

Sampling Results Show Cleanup is Working

Manistique Harbor and River Site
Manistique, Michigan

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Opportunity for public meeting

If you are interested in EPA holding a meeting to further explain these results, please contact:

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Information repository

Copies of the documents related to the cleanup of Manistique River and Harbor are available at:

Manistique Public Library
100 N. Cedar, Room 31
Manistique, Mich.

Schoolcraft County Courthouse
County Clerk's Office
300 Walnut St.
Manistique, Mich.

Web site

Check out the following Web site to learn more about the Manistique Harbor and River site.

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/manistique



Sampling of mud, surface water and fish conducted by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has shown that dredging of the Manistique Harbor and River has been very effective in reducing PCB contamination. PCB is short for polychlorinated biphenyls, which are hazardous chemical compounds once used extensively in manufacturing. PCBs are no longer made in the United States but last a long time if released into the environment.

At the completion of dredging in 2000, the average PCB level in the shallow mud (sediment) was 7.7 parts per million. Parts per million or ppm is a scientific measurement meaning parts of PCBs per million parts sediment. After another round of sampling was done in 2004, the average PCB level had dropped below 1 ppm, greatly exceeding EPA's cleanup goal of 10 ppm. Scientists say these unexpectedly good results may be due to natural processes in the river and harbor burying the PCBs left over from the dredging. It has taken extra time to release the 2004 sampling results because the agencies involved have been very careful ensuring that the sampling results, as well as the documents interpreting those results, are accurate.

In addition to the good news about the sediment, results of surface water sampling done in August 2004 showed PCBs were not detected, and none of the 29 fish sampled contained PCBs above the Food and Drug Administration limit of 2 ppm (the limit set to protect human health). Before dredging occurred in the Manistique River and Harbor, the average PCB level in walleye fillets from the river south of the highway bridge was 0.34 ppm. EPA predicted the dredging project would reduce the PCB level in walleye to 0.12 ppm, but the actual results showed PCB concentrations had dropped all the way to 0.056 ppm.

Details of sampling results

Sediment sampling

Mud samples were taken from 514 locations. Of those samples, 190 contained some level of PCBs. However, only eight samples were found at concentrations above EPA's cleanup goal of 10 ppm. The average level of PCBs was 0.74 ppm, which was far less than expected.

Surface water sampling

Surface water samples were taken from 40 locations and no PCBs were detected.

Fish sampling

Samples were taken from 29 adult fish. Of these, PCBs were found in 11 fish. PCB levels in 10 of those fish were above the Great Lakes Sport Fish Consumption Advisory of 0.05 ppm. This advisory is the recommended maximum amount of PCBs allowed in fish eaten by women of childbearing age, a level that was set to protect unborn children. No fillets had PCB concentrations above the FDA limit of 2 ppm. The average level of PCBs

in fish was 0.11 ppm. However, PCB levels remain high enough that there are still fish consumption advisories in effect for Manistique Harbor.

Sampling plan

Because the harbor and river can change over time due to currents, erosion and development, EPA will continue to take samples annually through 2008 to ensure the PCB levels continue to drop. Sampling done during this period will be more limited, focusing primarily on PCB "hot spots" where concentrations have been high. The first such round of sampling was done in August and September 2005. The results of the 2005 sampling in the "hot spots" found that the PCB levels remained very close to the levels found in the 2004 sampling in those areas. Another round of comprehensive sampling similar to the 2004 study is planned for 2008. After the 2008 sampling, EPA should have a better idea as to when the PCBs will no longer be a concern for the Manistique River and Harbor.

Mailing list

If you would like to be added to the Manistique mailing list or would like to make a change to your address, please contact Cheryl Allen (*see shaded box at right*).

For more information

For more information about the Manistique River and Harbor cleanup, please contact:

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MANISTIQUE RIVER AND HARBOR SITE: Sampling Shows Cleanup Working

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