



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Plainwell PCB Cleanup Progress, Updates, and Public Meeting

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site
Kalamazoo, Michigan September 2008

Informational meeting

EPA is holding a public meeting Tuesday, Sept. 23, so you can learn more about the latest developments in the Kalamazoo River cleanup.

The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. at the Comfort Inn and Conference Center, 622 Allegan St., Plainwell, Mich.

EPA representatives and other officials will make a formal presentation and be available to discuss site activities with you individually. If you need special accommodations, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Dave Novak (see below) by Sept. 18.

Contact EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Kalamazoo river cleanup, contact:

Dave Novak

Community Involvement
Coordinator

EPA Region 5 (P-19J)

77 W. Jackson Blvd.

Chicago, IL 60604-3590

312-886-7478 or 800-621-8431,

Ext. 67478, weekdays 10 a.m. to
5:30 p.m.

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For more information

You can read more information about the Kalamazoo River cleanup online at: www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject.

Cleanup work to remove PCB-contaminated sediment (mud) from the Kalamazoo River's Plainwell Impoundment continues on schedule. This is the second year of an estimated 2-year project to remove 120,000 cubic yards of sediment containing 4,400 pounds of PCBs. The cleanup work is being performed by contractors hired by responsible parties Millennium Holdings LLC and Georgia-Pacific LLC.

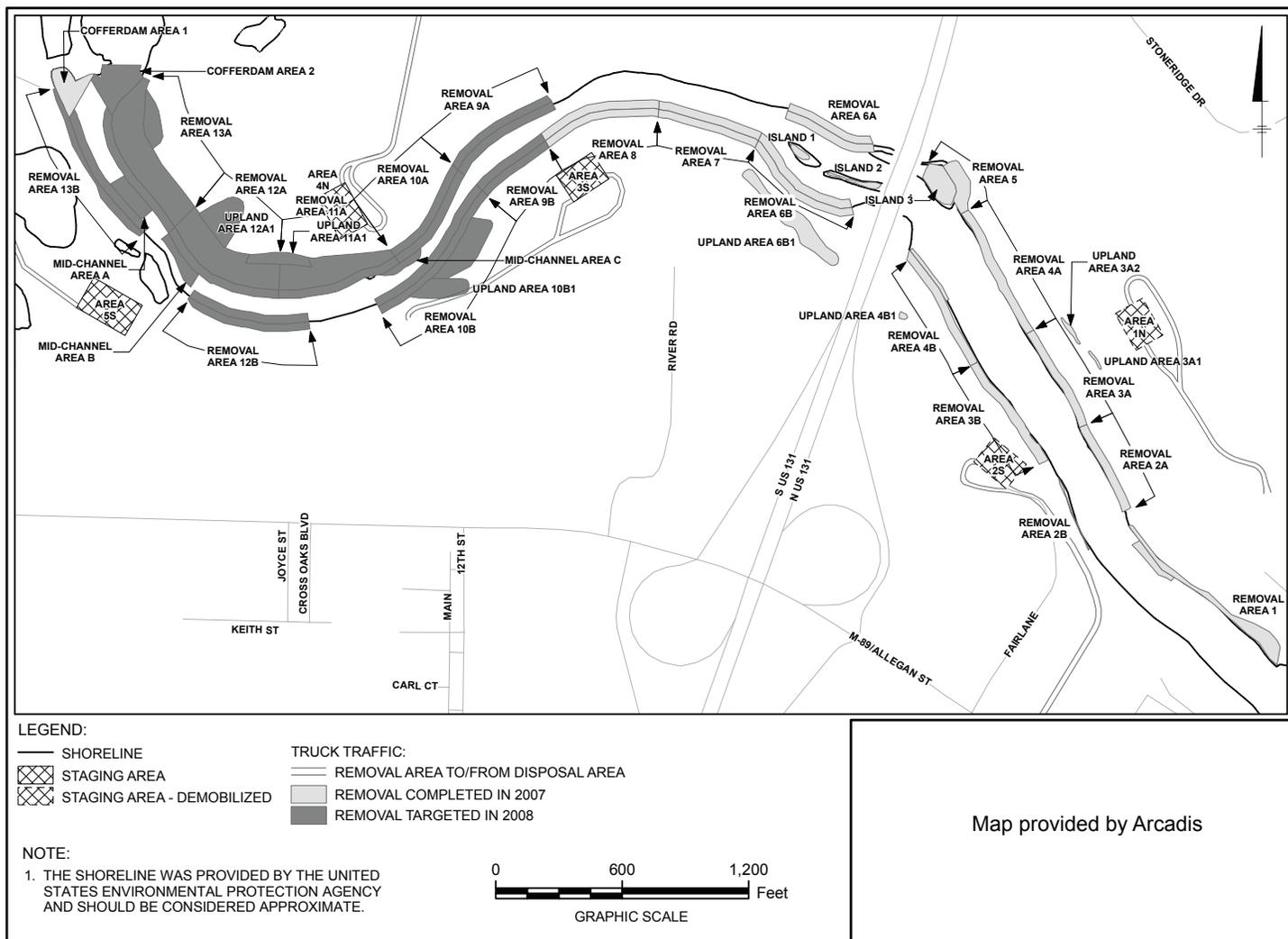
Polychlorinated biphenyls, better known as PCBs, are chemical compounds with common industrial uses. At high concentrations and exposures they can cause illness in humans and wildlife (see box on Page 3).

