

Army Corps Dredging Project Set for 2012

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expected to be dredging in the Lower Fox River again this year. Like last year, dredging will start in Green Bay near the Georgia-Pacific turning basin at the Interstate 43 Bridge and the “railroad bridge.” The Corps will work its way southwest, dredging about three miles upstream to the U.S. Highway 172 Bridge, which extends from Allouez to Ashwaubenon.

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg, the Corps’ proposal is being evaluated so work can begin this spring. “Because PCB levels may be higher near the turning basin, additional monitoring and sampling may be needed,” he stated.

When work begins, the Corps will use the same equipment it has used since 2010, Hahnenberg added.

By using an environmental-type closed bucket dredge with “baffles and seals,” the movement of water and mud will be slowed down. “The seal, which is similar to a rubber gasket, is used to prevent contaminated water and mud from leaking through while containing the PCB-contaminated sediment as it is being removed,” said Hahnenberg.

This type of bucket dredge, which is different from the Corps’ typical navigational dredge, won’t stir up sediment causing PCB contamination to spread. The Corps dredges this area annually to clear the waterway for boat traffic after sediment fills back in over the winter. Regular surveys are done to determine the status of areas that may need navigational dredging. These surveys show areas that may have filled in since the last Corps dredging.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOLDT TEAM

The Corps will use an environmental cable arm dredge again this year.

Latest Technology Guides Hydraulic Dredge

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

If you've seen a dredge working in the Lower Fox River, chances are you've never noticed the computer monitors inside the boat.

Real Time Kinematic Global Positioning System, or RTK GPS, is state-of-the-art technology that tells the operator exactly where the dredge head is while it is underwater. GPS RTK, which has been available since 2004, takes the guesswork out of dredging. It precisely finds the location using satellite technology, horizontally and vertically, on the Earth's surface.

Each dredge is positioned in the water using RTK GPS and a series of electronic sensors that measure tilt angle, acceleration, shock, vibration and movement. The position of the cutterhead will be tracked and recorded in relation to the dredge. Special software will use the input from the GPS and sensors to show the operator the position of the cutterhead.

Developed specifically for this cleanup project, this particular setup costs "hundreds of thousands of dollars," according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg. "But, it saves us money and time by being more efficient," he explained. "It targets areas of sediment we want to get and areas we don't want to get."

It works like a video game: The operator watches the right monitor as he looks for pressure in the dredged "slurry." (If he loses pressure, he knows something is wrong.) The left monitor shows a "profile." The dredge head, which resembles a large drill bit, is connected to a pipe that sucks the sediment and sends it to an underwater line. This leads to a handling area where sediment and liquid are separated, or dewatered. The colors on the monitors show how deep the water is as well as the places that have been dredged or still need to be dredged. Once those colored bands are dredged, they will turn gray indicating cleaned areas.

"The 'neat line' at the bottom of the screen is his target," Hahnenberg continued. "This is where we go from over 1 part per million to under 1 part per million."

Hahnenberg, who has worked on the Lower Fox River project since 1998, has seen it evolve. Before RTK GPS, plans had to be kept very simple for the dredge operator because it was done by "feel." He said, "The operator

would look at a box on a map and go back and forth, often dredging more than was necessary. It was hard to make sure we got everything, so this is a big improvement."

Although it is a big improvement for sediment cleanup projects in general, it is currently only used at the Lower Fox River and was previously used at Ohio's Ashtabula River because, according to Hahnenberg, "it takes a capital investment to develop."

While this project was developed for use with hydraulic dredges, it has been used in other places with clamshell dredges, such as Commencement Bay in Washington, because there was more sand to be removed. "It all depends on the nature of the sediment," said Hahnenberg. "It also depends on physical limitations like bridges and piers. It's not one size fits all."

The project's success also depends on good operators. Since there is no school to study for this type of work, operators typically learn on the job by watching someone else with more experience. "There is no formal education that trains you for this, so you have to learn it by doing it," Hahnenberg stated.

Overall, Hahnenberg gives RTK GPS a favorable review and would recommend it to his colleagues, under the right circumstances. "It's worked for us, but you need to have the right site characteristics and equipment as well as a good operator before I'd recommend it," he said. "It's a good way to go."

