



The RACER Trust: Empowering America's Auto Communities

Massena, NY

RACER Site ID 12000

Massena Powertrain Plant
56 Chevrolet Road
Massena, NY 13662

Updated May 2024

Site Description

The Massena Powertrain Plant, situated on 217 acres in Upstate New York, was an industrial and manufacturing site from the late 1950s until GM ended operations in May 2009. During its die casting process, GM used hydraulic fluids containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Phenols and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) also have been detected in groundwater and soil on the property.

The site is bordered by the St. Lawrence River to the north, the St. Regis Mohawk Nation to the east, the Raquette River to the south, and property owned by Alcoa and CSX to the west.

In March 2011, RACER Trust was created to clean up contamination found on the site and position the property for redevelopment. Cleanup activities are performed by RACER Trust in cooperation with and under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT). The Settlement Agreement that established the RACER Trust set aside nearly \$121 million for cleanup work and long-term operations, maintenance and monitoring.

Environmental History

There are several discrete areas of environmental concern at the site — a 12-acre Industrial Landfill, the North Disposal Area, the East Disposal Area, four industrial lagoons, the St. Lawrence River, the Raquette River, on- and off-site soils, and sediments. Several of these areas, as described further below, have been investigated and addressed. PCBs are the primary contaminant of concern in soil beneath the site. PCBs and volatile organic compounds also have been detected — albeit infrequently and at relatively low concentrations — in the groundwater beneath the site. Public water supply systems have not been impacted.

The site was added to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1984. EPA and GM entered into a voluntary agreement in 1985, whereby GM agreed to conduct an investigation into the nature and extent of contamination at the site.

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Since the signing of this agreement, GM performed extensive studies of environmental conditions on the property.

The first remedial activity at the site was performed by GM in 1987. With EPA's oversight, GM placed a cap on the Industrial Landfill to prevent the surface migration of contaminants from the landfill.



River Sediments, Lagoons, Soils and Groundwater

In December 1990, EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) that addressed river sediments, on-site lagoons, soils and groundwater. The decision called for dredging and excavation of contaminated materials, followed by on-site treatment and disposal of residual contamination and groundwater extraction and treatment.

In March 1992, EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to GM requiring it to undertake the design and implementation of the activities described in the ROD.

In 1994, GM requested that EPA re-evaluate the amount of treatment required for the North Disposal Area, river sediments, lagoons and soils. As a result, in July 1995, EPA released a proposed plan modifying the treatment threshold for excavated soils and sediments. This plan was later withdrawn due to public opposition. EPA issued a revised Proposed Plan in September 1998 to allow for off-site disposal rather than treatment of the materials. This proposal received broad support and was formalized in a ROD amendment in March 1999.

In 1995, GM completed dredging of St. Lawrence River sediments and placed a multi-layer cap on areas that did not meet cleanup targets following dredging. Dredged sediments were shipped by rail to an off-site hazardous waste disposal facility.

Other activities performed from 2000 to 2007 by GM include the partial remediation of two inactive lagoons (with excavated materials shipped to an off-site disposal facility); dredging and excavation of soils and sediments from the Raquette River; removal of contaminated soils near the Industrial Landfill; and dredging and excavation of soils in Turtle Cove and on two adjacent off-site properties. (Work on a third off-site property cannot be performed until access is granted by the property owners.)

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Industrial Landfill and East Disposal Area

In 1992, EPA issued a second ROD calling for excavation and off-site disposal of highly contaminated material from the East Disposal Area, followed by on-site treatment and disposal of residual contamination, capping the Industrial Landfill and less-contaminated material in the East Disposal Area, and groundwater containment. EPA issued a second Unilateral Administrative Order to GM in August 1992 requiring it to undertake the design and implementation of the work.

EPA's Evaluation of its Remedies

EPA issued Five-Year Review reports in July 2005, July 2010 and July 2015. Each concluded that the cleanup at the site protects human health and the environment in the short-term. The five-year reviews determined that the remedies will be fully protective once remaining remedial measures called for in the RODs are implemented.

Next Steps

RACER is committed to implementing EPA's selected cleanup for the site as effectively, thoroughly, safely and expeditiously as possible.

In 2011, RACER demolished the former manufacturing building and water tower; clean building materials were recycled and contaminated materials were disposed of in permitted landfills. In 2012, RACER remediated the manufacturing building floor slab, sub-surface tunnels, oily waste lines and impacted soils beneath the building. The remediation included backfilling to grade with processed clean floor slab concrete and imported backfill. This phase of work was completed in March 2013. Throughout 2013, RACER focused on remediating the North Disposal and Active and Inactive Lagoon areas. This work involved the excavation of heavily contaminated areas beneath the lagoons and in the vicinity of the aeration basin. This phase also included the demolition of the wastewater treatment building, the clarifiers and pump-house and butler building. This phase of work was completed in early 2014. Also in 2014, the East Disposal Area and East Disposal Infield Areas were both remediated. In 2015/16 the Industrial Landfill setback excavation and capping of the Industrial Landfill and East Disposal Area were completed. In 2017 the groundwater extraction system north of the capped landfill was installed. In addition, the residual material in the base of the 10-million gallon lagoon and associated inlet structure was removed and disposed of at an off-site permitted landfill. Throughout 2017 also, portions of the site meeting cleanup goals were graded with clean soil to promote stormwater drainage. In 2018 and early 2019 remaining select portions of the site meeting cleanup standards will be covered with clean soil to promote stormwater drainage, the 10-million gallon lagoon remediation and restoration will be completed, the groundwater treatment system will be installed and outstanding off-site soil remediation tasks, necessary to meet the selected remedy requirements, will be addressed.

