



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA Makes Progress at Kalamazoo River Superfund Site

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site
Kalamazoo, Michigan March 2005

For more information . . .

Don de Blasio

EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator
(312) 886-4360
(800) 621-8431
weekdays 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
deblasio.don@epa.gov

David Novak

EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator
(312) 886-7478 or
(800) 621-8431,
weekdays 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
novak.david@epa.gov

Shari Kolak

EPA Remedial Project Manager
(312) 886-6151
(800) 621-8431,
weekdays 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
kolak.shari@epa.gov

Site-related documents may be reviewed at:

Kalamazoo Public Library
315 S. Rose

Waldo Library
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, Mich.

Charles Ransom Library
180 S. Sherwood
Plainwell, Mich.

Allegan Public Library
331 Hubbard Street

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There has been progress on several fronts since the last public meeting regarding the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its state partners want to keep you up to date on their activities. Here is a brief summary of the most significant actions.

Court approves Weyerhaeuser settlement

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan approved a settlement Feb. 15 between Weyerhaeuser Co. and the federal government. Under the terms of the settlement, called a “consent decree,” here’s what Weyerhaeuser agreed to do:

- Contribute \$6.2 million to an EPA special account to be used for response actions on the site’s Kalamazoo River Operating Unit.
- Withdraw its objections to an earlier settlement related to the Plainwell mill. After Weyerhaeuser’s objections are withdrawn, EPA will ask the court to approve the settlement that calls for the Plainwell parties to pay \$7.15 million to the federal government and the state of Michigan. Weyerhaeuser will be able to use some of these funds to perform cleanup work at the 12th Street Landfill and the Plainwell mill.
- Start the cleanup plan selected by Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for the 12th Street Landfill. Weyerhaeuser will scoop up PCB-contaminated paper residue at the edges of the site and put them back into the landfill, then build a protective cap over the landfill and monitor the ground water (underground supply of fresh water). Weyerhaeuser is already developing the technical drawings and specifications for the project.
- Investigate the former Plainwell mill for possible contamination and clean up the mill property if contamination is found to pose an unacceptable health risk to people and the environment.

Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill

EPA is drafting a proposed cleanup plan and a formal document called a “record of decision.” These will be based in part on an MDEQ technical report done in late November. The EPA proposed cleanup plan should be released for public comments later this year.

Mediation

EPA, MDEQ, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Department of the Interior have been in confidential mediated negotiations since August with some of the companies identified as being responsible for contamination at the site. These companies are usually referred to as “potentially responsible parties.” The confidential mediation is helping the parties negotiate more studies at the site, payment of past costs



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Region 5
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

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EPA Makes Progress at Kalamazoo River Superfund Site**

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incurred by the government agencies, and restoration of federal and state natural resources.

Modeling

EPA has been conducting computer modeling on two sections of the Kalamazoo River, starting at Morrow Dam in Kalamazoo and ending at the dam in the City of Otsego. This is the first part of a project to develop a computer model of how PCBs move down the river and what happens to them as they are deposited on the banks and riverbed. EPA has shared the findings from this first phase of the project with the modeling technical advisory group, which included data gaps identified by the modelers. After additional discussions with this group, EPA will decide whether to move on to the second phase of computer modeling.

Georgia-Pacific former Kalamazoo Mill

EPA and MDEQ have been talking with Georgia-Pacific about cleanup of the company’s former Kalamazoo mill property so it can be deleted from the National Priorities List. NPL sites are among the nation’s most hazardous waste areas and are eligible for cleanup under EPA’s Superfund program. Removing a site from the NPL is a mark of success in cleanup efforts and can pave the way for redevelopment and reuse.

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www.epa.gov/region5/sites

If negotiations are successful, the adjacent former Hawthorne mill property will also be cleaned up as part of the effort. Representatives from Georgia-Pacific, EPA, MDEQ, Kalamazoo Township and the Natural Resource Trustees met in February to discuss the cleanup.

PRP search

EPA continues to investigate other industries and public or private entities that may be potentially responsible parties for the site.