

Amesbury Environmental Remediation

Former Amesbury MGP

Background

In the 1800s and early 1900s, numerous mills and industrial facilities operated by the Powwow River in Amesbury, in an area called the “Lower Mill Yard.” Among them was the former Amesbury Manufactured Gas Plant (“MGP”) located on 2.4 acres at the end of Water Street. The MGP operated from about 1899 to 1924, using coal and oil to manufacture gas. After MGP operations ceased, the City of Amesbury used portions of the area as a municipal landfill until 1952, followed by a local, private company that used it as an industrial landfill until the early 1960s. After landfilling operations concluded, part of the area was used for parking and the remainder was left as undeveloped, wooded wetland.

In 2004, National Grid started evaluating portions of the site for potential contamination from MGP operations, and then conducted a clean-up of the contaminants in the ground under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan. National Grid completed the permitted and approved clean-up for the site in 2017. Today, the area is a revitalized wetland located between the Amesbury Riverwalk and the Powwow River.

Continued Commitment to Monitoring

Since 2017, National Grid has continued to closely monitor the site and surrounding areas. National Grid has completed investigation activities to identify contamination beyond the original MGP site boundary, including within the Powwow River. The area of interest includes locations south of the initial Water Street location extending towards Macy Street along the Powwow River. Investigations confirmed that contaminants remain in wetland, mudflat, and river sediments, primarily in deeper layers. Surface water is unaffected. Future cleanup plans will focus on removing the potential for people and wildlife to come into contact with contaminated sediments.

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Remediation Plan / Next Steps

National Grid is also in the process of determining and prioritizing an appropriate remedy plan. The results of this remedy evaluation will be included in a report (Phase III Report) that is expected to be submitted to MassDEP in Winter 2026.

National Grid is reaching out to property owners in this area and has initiated several aspects of the complex permitting that will be required for the Project. The specific timeframe for the cleanup activities is under development and will depend on coordinating property access, completing the evaluation of remedial action alternatives, and permitting the selected remedial action.



Lower Mill Yard Area - Circa Early 1900s



Aerial View of Site – June 2013

Health and Safety

Health and safety are National Grid's top priorities as we work to remediate the site and surrounding areas. We are carefully planning this project in conjunction with multiple local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, and will closely monitor the Site when we're ready to perform the work to ensure clean-up is done safely.



Past remediation of MGP Site wetlands near Powwow River off Oakland/Water Streets now complete

The Manufactured Gas Process

The former Amesbury MGP used industrial processes to produce gas from coal and oil. The community used the gas, often referred to as "Town gas," primarily for the same purposes that we use natural gas today. MGPs were common throughout the Northeast before the construction of the region's natural gas pipelines. The gas production process often yielded by-products such as tars and oils. Some of these substances remained in the environment at former MGP sites after they ceased operations.

Community Outreach / Questions

National Grid is committed to keeping the community informed of our work on the site. For more information, please contact Kenneth Lento, National Grid at 617-791-2627 or Kenneth.Lento@nationalgrid.com