

Paper Companies Complete Dredging for 2009

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dredging, capping and covering activities in the Lower Fox River have wrapped up for the year.

Georgia-Pacific, NCR Corp. and Appleton Papers Inc. ended their “construction season” in mid November. Dredging and capping/covering in the Lower Fox River consisted of constructing a 6-acre, 70-foot-high sediment handling facility, dredging 540,300 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment and capping/covering about 62 acres in the river.

“Their original goal was 460,000 cubic yards,” said EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg. “So, needless to say, we are quite pleased. As for the handling facility, equipment was delivered, assembled and made operational within one year of site mobilization. Some of the major components, such as sediment dewatering plate and frame presses, were imported from Europe.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOLDT TEAM

This 8-inch cutterhead dredge operated continuously to remove contaminated sediment.

Hahnenberg added that the dredging work went exceptionally well. “This may be the greatest

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Project Exceeds Production Goals

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Now that dredging in the Lower Fox River from Little Rapids to Green Bay has wrapped up for 2009, the three companies doing the cleanup under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources oversight can look back on a successful year.

According to EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg, Appleton Papers Inc., Georgia-Pacific, and NCR Corp. surpassed their 2009 production goal by mid-October.

Statistics as of November 17 include:

- 13,276 truck loads (about 22 cubic yards per truck) of dredged sediment was taken to the disposal facility in Chilton.
- 314,696 tons of PCB-contaminated sediment was disposed.
- 17,262 loads of sediment was processed in the plate and frame presses.
- 690 million gallons of water was treated and discharged.
- 545,000 “man hours” of work was completed with no time lost due to accidents.
- Operations ran 24 hours per day, 5 days per week.

In addition to dredging, the companies began capping and covering activities in late August. They placed about 48 acres of sand and 7 acres of sand and heavy stone layers near Little Rapids and between Little Rapids and DePere.

Operations are expected to resume on April 5, 2010.

EPA Returns To Science Expo

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Lower Fox River cleanup will again be the main focus of a booth sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the Schreiber & WPS Einstein Project Science Expo on Saturday, March 13, 2010, at Green Bay’s Shopko Hall.

EPA staff will be available during the expo hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to answer questions about how the river is being protected, preserved and restored. In addition, there will be other hands-on environmental demonstrations that kids of all ages can check out, including trying on a hazardous materials or “moon” suit. Kids participating in the science fair will also find a special EPA surprise inside their “goody bags.”

This annual family event teaches kids the science fun behind our careers. Activities allow them to explore life, earth, physical and environmental science, technology/engineering, space/flight and forensics. For more information, see www.einsteinproject.org.



EPA’s Kathy Clayton helps a young visitor fit into a “moon suit.”

State Posts Fish Advisory Updates

By Jessica Maloney, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently posted updated fish advisory signs around Green Bay to reflect changes made to the consumption advice related to several fish species.

Wisconsin DNR routinely tests fish from state waters, including fish from the bay and the Lower Fox River. Although the Lower Fox River cleanup is making strides in creating a healthier ecosystem for fish, the advisories will remain in place until the PCBs in fish reach safe levels. In the meantime, the best way for people to protect their health is to read the advice for the waters in which they fish and for the type of fish they eat. Specific advice is also posted at some locations along the Lower Fox River and bay. It’s important to note that each stretch of the Lower Fox River and bay has different advisories.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WISCONSIN DEPT. OF HEALTH SERVICES

Fish advisory signs are updated with consumption advice.

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volume of contaminated sediment dredged in a single construction season for any environmental project,” he stated. “It represents 15 percent more volume dredged than the original 2009 target. In addition to that, the capping/covering work was not originally planned for 2009 but began early due to the progress being made at other parts of the site.”

As the work continued, the companies did extensive public outreach to address the communities’ concerns regarding boat traffic, trucking and noise.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOLDT TEAM

Landfill disposal of PCB-contaminated river sediment.

“Overall, they completed the work this year by assembling a team of local, state, national and international contractors that worked effectively and cooperatively with local municipalities as well as state and federal agencies,” Hahnenberg concluded. “The project’s estimated completion date is 2017, but given this year’s progress, it may be completed a year earlier.”



