

Press Release: Amec Foster Wheeler
Title: Columbian Packing Company Site Remediation
Category E: Environmental

Amec Foster Wheeler and Environment and Infrastructure, Inc. (Amec Foster Wheeler) of Portland, Maine provided regulatory permitting, investigation, design and construction support for remediation of the Columbian Packing Company site in Lubec, Maine. Constructed around 1900 on the shore of Johnson Bay, the Columbian Packing Company produced canned sardines that helped feed U.S. troops during both World Wars. The former factory store became home to the Lubec Historical Society which maintains hundreds of artifacts celebrating the region's coastal heritage. The cannery closed in the mid-1960s and fell into ruins as time and ocean tides took their toll.

In the early 2000s, the cannery property became a public health concern as the failing cannery structure began to collapse. Environmental assessment of the site indicated that the deteriorated cannery roof contained asbestos, and eroded fill along the adjacent shoreline contained heavy metals and organic contaminants, likely resulting from disposal of ash, clinker and other wastes along the shore. The foundation of the factory store building was also failing, and the basement of the old store contained a leaking oil tank which impacted soils, groundwater and indoor air.

With input from environmental regulators, the town and historical society, Amec Foster Wheeler developed an engineering design that addressed multiple site environmental and engineering concerns, and employed energy saving "Green Remediation" principles developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The design included careful demolition of the old cannery ruins, crushing and reusing concrete waste for cover along the eroding

shoreline, and stabilizing the shoreline with placement of geotextile and native riprap. The old factory store was moved 150 feet to a new foundation equipped with a vapor intrusion mitigation system, and oil-impacted soils were excavated and disposed off-site at a licensed disposal facility. The project was successful in removing a public health hazard, restoring the shoreline for safe public recreational access, and stabilizing the historic factory store at a location free of environmental contaminants. The project also featured broad community engagement which included public workshops, volunteer participation, and engagement of students at the Lubec Elementary School. In August 2017, over 100 members of the community attended a ribbon-cutting event that featured a proclamation by representatives of Senator Susan Collins.

John Sutherland, Lubec's Town Administrator during much of the cleanup effort, is delighted with the project and commented "Removal of the old cannery ruins and landscaping the site has opened up scenic views of Johnson Bay – this will provide much needed access to the shoreline and really improves our village gateway."

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has certified closure under the Voluntary Response Action Program, marking the final step in a transformative project which is protective of human health, the environment, and the economic vitality of Lubec. Beyond the tangible benefits of the remediation effort, the project serves to highlight the value of engineering in developing cost-effective, innovative solutions whose benefits can reverberate throughout a community.