

Remedial Investigation of UMore Park East, Dakota County, MN June 2012

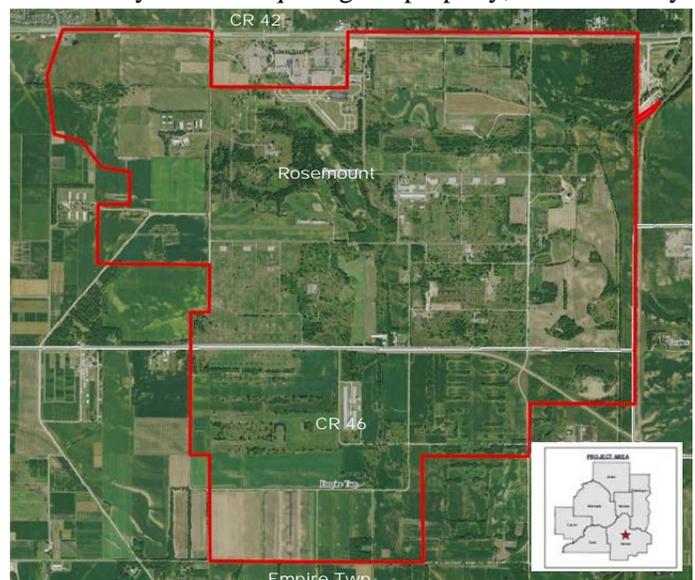
Introduction

The University of Minnesota recently completed a remedial investigation (RI) of the eastern portion of the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park in Dakota County, Minnesota. The purpose of the RI was to collect information needed to identify and assess potential risks to human health and the environment associated with historical uses of the property so that cleanup alternatives can be developed in the future to address any unacceptable risks.

Site Background and Location

In 1942 and 1943, the U.S. War Department acquired about 12,000 acres of farmland in Dakota County for the construction of the Gopher Ordnance Works (GOW), a facility that manufactured smokeless gunpowder and related products. Production began in approximately November 1944 and ceased in October 1945. After the war, the federal government declared GOW to be surplus property, demolished most of the buildings, and transferred approximately 8,000 acres and the remaining GOW buildings and infrastructure to the University. Since acquiring the property, the University has used it for agricultural and other research purposes and has also leased some parcels to agricultural and commercial tenants. The University has posted signs on segments of the UMore Park property that are not open to the public due to the presence of potential physical hazardous and identified substances in some areas. The public should contact the University for access to the property (see contact below).

The RI was conducted on the eastern approximately 3,500 acres of UMore Park (see figure). The western portion of UMore Park consists of the UMore Mining Area, which has been the subject of a comprehensive environmental study, and is proposed for sand and gravel extraction, and subsequently, residential and commercial redevelopment. South of UMore Park is the 2,822-acre Vermillion Highlands: A Research, Recreation and Wildlife Management Area that is jointly managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the University for outdoor recreation, wildlife management and agricultural research.



UMore Park East

The Remedial Investigation

A number of studies have previously been completed at UMore Park, which have identified the presence of historical releases of hazardous substances* on limited areas of the property. The University and state and local regulators continue to seek a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental condition of the property, including any impacts associated with the construction, operation and demolition of the former GOW, and subsequent University research and tenant activities. Through a competitive procurement process, the University selected Barr Engineering Company to conduct the RI. The completed RI is a technical study that characterized the environmental quality of soil and groundwater throughout the UMore Park East study area.

*These substances include metals, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls, and petroleum. Areas on which these substances have been identified and other areas where historical releases of these substances may have occurred were the subject of the investigation. The limited current use of the property ensures that potential risks or impacts to human health are minimized.

The RI work plan was prepared to be consistent with applicable state and federal Superfund guidelines, and was approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Superfund Program (MPCA), the lead regulatory agency for the site.

Barr Engineering used a number of investigative techniques including soil borings, test pit excavations, groundwater monitoring wells, and geophysical surveys to complete the study. Over 590 soil and groundwater samples were submitted for laboratory analysis as part of the study. The findings of the RI are documented in the Remedial Investigation Report, which is available for public review. The RI findings will be used to determine the future additional investigations and response actions that are necessary to protect public health and the environment and inform future use of the property. All future investigation and cleanup activities will be conducted with MPCA oversight.

Key Remedial Investigation Findings

- Soil and groundwater testing identified releases of hazardous substances from both GOW and post-GOW operations. These releases do not appear to be at levels that will require immediate action, based upon current land uses.
- The areas with the greatest environmental impacts appear to be consistent with the historical operations of the GOW. These areas include the power plant, the nitric acid plant, the coal ash pond, the GOW wastewater treatment plant and the shops area where materials were fabricated for construction of the GOW and the smokeless gunpowder production lines.
- The results provide sufficient detail to identify areas that will require additional investigation to fully characterize the extent and magnitude of the releases.
- Once fully characterized, response action plans can be developed which are reasonable and appropriate relative to proposed land uses.
- Based upon the current investigation there do not appear to be conditions present which, after completion of further investigation and cleanup, would prevent future redevelopment consistent with current land use planning by the University and local units of government.

Community Involvement Opportunities

The University is committed to working cooperatively with Dakota County, the City of Rosemount, Empire Township, and the general public to share information. The Remedial Investigation Report, a Community Involvement Plan and further information about the property is available for review at www.umorepark.umn.edu as well at the Information Repository established for the property at the UMore Park Administration Building, 1605 160th Street W, Rosemount, MN between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The MPCA and the University will hold a public information meeting on June 28, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Rosemount Community Center, 13885 South Robert Trail (Hwy. 3), Rosemount, MN, to present the findings of the RI and respond to questions from the public regarding the Remedial Investigation Report.

More Information

Please contact Tim Busse, Director of Communications, University Services, University of Minnesota at 612-624-2863 or busse006@umn.edu

For general information about the UMore Park property and access, contact Steven Lott, UMore Development LLC at 651-423-2562 or lottx020@umn.edu

You may also contact Gary Krueger of the MPCA Remediation Division at 651-757-2509 or gary.krueger@state.mn.us