

**Community Advisory Group (CAG)**  
**Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site**  
**Saratoga Spa State Park, Saratoga Springs, NY**  
**Thursday March 22, 2012 – 1pm-4pm**

**Meeting Summary**

**Members and Alternates Attending:** David Adams, Rich Elder, Manna Jo Greene, Richard Kidwell, Edward Kinowski, William Koebbeman, Roland Mann, David Mathis, Althea Mullarkey, Lois Squire Julie Stokes.

**CAG Liaisons Attending:** Danielle Adams (Ecology & Environment), John Davis (NYS Attorney General), John Fazzolari (Ecology & Environment), Joan Gerhardt (Behan Communication for GE), Gary Klawinski (USEPA), Tim Kruppenbacher (GE), Deepali McCloe (Ecology & Environment), Deanna Ripstein (NYSDOH), Larisa Romanowski (USEPA), Charles Sullivan (NPS).

**Others Attending:** Jeremy Brettholz (Green Mountain College), Peter DeFur (Environmental Stewardship Concepts), Justin Demming (NYSDOH), Philip Dobie, Adam Kane (Lake Champlain Maritime Museum), Jamie Meiers (Post Star), Neal Orsini (Town of Fort Edward), Paul Post (Saratogian), David Tromp (NYSDEC), Audrey Van Genechten (NYSDOH), plus one illegible sign in.

**Facilitators:** Ona Ferguson, Patrick Field.

**Members Absent:** Cecil Corbin-Mark, Darlene DeVoe, Mark Fitzsimmons, Richard Fuller, Brian Gilchrist, Robert Goldman, Robert Goldstein, Gil Hawkins, Christine Hoffer, Jeffrey Kellogg, Aaron Mair, Bill Peck, Merrillyn Pulver-Mouthrop, Tom Richardson, Sharon Ruggi, Rebecca Troutman.

**Next Meeting:** The next CAG meeting will be scheduled for June.

**Action Items:**

- Admin Committee – Create next meeting agenda.
- Peter DeFur – Distribute a written summary related to today's presentation to the CAG,.

**Welcome, Introductions, Review December Meeting Summary**

The facilitator welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The draft December meeting summary was approved without changes. All CAG meeting handouts and presentation slides are available within one week of CAG meetings at: <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/documents.htm>.

**Dredging Project Update**

Tim Kruppenbacher, GE, presented an update on the upcoming dredging season. The primary points from his presentation included:

*Schedule, Scope and General Updates* – The 2012 dredging season is scheduled from May to November, with work 24 hours a day, 6 days a week (this is the same schedule as previous dredging seasons). The goal is to remove 350,000 cubic yards of sediment between Route 4 and Griffin Island (Certification Units, CUs, 26-44), upstream to downstream. The Three Sisters Islands will start earlier and take approximately six weeks. This shallow part of the river will require smaller equipment to dig to access the site and then remove the contaminated sediments. Results from plantings in the 2009 dredge areas

(planted in 2011) are being reviewed and evaluated to inform the habitat program for the 2011 dredge areas. Habitat restoration is driven by weather and could begin in late May or earlier.

*Contracting Team* - Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure will be the contractors managing the processing, as they did in 2009 and 2011. The contracting for dredging and backfilling are almost finalized. Transportation will involve several contractors, including the NYS Canal Corps, which will operate Locks 7 and 8 24 hours a day during dredging. The Health and Safety Plan has been revised and is in place. The destination of the sediments has not yet been determined, but in 2011 the materials were disposed of near Boise, Idaho and in Wayne, Michigan, and both sites consistently and carefully unloaded full trains in less than two days.

*Processing Facility and other Efficiency Improvements* – GE is working to increase overall facility efficiency and productivity by building an additional barge unloading wharf (a previous chokepoint) and installing new size separation equipment, pumps, etc. GE is considering installation of a barge-mounted water treatment plant (it would have to meet essentially the same standards as water treatment operations on land and would use the same process of clarifying, granulated carbon, bag filters). The first rail car will be loaded and backfill will be placed after three weeks of dredging, a shorter timeline than used during previous seasons.

*Getting Started for the Season* – In order to begin operations after the winter, project staff open the dewatering facility, coordinate the opening of the locks (Lock 8 is currently under construction), put in docks and barges, get dredges and other equipment located currently in other places, do some tree trimming, and then review river conditions to determine start time.

CAG members asked only clarifying questions, and answers are embedded in the paragraphs above.

## **Cultural Resources**

Gary Klawinski, EPA, gave an overview of cultural resource investigations done in Phase 1 near Rogers Island, including Fort Edward timbers, Vessel U-2, and some unanticipated discoveries like the propeller. 2011 studies of CUs 9-25 included cribbing and other historic canal features and Native American sites on the shores, and various vessels in the west channel of Rogers Island in-river. The upcoming season will take into account some terrestrial Native American sites. The team is seeking to complete archaeological studies in specific areas at least a year ahead of dredging. For any item found in the river or on land, the project team determines its historical significance and assesses its condition related to PCB contamination. Items found in the river belong to New York State. For items found on individual (private) properties, the property owner is encouraged to donate the item to New York State. Any interim response actions in floodplains are also preceded by a review of on-site cultural resources.

