

La Crosse Xcel Trail

PUB-RR-774

September, 2007

La Crosse Xcel Trail (former manufactured gas plant)

La Crosse, WI
La Crosse County

.75 acres

Location: On the south bank of the La Crosse River at 200 Grove Street

A former manufactured gas plant, this site now offers safe and convenient public access to a park, state bike trail and the La Crosse River, and includes handicapped accessibility.

History

Before the advent of natural gas as the source of energy for the city's needs, this site served as a manufactured gas plant providing gas for lighting, heating and cooking oil. The purification process produced waste products which were often left on site, causing significant soil and groundwater contamination.

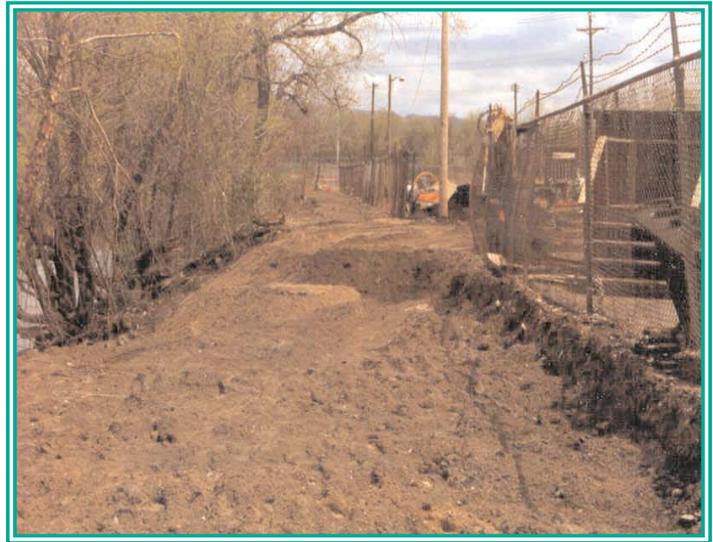
Investigation and Cleanup

Purifier box waste, which was a by-product created during the manufactured gas process, contributed to the presence of lead and cyanide in the soil. Out of concern for exposure issues to the public, along with the potential for additional groundwater contamination, Xcel Energy (formerly NSP) removed more than

10,500 tons of lead- and cyanide-contaminated soil from the western portion of the site. The soil was properly disposed of in the La Crosse County landfill. At least four feet of clean soil was placed over most of this portion of the property so the area would no longer pose any threat to the public or the environment. Because the banks of the river suffered from soil erosion for decades, the riverbank was also stabilized.

Redevelopment

The site was designated by the city to become a park and an extension of the public bike trail, with access to the La Crosse River. The reconstruction of the area included handicapped accessibility and decorative lighting.



The La Crosse trail during construction. The area was part of a manufactured gas plant site that had operated adjacent to the La Crosse River for many years (photo courtesy of DNR West Central Regional staff).



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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The hiking/biking trail after completion. The La Crosse River is in the background (photo courtesy of DNR West Central Regional staff).

The project was made possible through a cooperative effort between the city of La Crosse (La Crosse Redevelopment Authority), Xcel Energy and the WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

With project oversight by the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program, site investigation and cleanup of the soil and groundwater contamination on the property was funded primarily by Xcel Energy.

Also, the city was able to better define the extent of the groundwater contamination plume through the surrounding area by utilizing a Sustainable Urban Development Zone (SUDZ) Grant from the RR Program.

Contacts

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