



The RACER Trust: Empowering America's Auto Communities



Ypsilanti Township, MI RACER Site 11991

Willow Run Powertrain Plant
2930 Ecorse Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Site Description

One of the largest manufacturing facilities of its time when it was built in 1941 to build B-24 bombers for World War II, the Willow Run facility encompasses 311.68 acres and is located directly next to the Willow Run Airport.

This property originally was developed by Ford Motor Company to manufacture B-24 bombers during World War II. After the war, the plant was purchased by Kaiser-Frazer to produce automobiles. During the Korean War, Kaiser-Frazer produced C-119 and C-123 planes, before ceasing operations in 1953.

General Motors purchased the property in late 1953 for the manufacture of automobile transmissions. Operational activities at the plant included machining, cleaning and painting of metal parts and products, as well as transmission assembly. GM stopped production at the property in 2010.

Decommissioning and demolition of the site buildings began in 2013 and was completed in 2015. The only buildings to remain on the property are structures associated with ongoing groundwater treatment and the southeast corner of the original plant that will become the home of the National Museum of Aviation and Technology at Historic Willow Run.

Cleanup activities are performed by the RACER Trust, with the approval and oversight of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The Settlement Agreement that established the RACER Trust set aside \$36 million for cleanup work at this property.

Continued





Environmental History

In the 1980s, General Motors became aware of oil accumulating under portions of the building. Subsequently, environmental investigations and remediation work began, including the installation of soil borings, monitoring wells and recovery systems around the property. Cleanup activities are being completed under Part 201 of the Michigan Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) and the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) under the oversight of MDEQ.

Recovery systems were installed in the 1980s and 1990s to capture the light non-aqueous liquid (LNAPL), or oil-like liquids, that had accumulated under approximately a quarter of the main facility building. In 2002, the recovery systems were assessed and needed repairs were made to various recovery wells. Many were decommissioned and removed in subsequent years. The remaining LNAPL recovery systems were decommissioned prior to demolition of the plant in 2013. LNAPL continues to be collected from the subsurface through a subsurface storm water transmission piping system.

In 2011, a review was conducted of the completed investigation and cleanup activities, which lead to additional investigations beginning in 2012. The investigations included soil, groundwater, LNAPL, and soil vapor, with a focus on completing the investigation and designing final, long term remedial solutions.

Next Steps

Additional investigation, reporting, and interim remedial activities will continue to be conducted voluntarily under the oversight of MDEQ. With the demolition of the site buildings completed, long term groundwater and storm water solutions are currently being designed. When designs are completed and approved by MDEQ, the solutions will be implemented. It is expected that as a part of a final remedy LNAPL will be contained, and a restrictive covenant will be recorded prohibiting residential use at the property, requiring proper management of contaminated soil, prohibiting use of groundwater for potable purposes, requiring assessment of potential vapor intrusion, and requiring certain covers be retained as a part of managing infiltration. RACER will continually evaluate the on-going remedial activities and, when necessary, adjust methods and/or strategies with the goal of obtaining a corrective action complete with controls determination from MDEQ.

More detailed information on the site can be viewed at the RACER website at www.racertrust.org.

For More Information

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