Out and About...

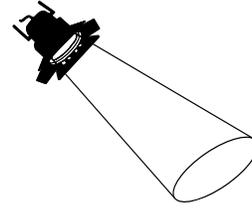
By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Green Bay Sail and Power Squadron, Green Bay; general Lower Fox River cleanup.
- ◆ *Jessica Maloney*, Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services: National Environmental Public Health Conference, Atlanta; “Hook, Line and Sinker: Fish Consumption Outreach and Education for Vulnerable Populations” presentation.

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



Spotlight On:

River Restoration on the West Branch of the Wolf River

By Colette Charbonneau, U.S. Department of the Interior Restoration Program

The West Branch of the Wolf River extends 29 miles in Menominee County in Northeastern Wisconsin. Historically, the river has provided wild rice and other food sources to the residents of the Menominee Indian Reservation. The river is classified as trout waters and supports trout populations.

A sawmill located in the village of Neopit has been in operation for over 80 years. Logs were traditionally stored in the mill pond before processing. A couple of flood events in the mid 1900s carried logs out of the mill pond and deposited them in a pile that formed a jam approximately one mile downstream from the dam.

“The logjam blocked the main channel of the river creating an impounded section of river characterized by a slow, wide and shallow stretch that caused water temperatures and sedimentation to increase,” explained Jonathan Pyatskowit, environmental specialist for the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. “Before the logjam, the river in this area consisted of narrow cold water riffles and deep pools that were habitat for a diverse population of aquatic life, especially healthy native brook trout. We no longer see trout living in this section of the river.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONATHAN PYATSKOWIT

A view of the logjam before river restoration.

The Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council approved funding in September 2005 from the natural resource damage assessment settlements for the tribe to restore the West Branch of the Wolf River. The restoration project consisted of removing the logjam and debris. The river was restored close to its original channel this summer.

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The river was surveyed for fish species, flow rates, depth, width, height of water and bottom content for the development of the final restoration of the river channel. Stewart Cogswell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fisheries biologist, designed the new river channel on paper using the measurements collected during the surveys and assisted the Menominee Tribe in overseeing the on-site contractor.

The contractor used a “green” machine that replaced the oil-based hydraulic fluid with biodegradable vegetable oil so the excavator could be used safely in the water. The logjam was removed with many of the logs being harvested for habitat use in the water and for bank stabilization.

The river channel was narrowed using sediment from the river bottom to bring the river banks in. Boulders were placed in the deep pools to create resting areas for fish. Logs were shoved deep into the riverbed near the shoreline in different areas to cause sediment to settle and naturally develop a bend in the river. Downstream of the construction area, a sand trap was used to collect sediment that was eroded due to the restoration work. The restoration of the river channel took two weeks to complete.

“Designing a river takes a little bit of art along with the science,” reflected Cogswell while standing in the river as he directed where the next boulder should be placed.

The Menominee Environmental Services Department will monitor this section of the river for a couple of years. Staff will look for changes in the status of wild rice stands above and below the project site as well as any changes in the physical attributes of the river. The composition of fish species will also

be surveyed to determine if native brook trout use this stretch of river again.

“This project will increase water quality in the river and provide good habitat to promote biodiversity within the watershed, which is a cornerstone of the Menominee Nation’s resource management activities,” concluded Pyatskowitz.

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

For further information on Natural Resource Damage Assessment restoration projects, contact Louise Clemency, FWS Wisconsin field office supervisor, at louise_clemency@fws.gov or at 920-866-1725.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONATHAN PYATSKOWIT

The West Branch after the logjam was removed.

Greg Swanson Retires From Wisconsin DNR

By Tom Turner, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Greg Swanson has made a career managing information on very large and important public projects in Wisconsin. When he started at the Department of Natural Resources as a senior public affairs manager in 1999, one of his first assignments was managing information for the estimated \$700 million, multi-decade cleanup of the Lower Fox River in northeastern Wisconsin.

