

## Ithaca Gun/Fall Creek Natural Area to Receive Containment Barrier Ithaca, NY

---

**Community Update**

**May 2021**

---

Public participation is essential to the success of EPA's community involvement program. If you have any questions, please contact:

**Mike Basile**

Community Involvement Coordinator  
Office (716) 551-4410  
Mobile (646) 369-0055  
[basile.michael@epa.gov](mailto:basile.michael@epa.gov)

**Don Graham**

On-Scene Coordinator  
(908) 420-4506  
[graham.donald@epa.gov](mailto:graham.donald@epa.gov)

For information about Ithaca Gun:  
[www.cityofithaca.org](http://www.cityofithaca.org)

**Upcoming Activities**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will install a containment barrier at the base of the cliff within the Fall Creek Natural Area located adjacent to the former Ithaca Gun Company in the City of Ithaca, Tompkins County, NY. While EPA has removed a large quantity of contaminated soil and debris from the site, it is evident that more remains. The barrier will control material that might be dislodged from the cliff face in the future. It will protect visitors to the Fall Creek Nature Area from exposure to contaminated soil. Work is scheduled to begin in May 2021. The containment barrier will limit the movement of lead and arsenic contaminated rock and soil from the base of the cliff onto the adjacent pathway used by visitors to the Fall Creek Natural Area. Before the barrier was built, lead and arsenic contaminated material within the Fall Creek Natural Area will be excavated and transported off-site for disposal. The barrier will be made of large limestone rectangular blocks weighing approximately 1,000 pounds each and will allow for erosion control to capture sediments migrating from the cliff face. Chain fencing will be installed to provide additional controls to minimize contact with contamination, and signs will be posted to inform the public of the potential hazards associated with lead and arsenic.

EPA collected and evaluated soil samples from the steep cliff face that is located along the southern portion of the Fall Creek Natural Area. The soil samples confirmed that elevated levels of lead and arsenic remain in the cliff face and continue to impact the Fall Creek Natural Area below.

**State and Local Partners**

EPA is working in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the New York State Department of Health, and the City of Ithaca. The City of Ithaca continues to post public warning signs about the lead and arsenic contaminated material within the Fall Creek Natural Area. NYSDEC has agreed to assume future responsibilities related to the contaminated cliff face that adjoins the Ithaca Gun Company facility to the Fall Creek Natural Area.

**Background**

The Ithaca Gun Company facility manufactured firearms and munitions from 1880 to 1986, resulting in lead and arsenic contamination on the facility and in areas adjoining the facility, including the Fall Creek Natural Area. In the early 2000s, EPA removed more than 6,000 tons of lead and arsenic contaminated soil from the facility above the Fall Creek Natural Area, and from the base of the cliff within the area. Following the completion of EPA's removal activities, the NYSDEC took over operations at the site working in coordination with the City of Ithaca. Continuing through 2014, State and City contractors removed lead and arsenic contaminated materials, including the demolition and removal of factory structures. In 2015, EPA removed an additional 200 tons of contaminated soil from the base of the cliff and the adjacent pathway within the Fall Creek Natural Area. In the spring of 2018, EPA placed a stone cap over the path where elevated levels of lead and arsenic were found. In April 2019, NYSDEC repaired the stone cap which was compromised by seasonal flooding and ice jams.