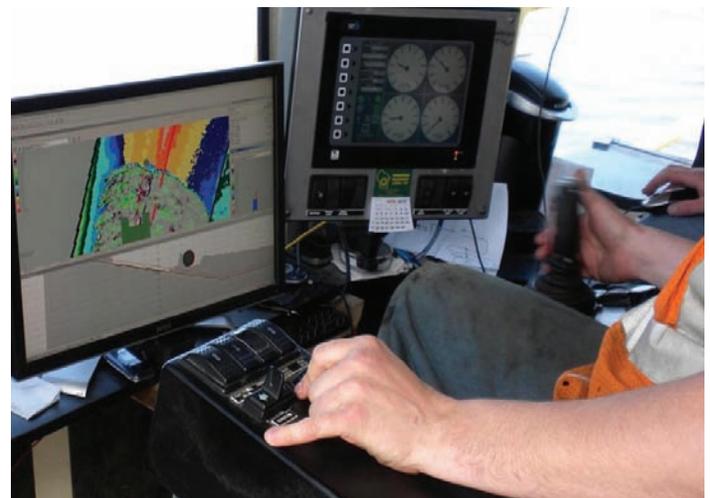


PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENNAN

The operator uses special GPS technology to target dredged areas.

Trustee Council Welcomes Ideas, Projects

By Trish Ossmann, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

What comes to mind when you think about cleaning up the Lower Fox River? Is it dredging? Is it a processing facility? Or is it new or improved wildlife habitats? Cleaning up the river is about more than just contaminated sediment. It's also about helping the fish and wildlife that call the Lower Fox River watershed their home.

That's where the Natural Resource Trustee Council comes in. This group, made up of representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin solicit, receive and select projects to help improve the Lower Fox River ecosystem.

The Council considers projects that specifically deal with habitat for fish and wildlife species damaged by PCB releases in the river and contamination in Green Bay. Projects vary, but the majority deal with restoring or protecting habitat for plants and animals that live within the watershed.

"We look for projects that help replace, restore or acquire the equivalent natural resources as those that were injured by the PCB releases," explained Betsy Galbraith, FWS restoration coordinator. "Restoration is an important part of the picture because even when dredging is complete, it will take many decades for fish and wildlife to recover."

Project proposals can be brought to the Council anytime by representatives of local non-profit organizations, government agencies, tribes or universities. So far, more than \$36 million in settlement funds from the companies responsible for the river's pollution have been devoted to 72 projects. An additional \$23 million in matching funds have also been provided from a variety of sources including federal, state and local grant programs as well as private organizations.

"We have approved numerous land acquisition projects, which is good to see because that means we're not only restoring or enhancing habitat, we're also protecting it for the future," said Wisconsin DNR Biologist John Huff, technical team representative for the Council.

The Natural Resource Trustee Council typically meets annually to conduct business and review projects, but the technical team meets more frequently to evaluate proposals and make recommendations.

"When we look at a project, we are looking for what the outcome will be and how it will help the species that were impacted by PCBs recover," said Galbraith. "These projects are a perfect example of how partnerships throughout northeast Wisconsin can improve the world in which we live."

For information on how to submit a project to the Council, contact Galbraith at betsy_galbraith@fws.gov or 920-866-1753.



Out and About ...

By Susan Pastor
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership is made up of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. These partners, as well as other supporting agencies, regularly provide speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following people recently made presentations:

January

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg and Susan Pastor*, EPA: Einstein Science Expo, Green Bay; general Lower Fox River cleanup.

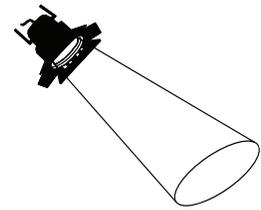
March

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA, and *Betsy Galbraith*, FWS: Introduction to Environmental Science and Issues in Biological Conservation classes, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay; general Lower Fox River cleanup and Green Bay Natural Resource Damage Assessment.

The Fox River Current is featuring Natural Resource Damage Assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:

Lower Wolf River Bottomlands



By Betsy M. Galbraith, Fox River/Green Bay NRDA Trustee Council Coordinator

An additional 30 acres of Wolf River frontage were recently added to the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resources Area. The purchase will protect natural resources and provide recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

“This is an important purchase to link existing tracts of state-owned land and meet the growing needs of the public,” stated Kay Brockman-Medegas, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist. “It fits into our master plan for the area very well.”