In 1999, the project's focus was on completing the pilot dredging in deposits N and O and completing the remedial investigation and feasibility study to get the proposed cleanup plan out to the public. There was considerable controversy among the public, the agencies involved and the paper companies – about how to solve the river's PCB problems. Options included dredging, capping, doing nothing and landfilling. Discussions also centered on which agency was responsible for which actions and how to share the costs.

Today, with the project well underway, most of these issues have been resolved. Many projects have been completed with more in the pipeline. In addition, the cleanup of Little Lake Butte des Morts has been completed and the major cleanup from the De Pere Dam downriver to the bay of Green Bay has ended its first year of an anticipated seven-year cleanup.



Greg Swanson

When asked what he is most proud of about his involvement in the Lower Fox River cleanup, He said, "I guess what I'm most proud of is having been part of a very complex, costly and controversial project that got done because the people working on it were dedicated professionals who wanted to see it done right."

Swanson said his 11 years at Wisconsin DNR went by quickly and the best part of it was the huge variety of projects he got to work on -- rules explanations, public outreach, emergencies like wildfires, floods, snowstorms, video and audio productions and new technologies for delivering information. He credits this broad spectrum of issues and activities with keeping his life and job both interesting and fun.

Swanson's career with the state of Wisconsin wasn't only with the DNR. Before joining Wisconsin DNR, he served five years as a district communications manager for the Department of Transportation. While at DOT, he managed information for the \$450 million, 196-mile, four-lane construction of Wisconsin's Highway 29. This new highway is a direct, major east-west corridor carrying traffic and commerce safely from northern Wisconsin's west coast on the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers near Minneapolis and St. Paul, to the state's east coast on the shores of Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

Although Swanson settled in Sun Prairie 11 years ago, he is not a Wisconsin native. He grew up in Rockford, Ill., and has lived in Carbondale, Ill.; Kearney, Neb.; Duluth, Minn. and Wisconsin Rapids.

Before entering state service Swanson held a variety of positions. He worked in commercial and non-commercial radio and TV, institutional audio visual and taught media communication in the University of Nebraska and University of Minnesota systems. He has owned and operated a temporary employment service agency and a saloon where he occasionally tended bar. During his early years, he worked in retail sales and drove garbage and delivery trucks. As a volunteer, Swanson served as a fireman and an emergency management technician.

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In retirement, Swanson plans to keep working part time in sales, doing some freelance audio visual and writing, getting at those projects around the house, having a little more time for golf, spending time with his grandkids and maybe some traveling. Never one to rest on his laurels, Swanson said he hopes to use the knowledge and skills he picked up at Wisconsin DNR to do some similar work for government agencies or in the private sector.

Swanson and his wife Gloria have been married for 39 years. Their daughter Brooke is a teacher and is completing her master's degree at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls campus. The couple has two grandchildren. Kaden is 10 and Jazmin is 13.

Greg Swanson was part of the team that developed the Fox River *Current* and was a regular contributor to its pages. His skills, knowledge and cheerful way of doing business will be missed.

State Posts Fish *from Page 2*

General fish consumption advice for anglers, especially women of child-bearing age and children, is to eat smaller, younger fish. Fish that are smaller and younger tend not to eat other fish so they don't accumulate as many toxins in their bodies. Anglers can still have fun fishing while taking care to limit what they eat according to the meal frequency listed for the fish species and location.

Updates to the consumption advisories are included in the "Choose Wisely" publication available at local health departments and DNR offices and at <http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption/> and <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/Fish/>.

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. Binders containing fact sheets and newsletters, however, 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:

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

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

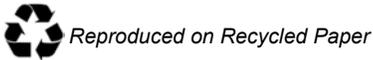
<http://contaminants.fws.gov/issues/restoration.cfm>

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

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.



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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 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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Fox River *Current* is published tri-annually by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date information about cleanup and restoration efforts on the Lower Fox River. Call Susan Pastor at 312-353-1325 or 800-621-8431 Ext. 31325, weekdays, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to request a subscription or alternative format. Feedback on articles and ideas for future issues are welcome. Send comments to Susan Pastor, EPA Superfund Division (SI-7J), 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604 or e-mail pastor.susan@epa.gov.