing materials in the buildings to be demolished. The removal and disposal was done in April 2012, took approximately three weeks, and it was performed in accordance with all the applicable regulations, thus preventing the release of asbestos fiber into the air, and ensuring a safe work area.

Subsequently, in May 2012, the buildings were demolished and the site was cleared by a demolition contractor hired by the City of Nashua. It took approximately 2 weeks and the demolition materials were transported to the Four Hills Landfill for final disposal.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have begun the investigation of the undeveloped, 15 acre southern parcel of the site. The objective of this investigation is to collect sufficient soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment samples to determine what portion of the southern parcel, if not all, has been unaffected by historical operations from the Tannery. The areas determined to be not contaminated by the Tannery will be proposed for removal from EPA's National Priorities List (NPL). This may allow the DES, EPA and the City to focus efforts on the remaining contaminated areas in order

to eventually clean up and bring the site back into productive reuse.

## WHAT TO EXPECT:

During the month of October and part of November 2012, the contractor hired by DES and EPA to investigate the southern parcel, Sanborn Head and Associates, Inc., will be collecting soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater samples from the site. Sanborn Head personnel and DES and/or EPA officials will be wearing standard health and safety gear such as hard hats, safety glasses, respirators, coveralls and gloves, and monitoring equipment. All of this is to ensure the safety of the field workers which may come in direct contact with potential contaminants on-site, such as metals, asbestos, and volatile organic compounds.

Several vehicles may be observed entering and exiting the site premises, during the day. The vehicles will be transporting field personnel, health and safety equipment, and the collected samples. Vehicles will be identified either as Sanborn Head, DES or EPA property. No major noises are to be expected except the occasional hammering of stainless steel rods into the ground with hand-held metal tools. The entire sampling effort is expected to last approximately four to six weeks.

## KEY CONTACTS:

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