In 2007, over 37,000 cubic yards or 1,059 truckloads of PCB-contaminated sediment were removed from the river and nearby banks. This includes removal areas 1, 2, 3A and B, 4A and B, 5, 6A and B, 7 and 8 (see map on Page 2). Cleanup crews have completed work in the Phase 1 coffer dam area with construction of the western water diversion structure (Phase 1 coffer dam), which maintains the current flow of the river over the eastern spillway area. This allowed workers to dredge behind the dam, build a water control structure, and remove the portion of the dam in the former powerhouse area.



Dredging activities in mid-channel area B.

So far in 2008, workers have removed sediment and restored banks along some 3,000 feet of riverbank including areas 9A and B, 10A and B, 11B, and 12B (see map on page 2). Work has been completed on mid-channel areas B and C, removal of the Phase 1 cofferdam, and construction of the Phase 2 cofferdam system just upstream of the eastern portion (spillway) of the dam. As of Aug. 11, some 45,000 cubic yards or 1,289 truckloads of PCB-contaminated sediment have been removed this year. The water control structure, which was constructed during Phase 1, will remain in place in the western channel as a means of managing the water level in



the impoundment to facilitate the dredging operations. After the mid-channel and near-shore sediment cleanup activities are complete, the water control structure will be removed, allowing the Kalamazoo River to flow freely through the new western channel, past what was once the Plainwell Dam.

Kalamazoo River sediment dug up in the Plainwell Impoundment cleanup this year (2008) will continue to be sent off site to commercial landfills for disposal. The Plainwell waste is being divided into sediment containing 50 parts per million or more of PCBs and material with lower concentrations. To help put this in perspective, that equates to 50 drops of dye in 10,000 gallons of water. Under the federal Toxic Substances and Control Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates the use, storage and disposal of sediment with PCB concentrations exceeding 50 ppm. Sediment with PCBs above the 50 ppm level will continue to be sent off site to Environmental Quality Co.'s Wayne Disposal Landfill in Belleville, Mich. Sediment with less than 50 ppm PCBs, which is considered nonhazardous waste, will continue to be sent to

Allied Waste's C and C Landfill near Marshall, Mich., and its Ottawa Farms Landfill near Coopersville, Mich.

EPA Region 5 and state partner Michigan Department of Environmental Quality continue to oversee this year's dredging. The estimated cost of the time-critical removal cleanup is \$30 million and is expected to continue through December 2008. Site information including new photographs is posted at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject.