This property is adjacent to a popular boat landing and shoreline fishing area. Immediately upstream of the property is a sturgeon spawning site. Protection of an additional stretch of shoreline and floodplain in close proximity to a sturgeon spawning site will benefit that species. The sandy areas will be ideal for turtle nesting. The federally endangered snuffbox mussel will also benefit from the purchase. Birders will be able to see migrants and residents, like the cerulean and prothonotary warblers.

The parcel includes 1,455 feet of frontage along one bank of the Wolf River and is bordered by state-owned land on two sides. The uplands contain 5 acres of oak, while the lowlands consist of bottomland hardwoods. The lowlands are in the 100-year floodplain boundary and experience high water,

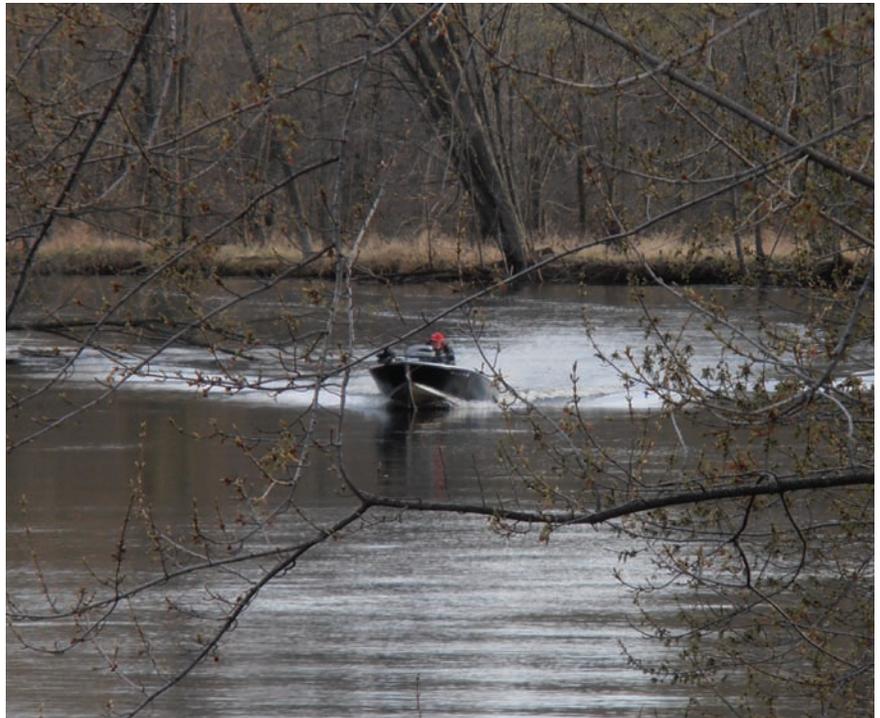


PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY BROCKMAN-MEDERAS, WISCONSIN DNR

Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy fishing and boating on the Wolf River near the new property.

especially in spring. Buildings will be removed to restore the character of the land. Parking lot improvements are also expected within the next few months to accommodate many vehicles, especially in spring when fishing is very popular from the bridge.

Additional shoreline fishing, an area to launch canoes and a potential canoe campsite will complement existing recreational opportunities. “A primitive campsite on the uplands will give canoeists and kayakers that wish to take long trips down the Wolf River a stopover point,” said Brockman-Medegas.

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The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands Natural Resources Area includes 14 existing Wisconsin DNR project areas in portions of Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca and Winnebago Counties. These separate projects, a total of about 31,000 acres, include mostly wildlife, fishery and natural areas.

Protection of this area contributes to the Lower Wolf and Embarrass River corridors' overall biological health and diversity in addition to providing important downstream water quality benefits. The area's rich land and water resources support many unique plants, fish and animals.

This property is located 5 miles east of Clintonville on state Route 156, southwest of the bridge over the Wolf River.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY BROCKMAN-MEDERAS, WISCONSIN DNR

Future campsite on the property.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY BROCKMAN-MEDERAS, WISCONSIN DNR

A view of the Wolf River shoreline.

The project was funded by the Lower Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council using natural resource damage assessment settlement dollars. Matching funds for the project were also contributed by Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

The natural resource trustees are comprised of the Wisconsin DNR, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more information about Fox River/Green Bay NRDA projects, contact Betsy M. Galbraith, Trustee Council Coordinator, at betsy_galbraith@fws.gov or 920-866-1753.

Familiar Face Assumes DNR Public Affairs Role

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Although Trish Ossmann is new to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and its Green Bay office, she is not new to the area.

