Hudson River PCBs SUPERFUND SITE
Region 2: NJ, NY, PR, VI • 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Project Design Work Plans

Baseline Monitoring

May 2003

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Highlights

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reached a draft legal agreement with the General Electric Company (GE) for the company to perform the design work needed to implement the cleanup of a 40-mile stretch of the Upper Hudson River. The agreement, which is embodied in a draft Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), incorporates draft versions of design work plans that address the design of the dredging work: habitat delineation and assessment, cultural and archaeological resources, and baseline monitoring for the cleanup project. EPA is releasing the draft work plans for public review and input before they are finalized.

Designing the Hudson River Cleanup

On February 1, 2002, EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site. The ROD called for targeted environmental dredging of an estimated 2.65 million cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediments from the Upper Hudson River between Hudson Falls, New York and the Federal Dam at Troy. Before dredging can begin, comprehensive engineering plans and specifications for the project must be developed to ensure that it is implemented in a safe and effective manner.

The Baseline Monitoring Program is detailed in one of four draft work plans for the cleanup project. It addresses pre-dredging or "baseline" monitoring that will be done to evaluate whether the cleanup is meeting the engineering performance standards established for the project. It will also provide data on PCB levels in fish and water to evaluate long-term recovery trends. The sediment sampling required for this work is being conducted under a July 2002 Sediment Sampling Administrative Order on Consent with GE.

Upper and Lower Hudson River Water Monitoring

Monitoring stations will be located in the Upper Hudson at Bakers Falls, Rogers Island, Thompson Island Dam, Schuylerville, Stillwater and Waterford. Water samples will be collected weekly, year-round, at Bakers Falls, Rogers Island, Schuylerville and Waterford. At the Thompson Island Dam, samples will be collected weekly from March to November. At the Stillwater station, water samples will be collected weekly from May to November. These data, which will establish baseline PCB levels in water, will be used to determine whether the project is meeting the performance standard for the resuspension of sediments during dredging.

A station at the Mohawk River in Cohoes will be sampled monthly throughout the year. Data collected from Waterford and the Mohawk River station will be used to determine the amount of PCBs being transported to the lower river before dredging begins. This information will be used to assess the effectiveness of dredging in reducing the movement of PCBs to the lower river.

Water samples will also be taken from the Lower Hudson River at Albany/Troy and Poughkeepsie. These samples, which will be collected each month from May to November, will be analyzed for PCBs in order to establish pre-dredging conditions. At these locations, samples will be taken from one point in the center of the river.

Throughout the baseline monitoring program, some of the water samples will be routinely tested for dioxins, furans, metals and nutrients (nitrates, nitrites, etc.). In addition, total suspended solids (TSS), temperature, pH, turbidity and dissolved oxygen will be measured at each Upper Hudson station. River flow, as recorded by existing U.S. Geologic Survey flow gauges, will also be recorded at the time of sampling.

Upper Hudson Fish Monitoring

Samples of sport and forage fish consumed by wildlife will be collected and analyzed for PCBs and fat content. Ten percent of the total number of adult fish collected will be analyzed once during the program for mercury, dioxins, furans and pesticides. In addition, fish weight and length will be measured to assess fish condition.

Sampling at Thompson Island Pool, Northumberland/Fort Miller Pools, Stillwater Pool and at Albany/Troy will ensure that a wide range of species are collected and sampled. The Feeder Dam Pool, which is located upstream of the planned dredging, will be used as a basis of comparison.

Fish collections will include largemouth/smallmouth bass, yellow/brown bullhead, yearling pumpkinseed, yellow perch (and white perch at Albany/Troy) and spottail shiner. Other forage fish will be substituted if spottail shiners are not available. These species, including sport fish consumed by people and forage fish eaten by wildlife, have contact with a range of sediments. The sampling program will attempt to obtain an individual average concentration for the Thompson Island, Northumberland/Ft. Miller, and Stillwater Pools. A maximum of 30 individual fish of each species will be collected from each pool. At Albany/Troy and the Feeder Dam Pool, the sampling will be from one location, with a maximum of 20 individual fish of each species collected at each location.

Standard sampling methods, including netting, electroshocking and angling, will be used to collect fish.

Additional Water Surveys

Special studies will be undertaken throughout the design phase of the project to evaluate water flow velocities, the ability to monitor a single parcel of water as it travels downstream, and the distribution of PCBs between the water (dissolved portion) and the suspended matter in the water (the particulate portion).

During 2004, weekly monitoring will be conducted at Lock 1 (located just north of Waterford) from May to November and compared with the data from the Waterford river station. If the data exhibits a strong correlation, the Lock 1 station will be abandoned.

Monitoring Results

Summaries of the monitoring results for each year will be provided in reports to EPA.

Public Review

The draft work plans for remedial design, habitat delineation and assessment, cultural and archaeological resources, and baseline monitoring have been released for public review and input. EPA will consider public input on the work plans and will decide whether any changes to these technical documents are appropriate before they are finalized. Because the work plans are incorporated in the AOC, the Agency must reach agreement with GE on any additional changes before it is signed. The three-week public review period begins on May 28 and ends on June 18.

The draft *Remedial Design Work Plan,* the *Baseline Monitoring Program Scoping Document, Habitat Delineation and Assessment Work Plan, and the Cultural and Archeological Resources Assessment Work Plan* and fact sheets on the work plans are available at information repositories located in Glens Falls, Ft. Edward (Hudson River Field Office), Saratoga Springs, Albany, Poughkeepsie, and New York City. Electronic versions can be found on the EPA project Web site at www.epa.gov/hudson. Copies are also available in print and on CD-ROM by calling the Hudson River Field Office.

Written comments on the draft work plans should be sent to the Hudson River Field Office at the address below.

Public Education Sessions

EPA is hosting public information sessions on the draft engineering performance standards for the cleanup project and will allow time at those sessions for questions on and discussion of the draft work plans. The sessions will be held on:

Monday, June 2

Queensbury Hotel
88 Ridge Street
Glens Falls, New York
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm/
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Tuesday, June 3

Sage College of Albany,
Kahl Center
140 New Scotland Avenue
Albany, New York
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm/
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

For More Information

Visit, call, or write to the Hudson River Field Office at the address below or log on to **www.epa.gov/hudson.**

EPA Contacts

Leo Rosales,
Community Involvement Coordinator
Hudson River Field Office

421 Lower Main Street
Hudson Falls, NY 12839
(518) 747-4389 or (866) 615-6490 Toll-Free
hrfo@capital.net

The Field Office hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, with evening hours by appointment.

David Kluesner,
Community Involvement Coordinator

EPA Region 2 Office
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007
(212) 637-3653

EPA Superfund Ombudsman

EPA Region 2 has designated an ombudsman as a point-of-contact for community concerns and questions about the federal Superfund program in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To support this effort, the Agency has established a 24-hour, toll-free number that the public can call to request information, express concerns, or register complaints about Superfund. The ombudsman for EPA's Region 2 office is: George H. Zachos, U.S. EPA, Region 2, 2890 Woodbridge Avenue MS-211, Edison, New Jersey 08837, (732) 321-6621, Toll-free (888) 283-7626