Information on the site and past environmental tests can be viewed at the RACER website at www.racertrust.org or on the Environmental Protection Agency's website at www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/npl/gmmassena.

Information repositories have been established where final project-related documents are available for public review:

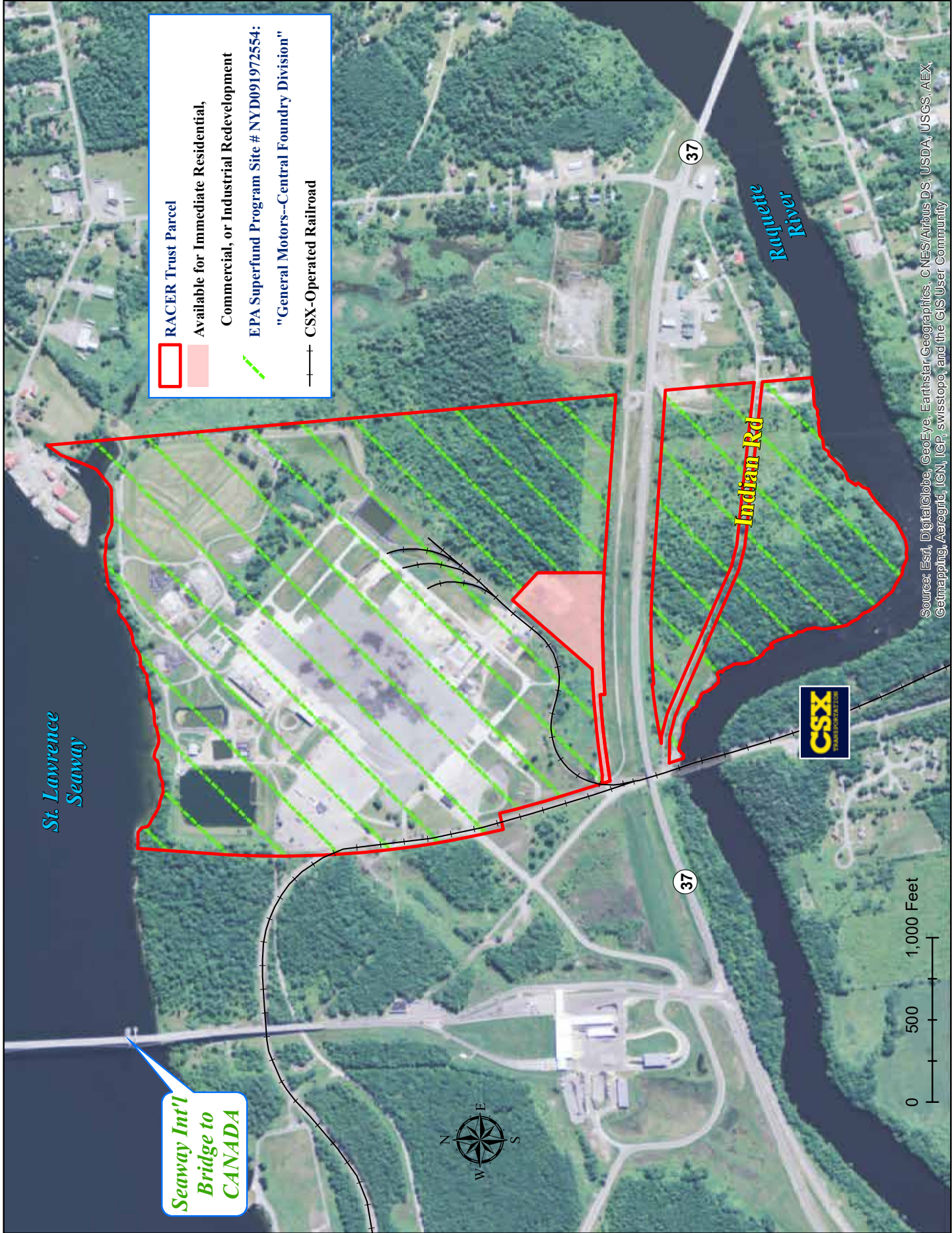
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe • Community Building • Akwesasne, NY 13655

Massena Public Library • 41 Glen Street • Massena, NY 13662

EPA Region 2 Superfund Records Center • 290 Broadway, 18th Floor • New York, NY 10007-1866

For More Information

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RACER Trust Parcel
 Available for Immediate Residential,
 Commercial, or Industrial Redevelopment
 EPA Superfund Program Site # NYD091972554:
 "General Motors--Central Foundry Division"
 CSX-Operated Railroad

*St. Lawrence
Seaway*

Indian Rd

*Raquette
River*

*Seaway Int'l
Bridge to
CANADA*



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aergrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community