Mill update

Earlier this year for the Plainwell Mill, EPA provided comments to Weyerhaeuser (one of the parties EPA has found to be responsible for contamination at the site) on the cleanup study and alternatives field sampling plan. After its review of EPA comments, Weyerhaeuser suggested phasing the cleanup investigation, which EPA and MDEQ agreed upon. EPA and MDEQ are reviewing the work plan for additional investigations on the banks of the mill, and mobilization for this work is expected this fall.

Kalamazoo River/Portage Creek supplemental cleanup studies

A February 2007 legal agreement requires additional study of the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek. Planners divided the river into seven areas for the additional investigation. Area 1 consists of the Kalamazoo River between Morrow Dam and Plainwell, and Portage Creek between Cork Street and the Kalamazoo River.

Phase 1 of the investigation work was conducted last fall. Phase 2 investigations are under way and included collecting 40 sediment cores along Portage Creek; 30 sediment cores along the Kalamazoo River between the former Georgia-Pacific Mill and Crown Vantage Landfill; and 60 cores along the Kalamazoo River from the Plainwell No. 2 Dam Area. The cores are being segregated and analyzed for PCBs to determine the extent of any contamination in these areas. Although previous sampling has occurred in Area 1, this sampling effort focuses on areas where little information has been obtained and/or some previous contamination has been identified, but the extent is not known.

Representatives of EPA, MDEQ and the Kalamazoo River Study Group are working together to determine what further sampling may be necessary. The Phase 2 work will be completed this fall, and based upon those sampling results, a Phase 3 sampling event will occur to finalize this sediment sampling effort in Area 1.

Update for the landfills

In addition to the cleanup activities at the Plainwell Impoundment, developments on other parts of the Kalamazoo River site cleanups are occurring.

12th Street Landfill

Weyerhaeuser has conducted its pre-design studies, the first step in the cleanup design process for the 12th Street Landfill cap and monitoring system. The first draft of the cleanup design document is due in September. Construction of the cap and monitoring system should occur in the 2009 field season.

Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill

EPA and the Kalamazoo River Study Group are concluding their negotiations for the cleanup plan that EPA selected in the 2006 record of decision. The consent decree also includes a settlement between the Natural Resource Trustees and Kalamazoo River Study Group for the group to do additional work that would result in restoring habitat. As a part of this, the Kalamazoo River Study Group will cut down the sheet piling at the Willow A-Site Landfill and recontour the toe of the landfill to create a shoreline habitat. Once the consent decree is signed, the design process will begin with the necessary pre-design studies.

Allied Paper Landfill

EPA is finalizing its review of applicable cleanup goals for the Allied Paper Landfill. Millennium Holdings will use the results to generate practical cleanup options that will be documented in a report called a feasibility study. The first draft of the FS is expected at the end of March 2009. As part of EPA's work on the landfill, EPA is providing support to the city of Kalamazoo on its redevelopment plans for the Portage Creek corridor. EPA will hold a meeting to discuss the Allied Landfill operable unit in Kalamazoo during late October or early November. Information about the meeting will be provided later.

What are PCBs?

PCBs are a group of toxic chemicals that were produced in the United States between 1929 and 1978 for use primarily as industrial coolants, insulators and lubricants. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications, including carbonless copy paper—which contributed to the Kalamazoo River contamination—and many other applications because they were stable and resisted wear and chemical breakdown.

The same chemical properties that made PCBs useful to industry are now responsible for persistent levels of PCBs remaining in the environment, including the Kalamazoo River. PCBs last in the environment because they adhere readily to organic material in sediment and soil and tend

to build up in the fatty tissue of fish and other animals. PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects in animals. PCBs cause cancer and may affect the immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine systems. Studies suggest PCBs have similar effects on people.

The different health effects of PCBs may be interrelated, as alterations in one system may have significant implications for other systems of the body. The potential adverse environmental and health effects of PCBs were not well understood until 1977, when the government banned most uses of PCBs.

On the Web:

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject

**ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SUPERFUND SITE:
Plainwell PCB Cleanup Progress Updates**

FIRST CLASS

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**Public Meeting
Tuesday, Sept. 23
(details inside)**