Adam Kane, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM), talked about the work LCMM has done with EPA and GE since 2002 on this project, which includes providing underwater archaeological expertise and a deep understanding of the region's history. General methodology for archaeological work is to do historical research, gather background data, determine what is likely to be found in a given area, look at remote sensing data, then do field investigations such as underwater surveys. The efforts in 2011, based on data collected by GE's contractor URS, showed three locations with potentially significant submerged resources in the coming dredging season: a Training Dike at Three Sister Island installed in the early twentieth century to steer the course of the river, a Training Dike at Griffin Island, and a Piling Complex/wooden revetment to stabilize the steep hillside adjacent to the Old Champlain Canal built in approximately 1826. Dredging will be offset so as not to disturb these findings. The dredging is not expected to have much of an impact on these resources. Unanticipated discoveries in 2011 were a folding anchor, a grappling anchor perhaps from the Revolutionary War, a rudder likely from 1910 and a barrel

buoy. The first two of these are not contaminated and will be displayed at a local venue, such as the Rogers Island Visitors Center. The latter two were documented but disposed of because they were contaminated. 2012 research will include investigation of an area south of Lock 6 with significant historic infrastructure.

Adam said the timbers from Fort Edward disturbed in 2009 are almost completely preserved, and that the team believes the timber was cribbing to stabilize the shoreline beside the Fort (not timber from the fort structure itself). Despite contamination, all the timbers except for three feet of the longest one could be kept. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Phase I between EPA and GE includes work LCMM will do to fulfill the loss of archaeological resources from dredging, including developing a museum exhibit to go with the timbers for the Rogers Island Visitor's Center, compiling a report about the southern end of Rogers Island around 1900 when it was important in maritime commerce, and photo documentation of canal features and remains in the Village of Fort Edward.

CAG members discussed the importance of recording what is learned during the cultural resources work in the dredging project. They suggested that EPA and GE record what they're learning about the history of the estuary and plan to translate those findings for a lay audience in the form of a documentary or other compelling format or display(s) by the end of dredging. They recommended videotaping some of the process in addition to the video being taken of in-river work. They suggested preparing to share what has been done, what technologies have been used, lessons learned, and findings. The story is of value for people along the whole river, so any and all public education would be a great benefit. Gary Klawinski said EPA and GE are exploring options administratively for the MOA for Phase 2, and consulting parties and the CAG will have an opportunity to give input on the contents of that MOA.

### **Review of CAG Questions on Dredging Impacts on PCB Concentrations in Fish**

Peter DeFur, TAG advisor, reviewed the objectives of the dredging project. He will provide a written summary of his presentation to CAG members. Peter reviewed the differences in perspective by the Federal Natural Resources Trustees (NOAA, NPS and USFWS) from EPA and GE regarding the concentration and volume of PCBs likely to be left in the river at the end of the project. He described remediation goals of fish tissue target PCB concentrations of up to 0.4mg/kg per fillet and up to 0.7mg/kg for concentrations in other animals.

Peter discussed the Federal Natural Resources Trustees' position that the sediment PCB concentrations are higher than previously known and that the models 10 years ago were based on this older data. Furthermore, he said that the assumptions about how many PCBs move downstream through natural processes (which may explain the higher actual concentrations) were higher than the current data suggests, that is, more PCBs are staying put than anticipated. Thus, using the same model of 10 years ago, based on new data, fish tissue levels are likely to decrease more slowly than anticipated. According to this model, more PCBs would need to be dredged in order for the project to reach the goals set for fish tissue levels. The Federal Natural Resources Trustees suggested that the most effective way to meet the goals set for fish tissue levels is to dredge in the acres closest to the planned dredge area in River Sections 2 & 3. Peter did not evaluate the Federal Natural Resources Trustees' analysis on where to find these PCBs or on whether their fish tissue level goals could be attained by dredging their recommended 136 additional acres.

CAG members discussed the following topics in response to the presentation; responses are in italics:

- Dredging small areas – A CAG member expressed concern that no matter how contaminated small sites of less than 50,000 square feet, they will not be dredged. *Because of the geography of the river and the requirement that a site needs to be further than a half a mile from dredging activities to be*

*“isolated,” EPA does not believe any such sites were left out of the delineation. Any samples in which two or more adjacent cores exceeded concentration limits were included in the delineation.*

- Models and attaining fish concentration objectives – A CAG member expressed concern that PCBs will still pose risks in the river after the clean up to humans and other species. Several CAG members asked for more clarity on how EPA expects the ROD objectives to be obtained given the limited natural attenuation process for PCBs and given what new data shows. If the current approach and delineated area won't clean up the river to the required amount, shouldn't the approach be adjusted? CAG members asked that a new model be developed collaboratively, as the Peer Review process recommended. *GE and EPA are still considering options with the model.*

## **Floodplains Update**

Gary Klawinski, EPA, reviewed the work done to date in the floodplains, including the number of samples taken since 2000. There are a total of 36 caps and 24 signage areas in use areas that needed temporary action prior to the remediation. The process for capping is to lay fabric down to prevent exposure, lay six inches of topsoil, and then sometimes reseed or sod. The team discusses with landowners signage, where the cover is, and recommendations on not digging. For 2012, next steps are to address needs of 20 properties that weren't dealt with in 2011 and to look at data gaps in backwater areas where higher flow conditions move away from the river. They will look at data points over 10ppm for immediate action and any places where human uses of the floodplains may have changed. They are developing a work plan for the Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study (RI/FS).

In 2011, as there was a 100-year flood, 190 samples of flood mud were taken in mud depositional areas versus the usual 10-20 per year. Most samples were under 1ppm PCBs, with a few between 1-5ppm. The results are such that EPA is not very concerned about recontamination of PCBs on land due to the flood. One of the current questions is the edge between in-river work (cores in river) and floodplain work (samples).

## **Additional Questions**

A CAG member noted that navigational dredging remains a pending issue that CAG members care about. Another asked about sampling done in river over time and review of caps to be sure they don't move. It was noted that recontamination on top of caps post-dredging does not trigger re-dredging of that area.

## **CAG Business**

*Topics* – CAG members asked for more information on development of a new model of PCB removal and fish tissue contamination levels.

*Meeting Date* – The next CAG meeting will likely be in June.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.