

Western New York Love Canals of Today

In the early 1950's at **Bethlehem Steel** the government exposed thousands of unknowing civilians to dangerous levels of radiation as they secretly worked to refine techniques for milling uranium to support atomic weapons for the Cold War. In 2000 The Federal Government finally admitted that it had exposed these "Cold War Warriors" to dangerous radiation. It promised to make good by compensating those workers who later developed cancer because of the exposure via the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). Thousands of claims have been filed locally and while some have received a lump sum of \$150,000 benefit, many others have been denied or their claims have yet to be processed. Touted as "claimant-friendly" at the onset, the process of judging claims has become anything but and remains to this day a bureaucratic nightmare.

CWM Chemical Services, Inc. was nominated as a Love Canal of Today because it is amassing one of the largest stockpiles of chemical waste in the United States at its landfill, only 2 miles from the Niagara River and 3 miles from Lake Ontario. CWM's facility has contaminated creeks that run through residences and parks important to the community, local tribes, and the Great Lakes which hold 95% of the U.S. fresh surface water supply. Residents For Responsible Government, Inc. ("RRG") is opposing the CWM application for more hazardous waste landfill capacity. RRG also promotes safer, permanent alternatives to the burial of toxic waste to achieve the goal best articulated by Lois Gibbs: "Not in Anyone's Backyard."

FMC is a pesticide manufacturing plant located in the center of the small community of Middleport NY. This site was used as a production and research facility of pesticides for residential, commercial and military use. For decades, FMC disposed of its waste in open trenches on their property. The entire town has been impacted by air, surface water runoff and groundwater contamination. The groundwater testing has shown dozens of chemicals present like ethylene chloride, TCE, benzene, ammonia, and many more. The same contaminants found in the groundwater are also present in the local creek and storm sewers and are being found in very high levels several miles down stream. Widespread arsenic contamination is prevalent in area soils well in excess of regulatory limits. In 1946 FMC sold a large parcel of land where their original manufacturing facility sat, to the local school district. The property sits adjacent to the current FMC facility, down hill and down wind and was purchased for \$1 with the stipulation that FMC was allowed to contaminate the property "in perpetuity". Only patchwork interim remediation of the school and surrounding properties has been completed since the early 1990's. In March 2008, FMC applied to the DEC/EPA for authorization to have an above ground CAMU landfill on their site for permanent storage of soils/wastes resulting from the ongoing temporary cleanups. This CAMU will be situated 100 feet from the school yard fence. The prevailing winds blow toward the school yard and the CAMU will be at a higher elevation than the school.

The **West Valley nuclear site** is in the hamlet of West Valley, Town of Ashford in Cattaraugus County, 30 miles southeast of Buffalo. The site holds the remains of this nation's first and so far only attempt to commercially reprocess spent nuclear fuel for the purpose of recovering uranium and plutonium. The wastes on site are among the most complex mix of nuclear and hazardous wastes in the nation. The site is a study in the way the US manages, or perhaps more correctly, mismanages nuclear wastes and fails to cleanup or worse, further contaminates the land and water and jeopardizes life. The site has the distinction of having the longest unresolved EIS in US history. The Coalition has DOE in Court alleging DOE is in violation of NEPA, yet DOE continues to follow an illegitimate process for decontaminating and decommissioning the site. DOE is expected to release yet another draft EIS at the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009 at which time the public will be encouraged, by the Coalition, to comment on DOE's preferred alternative for the site, an alternative that fails to commit to a full cleanup.