



Soil Removal Begins at Belanger Park

River Rouge, Michigan

March 2024

For more information

If you have questions, please contact:

Deanne Belcher

City of River Rouge Liaison
313-297-0001, ext. 2
dbelcher@cityofriverrouge.org

Brian Kelly

EPA On-Scene Coordinator
734-740-9019
Kelly.Brian@epa.gov

Kirstin Safakas

EPA Community Liaison
312-919-4621
Safakas.Kirstin@epa.gov

Steven Moorhead

EGLE Project Manager
586-419-9361
MoorheadS@michigan.gov

Michigan Department of Health and Human Service's Environmental Health Hotline

517-648-6942

Learn more

To learn more about the cleanup, please visit EPA's Belanger Park website by using a smartphone or tablet's camera scan function to follow this QR code, or visit the link below it:



<https://response.epa.gov/Belanger>



Figure 1 shows a map of the construction area in which EPA will be working.

Last fall, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, or EGLE, completed soil sampling at Belanger Park within the city of River Rouge, Michigan. Results from this sampling event showed elevated levels of lead and cadmium above EPA's contact criteria in certain grassy areas of the park, which were then closed off by the city with temporary fencing until a cleanup could take place.

Harsh Michigan winters typically leave parts of the ground frozen until springtime, making in-situ, or in-ground, construction projects difficult. As temperatures are now beginning to warm, EPA plans on starting its remediation of the park this April. At that time, you may begin to see equipment being staged within the construction area (see map above) of the park, which will remain closed until remediation is complete as well as for some time afterward to reestablish healthy grass growth. This remediation will consist primarily of the excavation and removal of contaminated soil at depths of anywhere between 12" and 24", which will then be backfilled with clean soil and replanted with vegetation. Soil removed from the site will be sent to a regulated waste facility for proper disposal.

Site work is expected to continue for two months, and although access to the park (picnic shelter, etc.) will remain restricted, the boat launch and fishing pier will be open for public use. When recreating in these areas, please obey all posted signage surrounding the construction area and watch for increased truck traffic until further notice.

Lead and cadmium

Lead and cadmium are two naturally-occurring heavy metals that can be found in soil especially surrounding urban areas. Some metals do not breakdown over time, so materials deposited in the past can still be a problem today with the potential to impact human health—especially the health of children. You can reduce your family’s risk of exposure by:

- Washing hands and faces after encountering dirt and soil.
- Not allowing children to chew or “mouth” surfaces of items, especially things that may have touched the ground.
- Using a doormat to wipe feet before entering a home.
- Cleaning the house regularly to remove dust and tracked-in dirt.
- Maintaining proper pet hygiene for pets, such as dogs, that spend time outdoors.
- Avoiding smoking in enclosed spaces (such as homes or cars) to limit people’s exposure to smoke, as cadmium is found in cigarettes.

Outreach opportunities

EPA’s Great Lakes office recently welcomed a new Division into the Region, referred to as the Environmental Justice Community Health and Environmental Review, or EJCHER, Division. Full-time staff in this Division were hired to dedicate their time to advancing environmental justice, or EJ, initiatives, which include hands-on engagement and education with communities facing environmental contamination. These staff members are in the beginning stages of planning outreach activities in the downriver area, which may coordinate with the cleanup of Belanger Park. More information on these activities will be provided as efforts progress.



Soil Removal Begins at Belanger Park