

Remedial Investigation of UMore Park/Former Gopher Ordnance Works, Dakota County, MN

April 2016

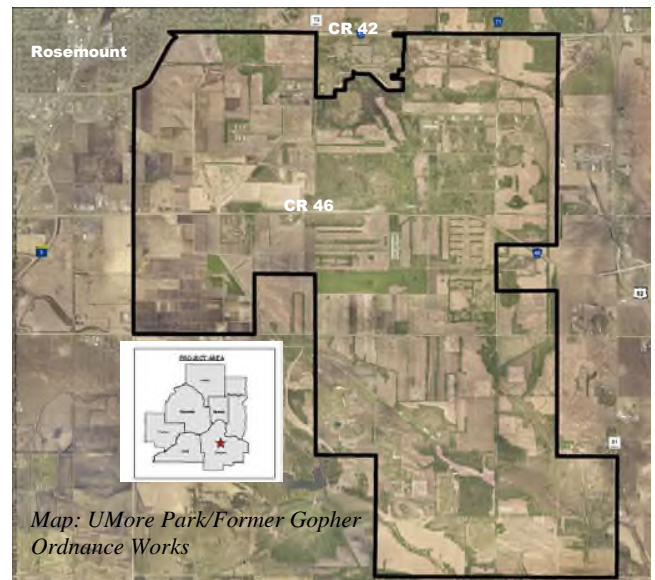
Introduction

The University of Minnesota has prepared this Fact Sheet to provide an overview to the local and University communities of the University's planned Remedial Investigation (RI) of the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park/Former Gopher Ordnance Works in Dakota County, Minnesota. The purpose of the RI is to collect information needed to identify and assess potential risks to human health and the environment associated with historical uses of the property, which will be used to identify alternatives to address potential unacceptable chemical risks that may be present.

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 UMore Mining Area is located in the western portion of UMore Park, and since 2013, has been used for sand and gravel extraction.



Beginning in 2006, the southern 2,822 acres of the property have been used as Vermillion Highlands: A Research, Recreation and Wildlife Management Area that is jointly managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the University for recreation, wildlife management and agricultural research.

The Remedial Investigation

The University and state and local regulators are seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental condition of the property, including impacts associated with the construction, operation and demolition of the former GOW, and subsequent University research and tenant activities. A number of environmental studies have previously been completed, which have identified the presence of historical releases of constituents of concern (COCs) including heavy metals (lead, arsenic and mercury), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, semi-volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls and petroleum products in soil at limited areas of the property. Most recently, in 2011-2012, the University completed a Remedial Investigation of UMore East, which comprises the eastern two-thirds of UMore Park.

The RI will investigate ten (10) areas of known or potential releases identified through prior environmental studies. These areas were selected based upon comments by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to past studies and

recommendations by the Minnesota Department of Health in its draft Public Health Assessment of the Former Gopher Ordnance Works, Dakota County, Minnesota (September 2014).

Through a competitive procurement process, the University selected Barr Engineering Company to conduct the RI. A RI is a technical study that characterizes the environmental quality of soil, groundwater and/or other environmental media. It consists of a formal process established under state and federal rules and is intended to systematically identify areas that will require risk evaluation, and suitable remedial actions as necessary. Barr will use a number of investigative techniques including soil borings, test pit excavations and groundwater monitoring points, and will collect and submit soil, groundwater and soil vapor samples for laboratory analysis. The RI field work is scheduled to begin in May 2016.

The MPCA serves as the lead regulatory agency for the site, and will review and approve the RI Work Plan and supporting documents. The University is also committed to working cooperatively with Dakota County, the city of Rosemount, Empire Township, and the general public to share information as the RI proceeds.

The findings of the RI, and past environmental studies at the property, will be documented in a Final Remedial Investigation Report, which will be made available for public review in late 2016. This RI is the final step in the investigation phase for this site. The RI findings will then be used to identify and assess potential response action alternatives to address the identified releases, consistent with the current and planned use of the property.

Community Involvement Opportunities

The RI Work Plan, a Community Involvement Plan, a Fact Sheet 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 Lease Office, 15325 Babcock Ave, Rosemount, MN 55068. Please contact Mike Waldemar at 651-423-1118 to make arrangements to view documents in the Repository.

The University will hold a public meeting on April 26, 2016 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 Remedial Investigation Work Plan and offer the public an opportunity to provide comments and questions. The MPCA will also accept written public comments to the RI Work Plan and supporting documents from April 11, 2016 to May 12, 2016. Written comments may be provided to the MPCA at the public meeting or by mail or hand delivery to:

Mr. Gary Krueger
Remediation Division
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road N
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

More Information

Please contact Tim Busse, Director of Communications, University Services, University of Minnesota
Telephone: 612-624-2863
Email: busse006@umn.edu
You may also contact Gary Krueger of the MPCA Remediation Division at 651-757-2509.