Ossmann was hired as the Wisconsin DNR's regional public affairs manager last fall after serving as a producer, assistant news director and editor with WBAY-TV, Green Bay's ABC affiliate, for nearly 15 years. Except for a short stint with a Mankato, Minn., television and radio station, the Wisconsin native never strayed too far from the Fox Valley. Ossmann, 36, grew up in Appleton and West Bend, attended the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and moved into her current home in Combined Locks.

"I was a news anchor for AM radio news in Mankato from 1999 to 2000," Ossmann said. "Then, WBAY called and asked me to come 'home.' I stayed there until October 2011."

Her majors in organizational communication and electronic media prepared her for her former television career as well as her new career with the state. She applied online for her current position last year while juggling a 60-hour work week with WBAY and raising three young children. "I was on call 24/7 and it got to be too much," she said. "The timing was right."

Even though there are new challenges to tackle, she sees everything as an opportunity to learn. "There is always something new here—water, air, land and wildlife issues," she continued. "I always liked the outdoors and after I saw sturgeon tagging, I thought that I have got to work for the DNR someday. That would be the greatest job ever."

Considered somewhat of an "expert" in social media, Ossmann jumped right in and set up the department's Facebook page and assisted with new Twitter, U-Tube and Flickr accounts. "The Facebook page is my thing, having done social media before," she stated. "It worked quite well."

Ossmann brings more than social media skills to her new job. Having worked for local TV for more than a decade, she understands what the media wants in the way of customer service. "I know their equipment and photo needs," Ossmann explained. "I also know they need

handouts. That is so critical. At least they have something in their hand to refer to."

Having followed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup of Little Lake Butte des Morts for her former employer, Ossmann said she is ready to help EPA promote the upstream work. "It will be really interesting to watch the cleanup in De Pere," she added.

While working with the media from a different perspective, she is now writing news releases, arranging public meetings and coordinating special events. She is currently working on the department's booth space for July's Farm Technology Days. "It's in New London this year, which is in my area, and it's a really big deal," said Ossmann. "We work with U.S. EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Agriculture."

Having covered lots of "big deals" in her news career, Ossmann is used to being pulled in different directions. "I live for stress," she said. "If I'm not busy, I'm miserable."

As if a day job doesn't keep her busy enough, Ossmann also teaches a media ethics class at UW-Green Bay. "I've done that for the past 10 years," she added.

A Packer fan, she also finds time to cheer for her favorite football team. Unlike most fans, she was able to do that as



Trish Ossmann

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part of her job. “The Super Bowls, especially the last one, were incredible,” she continued. “We covered the whole parade route live and did multiple stories. The Packers aren’t just sports here. They are news. It was crazy, but fun.”

According to Ossmann, other news events were anything but fun. “Soldiers who were killed were always difficult to cover,” she said, “but some people find healing by talking about it.”

When the father of an 18-year old marine died in Iraq in 2004, he reached out to local media, inviting TV stations to his Hobart home. “He showed us several pictures of his son to share his memories with those who never met his child,” she said.

Other local events she covered include an American Red Cross telethon to raise money for tornado victims and an annual Toys for Tots drive. However, one day still stands out in her mind.

“I was at home watching the news on Sept. 11, 2001, when the second plane hit. That’s when I gathered my things and immediately went to work,” she recalled. “We all watched, but you can’t get emotional in the news business when you’re in the midst of it.”

With two daughters and a son under the age of nine, she tries to separate her home life from her professional life. “I enjoy fishing for bass and salmon,” she beamed. “I would love to take a fishing vacation, but for now I’m more than happy casting a line right here at home.”

Information Available at Local Libraries

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership invites the public to review technical reports, fact sheets, newsletters and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the Wisconsin libraries listed below.

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton; 920-832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay; 920-448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay; 920-743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida; 920-869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh; 920-236-5205

In addition, fact sheets and newsletters only are maintained at the public libraries in De Pere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown.

An Administrative Record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the cleanup plans was based, is available at:

- **Wisconsin DNR**, Northeast Regional Office, 2984 Shawano Ave., Green Bay
- **Wisconsin DNR**, Bureau of Watershed Management, 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison
- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay
- **EPA Record Center**, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago



Check out these websites:

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/foxriver>

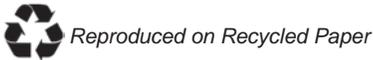
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/foxriver/index.html>

<http://contaminants.fws.gov/issues/restoration.cfm>

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/nrda/index.html>



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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

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