

# Caribou Power Plant Removal Site Caribou, ME

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

## THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND REMOVAL PROGRAM

responds to chemical, biological and radiological releases and large-scale national emergencies, including homeland security incidents. EPA conducts short term cleanups in the removal program when necessary to protect human health and the environment by either funding response actions directly or overseeing and enforcing actions conducted by potentially responsible parties.



## BACKGROUND

The 8-acre Caribou Power Plant site (the site) was used for power generation since the late 1800s, starting with the construction of the Caribou dam and former hydroelectric plant in 1889, followed by the construction of the diesel plant in 1949. The site operated through the early 2000s. The Site currently consists of the steam and diesel plants, several outbuildings, with vacant parcels to the north and south. The former Steam and Diesel Plants are equipped with multiple intake and discharge pipes that used the adjacent Aroostook River for the intake of process water (steam generation, diesel engine cooling) and for the discharge of facility drainage.

The power plant is located near mixed commercial and residential areas located to the north and west of the property. A public boat launch area is located to the north and south of the property. The Aroostook River is located to the East.

## EPA UPCOMING WORK TO BE CONDUCTED AT THE STEAM PLANT

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP) asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Removal program to conduct a site investigation. EPA collected samples from asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in November 2022 at both the Steam and Diesel plants. Samples confirmed the presence of ACM and EPA determined that a removal action, or a short-term cleanup, should be conducted to remove damaged and exposed ACM at risk of release to the public and the environment. Other hazardous materials found include potential mercury- containing fixtures and components (switches, controls), lead batteries, laboratory and boiler

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## EMERGENCY REMOVAL

treatment chemicals, and retail-sized containers of paints, solvents, and other flammables.

In mid-June 2024, EPA will begin staging the needed equipment to clean up the Steam Plant. (EPA Brownfields funding will be used to clean up the Diesel Plant). Activities will include carefully removing and disposing of damaged and exposed ACM and other hazardous materials. ACM which is not damaged or exposed will not be removed from the Steam Plant, as undamaged asbestos poses little risk and will be contained within the building. EPA will repair parts of the Steam Plant roof that is leaking to stop rain and snow from entering and damaging intact asbestos insulation not removed during the EPA Removal program cleanup.

During cleanup activities, EPA will conduct continual air monitoring along the site perimeter and dust control activities as necessary to prevent any hazardous materials from moving into nearby residential areas and the Aroostook River. Fencing will be erected at the property to prevent trespassing into the Steam Plant and will be placed to ensure continued access to the boat launch area, which will remain open to the public during the cleanup. Activities to remove damaged asbestos and other hazardous materials will be conducted within the building, eliminating the risk to the public accessing the boat launch area.

EPA will work with the Town to provide cleanup status updates throughout the summer and fall. Clean up of the Steam Plant is expected to start in early July 2024 and will take approximately four months to complete. Additional information can be found online at: <https://response.epa.gov/cariboupower>

## **EPA UPCOMING WORK TO BE CONDUCTED AT THE DIESEL PLANT**

In 2023, the city of Caribou was awarded a \$900,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the cleanup of the Diesel Plant building. Work at the Diesel Plant can begin once cleanup activities are complete at the Steam Plant. The EPA Removal and Brownfields programs will work together to ensure an efficient transition between cleanups.

For more information on Brownfields, please visit [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields)