

EPA Accepts Comments on Proposed Cleanup Plan

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Comments are being accepted from the public through Jan. 31, 2008 concerning a proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to revise the cleanup plan for Little Lake Butte des Morts.

The lake, referred to as Operable Unit 1, originally was in line for a cleanup that primarily involved dredging PCB-contaminated sediment (mud) in areas south and east of Appleton. Although that cleanup has been ongoing since 2004, new information collected during the design phase indicated that combining dredging with capping would allow the cleanup to move faster at a lower cost. If adopted, the new plan would reduce the time it would take to complete the lake cleanup by five years.

The proposed plan includes a balanced approach of capping, sand covering and dredging based on the results of more than 6,300 sediment samples.

“This new information, as well as the experience the companies doing the work have gained, has given the agencies a reason to rethink the best way to complete this project,” said EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg.

The current plan, which was adopted in 2002, involves dredging about 1 million cubic yards of sediment while the recommended plan entails dredging about 400,000 cubic yards of sediment. While the original plan would meet EPA’s and DNR’s cleanup goal of 0.25 parts per million for average PCB levels in sediment at the river’s surface, the new plan would also meet it, but in a more efficient way.

The 2002 plan would cost between \$136 million and \$150 million while the proposed plan is estimated at \$90 million to \$110 million. Both plans would protect people’s health and the environment. Glatfelter and WTM I Co., the paper companies doing the cleanup under EPA and DNR oversight, have indicated that they are in favor of the new plan and will continue to work on this cleanup.

Although the proposed plan costs less, it will still achieve the agencies’ cleanup goal, according to Hahnenberg.

“A more expensive cleanup doesn’t always mean a better cleanup under the Superfund law,” he continued. “The companies have done a good job so far of removing 70 percent of the PCBs targeted in our original decision. We look forward to completing this project in a timely manner while achieving a protective result under this new approach.”

In addition to dredging and capping, the new plan also includes keeping fish advisories in place as well as continuing regular PCB monitoring in sediment, water and fish tissue. These are expected to be lifted gradually as the environment recovers due to the PCB removal and containment.

Written comments may be sent using the form on Page 5, via fax to 312-353-1155 and online at www.epa.gov/region5/publiccomment/foxriver-pubcomment.htm.



COURTESY OF THE BOLDT TEAM

Dredged material from geotextile tubes is loaded onto trucks.

EPA Orders Companies To Meet Deadlines

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

A federal order was issued in mid-November to a group of paper companies responsible for PCB-contaminated sediment (mud) in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's order requires the companies to meet two deadlines to accelerate the \$390 million cleanup from Appleton to Green Bay. Working in conjunction with U.S. Department of Justice and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, EPA wants action in two phases. The first began in December and required the companies to begin preparation for the cleanup. This would include buying equipment, finding staging areas for the equipment, arranging for landfill disposal, conducting site surveys and obtaining access agreements from private property owners.

Phase 2 mandates that actual dredging and capping in the river begin in 2009. By then, the companies should have completed all of the work specified in the first phase.

Details of the work are outlined in a document called the amended record of decision dated June 2007.

According to EPA Attorney Richard Murawski, the only way to keep the cleanup on track was to issue the companies an order. "The companies could not agree on how to divide the cost of the cleanup among them," he explained. "The order requires them to follow the timeline and it compels them to do the work. If they don't comply, they could face serious penalties. But, we don't expect that to happen."

The paper companies receiving the order were Appleton, CBC Coating, Inc., Georgia-Pacific Corp., Menasha Corp., NCR Corp., Glatfelter, U.S. Paper Mills Corp. and WTM I Co.

Copies of the order are available at the libraries listed on Page 7. It may also be viewed online at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver under "Legal Documents."

Menasha Corp. To Help Fund Lake Cleanup

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Because of a recent addition to an existing federal legal agreement, Menasha Corp. will help pay for the Little Lake Butte des Morts cleanup.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources filed an "agreed supplement" to a 2004 consent decree in Milwaukee's U.S. District Court in mid-November. According to EPA Attorney Richard Murawski, Menasha Corp. has committed to help pay for the estimated \$100 million cleanup of Little Lake Butte des Morts, also referred to as Operable Unit 1. Under the earlier decree, the cleanup work in OU 1 is actually being done by Glatfelter and WTM I Co. They have provided most of the funding so far.

"We filed a supplement to the consent decree for the OU 1 cleanup and Menasha has agreed to contribute \$7 million toward that cleanup," he said.

Menasha Corp. has also joined seven other paper companies in negotiations involving the \$390 million cleanup for the rest of the river from Appleton to Green Bay, also referred to as OUs 2-5, according to Murawski.

"All eight companies are on the hook for the cleanup of OUs 2-5, which we expect to start in 2009," said Murawski.

The other seven companies are NCR Corp., Appleton, Georgia-Pacific Corp., Glatfelter, WTM I Co., U.S. Paper Mills Corp. and CBC Coating, Inc.

Lake, Downstream Work Wraps Up for 2007

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The fourth year of cleanup in Little Lake Butte des Morts has been completed with about 130,000 cubic yards removed in 2007 and 335,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment (mud) removed overall.

According to the Little Lake Cleanup Team, comprised of local paper companies WTM I Co., Glatfelter and their contractors, dredging this year occurred primarily along the west side of the lake. In addition, there were several placement tests for sand covers and “armored” caps in this area also referred to as Operable Unit 1, according to EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg.

“Armored caps are comprised of 7 inches of gravel and rocks with 6 inches of sand underneath,” Hahnenberg explained. “Dredging and using 6-inch caps and sand covers is also planned for next year pending the outcome of the proposed cleanup plan and public comment period” (see Pages 1 and 5).

Once the sediment was removed from the bottom of the lake, it was taken through a pipeline to very large plastic bags called geotextile tubes, which sit on a gravel dewatering site. They are part of a larger staging area on the west side of the lake on the south side of the Highway 10/441 bridge near North Lake Street. A boat dock, water treatment building and observation deck are also part of the staging area.

Dredging typically occurs during spring, summer and fall, with sediment hauling to a hazardous waste landfill in Chilton continuing in fall, winter and spring. A work plan has been given to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that details the 2008 schedule. Dredging and sand cover work is expected to be completed next year. The project should then be ready to move into its final phase in 2009. This phase will consist of cap and sand cover placement and final “demobilization,” if the proposed plan is adopted.

For more information, visit www.littlelakecleanup.com.

See **Lake, Downstream** Page 7



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:

October

- ◆ *Colette Charbonneau, FWS*: Deputy Regional Directors’ meeting for FWS, Baraboo; Lower Fox River/Green Bay restoration accomplishments.
- ◆ *Colette Charbonneau, FWS*: Ecological Services’ Project Leaders meeting for FWS Region 3, De Pere; Lower Fox River/Green Bay damage assessment and restoration accomplishments.
- ◆ *Greg Hill, DNR*: University of Wisconsin, Environmental Law and Policy class, Whitewater; general Lower Fox River/Green Bay cleanup and Superfund.

The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:

Oneida Headwater Wetlands Restoration Project



By Betsy Galbraith, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

When Tony Kuchma, Oneida Wetland Program Coordinator, first stepped onto this soggy farm field in 2005, he had a good feeling that it could be restored to wetlands. As he began his research, the pieces of the puzzle fell into place—dark, rich soil, old aerial photos from the 1930s showing wetlands, and wetland plants appearing on the edge of the farm field.

The 200-acre wetland area had been ditched and drained over the last century to make way for farming. According to historic maps and survey notes, the area was a cedar-tamarack swamp prior to 1850. “My vision was to restore the area to a functioning wetland for waterfowl,” Kuchma stated. “The only thing missing was the water.”

Many hours were spent engineering a plan for the project. Biologists from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe and Wisconsin Waterfowl Association provided technical expertise on the design.

“We spent a lot of time on the design and gathered input from other biologists doing similar projects around the state,” Kuchma explained. “We wanted to make this the best possible place for waterfowl.”

Funded by the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council, construction began in June 2007. Two earthen berms were built to hold water within the 200-acre site. Water elevation control structures, supplied by FWS’ Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, were installed to manage water levels. Emergency spillways were built to handle a 100-year flood event. A large sediment basin was also constructed to remove sediment (mud), pesticides, and fertilizers that are carried with runoff and snow melt. Pairing ponds and nesting islands were provided to encourage waterfowl reproduction. “These devices give us the ability to adjust water levels across the site by inches,” states Kuchma.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TONY KUCHMA, ONEIDA TRIBE

Construction contractor shapes a waterway for the project.

After construction was completed in the fall, seed mixes, wetland plants and trees were planted throughout the site. Some historic wetland areas are expected to resprout native wetland plants as water is returned to the landscape.

The newly restored headwater wetlands of the south branch of the Suamico River filter harmful runoff from a 2,000-acre watershed prior to the water entering the river. The river provides important pike spawning areas on the west shore and eventually empties into Green Bay.

The site is already a popular hunting spot for Oneida tribal members. Restoration of the wetlands is expected to attract more community members for wildlife viewing, hiking and cultural activities.

See Spotlight, Page 7

Lower Fox River Site Comment Sheet

Detach, fold, stamp and mail

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____

Place
Stamp
Here

Susan Pastor
Community Involvement Coordinator
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Lake, Downstream *from Page 3*

Further downstream, Phase 1 of the cleanup in areas near the DePere Dam, also known as OU 4, wrapped up for the season in early November.

Preliminary dredging results of this "hot spot" in the river show slightly over 176,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment were removed from about 19 acres of riverbed. About 39,500 cubic yards of highly contaminated sediment with PCB levels over 50 parts per million were removed. All of the sediment with PCB levels over 50 ppm was removed and taken to a licensed landfill in Michigan.

Dredging to remove the remaining sediment with PCB levels under 50 ppm will be done in 2008, along with additional sand covering over the dredged areas. When Phase 1 of the project is completed next year, an estimated 3,850 pounds of PCBs contained within 160,000 cubic yards of sediment will have been removed from the river.

For further information on both cleanup projects, visit www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver.

Spotlight *from Page 4*

For more information about this project, contact Kuchma at 920-496-5346.

The natural resource trustees are comprised of DNR, FWS, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Attorney General, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department

of Natural Resources, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For further information on other Natural Resource Damage Assessment projects, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau, FWS, at Colette_Charbonneau@fws.gov or at 920-866-1726.

Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the local libraries listed below. Information repositories at the public libraries in De Pere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets are being maintained at these locations as well as at the following repositories:

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



Check out these Web sites:

www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/foxriver

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver

www.fws.gov/contaminants/issues/restoration.cfm

www.fws.gov/midwest/nrda

An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan was based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.



Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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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