

Dept. of Natural Resources: DNR receives first funds from federal bipartisan infrastructure law

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced the department received \$1,397,697 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue addressing contamination at an extensive Superfund site.

The funding is the first the DNR has received as part of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The DNR will use the funds to continue conducting cleanup work at the former Penta Wood Products Superfund site in Burnett County, near Siren, Wisconsin.

“Wisconsin is grateful for this significant award of federal infrastructure funding,” said Gov. Tony Evers. “This funding will help the DNR clean up our state’s rural environment and protect the health of nearby residents.”

The Penta Wood Products Site is a former wood treating facility located on an approximately 82-acre parcel of rural property. Operating from 1953 to 1992, the facility used a chemical called pentachlorophenol, or PCP, to treat wood posts and telephone poles by dipping them in an open tank.

In the late 1980s, the DNR investigated areas of the Penta Wood Products property where chemical spills had reportedly occurred. The investigations found that soil and groundwater at the facility was contaminated with PCP and other chemicals. Potential risks to human health and the environment via soil, sediment, and surface water exposures were also identified.

By 1992, the property had been abandoned, and in 1996, the EPA designated the Penta Wood Products property a federal Superfund site. Since then, cleanup efforts by both the EPA and DNR have been ongoing.

“Additional work is needed to restore the environment. Since the entities responsible for the contamination no longer exist, the state and federal governments have had to step in,” said Christine Haag, Director of the DNR Remediation and Redevelopment Program. “This funding will be critical to cleaning up contaminated wetlands on neighboring properties and bringing us closer to achieving our ultimate goal, clean up and closure of this Superfund site.”

With this significant injection of federal funding, the first phase of this latest cleanup effort will be able to begin this summer with the covering of the shallow surface soil layer from the Penta Wood Products property to prevent contact with the contamination. Then during the winter of 2022-2023, the DNR will conduct work to remove contamination from the neighboring wetlands.

On Dec. 17, 2021, the [EPA announced a \\$1 billion investment from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) to initiate cleanups and clear the backlog of 49 previously unfunded Superfund sites around the country and accelerate cleanup at dozens of other sites.

This is the first funding that the DNR has received as a result of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It is also the first Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding that the EPA has awarded to any [Region 5 state \(Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and 35 Tribes\)](#).

[Learn more about the Penta Wood Products Superfund Site here.](#)