

Community Advisory Group (CAG)
Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site
Meeting Notes
Thursday, March 27, 2008
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
Loudonville, NY

Members and Alternates Attending: Dan Casey, Philip Dobie, John Dutka, Mark Galough, Joe Gardner, Robert Goldman, Robert Goldstein, Manna Jo Greene, George Hodgson, Bill Koebbeman, Roland Mann, John Reiger, Warren Reiss, Lois Squire, Julie Stokes, Ken Watson.

CAG Liaisons Attending: Danielle Adams (E&E), John Callaghan (NYSCC), William Daigle (NYSDEC), David King (USEPA), Deanna Ripstein (NYSDOH), Kristen Skopeck (USEPA).

Others Attending: Lee Coleman (Daily Gazette), Peggy Farrell (E&E), John Hyson (Belshim), Regina Keenan (NYSDOH), Beth Krueger (Behan Communications), Greg Lesniak (Shumaker Consulting Engineering), Paul Loatman (Mechanicville City Historian), D. Maistrety, Carmella Mantello (NYSCC), Fred Realbuto (Audubon International), Nick Reisman (Post-Star), Ben Rice (NPS), Benjamin Stafford (SCA Hudson Valley), Andrew Timmins (D.A. Collins), John Vetter (USEPA).

Facilitators: Ona Ferguson, Patrick Field.

Members Absent: Cecil Corbin-Mark, Mark Fitzsimmons, Richard Fuller, Gil Hawkins, Preston Jenkins, Betty Koval, John Lawler, Aaron Mair, David Mathis, Dan McGraw, Merrillyn Pulver-Moulthrop, Judy Schmidt-Dean, Mindy Wormuth.

Next meetings: The next CAG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 4 at Saratoga Spa State Park.

Action Items

- EPA will provide information about the independent technical assistance available to the CAG.
- CBI will work to arrange a morning meeting on navigational dredging.
- EPA will present at the next CAG meeting on topics identified in the February 11, 2008 letter to the Times Union editor and will give an update on the negotiations for hiking trails above the waterline.
- EPA will share the list of contractors approved for the water supply project with Phil Dobie.
- CAG members are requested to let EPA know of people or organizations interested in participating in cultural resources consulting parties meetings.
- EPA will contact Saratoga Plan/Julie Stokes about the archaeological review near the Bemis Heights site.
- All are welcome to attend an informational meeting about the water supply issue on April 28 at Waterford High School.

Welcome, Introductions, Review of September Meeting Summary and Action Items

Facilitators welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the notes from the January meeting were approved with one change that added more specificity in the text and an appendix item on the topic of taxation and the dewatering facility.

Phase 2 Dredge Area Delineation Report

David King presented the Phase 2 Dredge Area Delineation Report (P2DAD), reviewing maps of the areas of the river that will be dredged in Phase 2. This presentation was a repeat of the one given at the January CAG meeting, and provided for participants who may have missed the January meeting. The presentation can be found at <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/documents.htm>. Both the Dredge Area Delineation Phase 2 Factsheet and the full Phase 2 Dredge Area Delineation Report are available on the web at www.epa.gov/hudson.

The P2DAD was based on over 50,000 sediment samples collected to determine the amount and location of PCBs. Approximately 400 acres of river will be dredged, and the typical dredge depth will be three feet. The P2DAD indicates that a smaller volume of sediment will be dredged than originally estimated in the Record of Decision (ROD), but a larger mass of PCBs will be captured. Though there has been a reduction in the volume of material to be dredged, the project timeline remains the same. The P2DAD was reviewed by USFWS, NOAA, DEC and DOH. Some agencies, including NOAA, thought GE should plan to dredge more material, but EPA thinks the P2DAD meets the objectives of the ROD.

EPA expects that a draft Phase 2 Design will be available for public comment in July (120 days after the approval of the P2DAD). In 2008, there will be some additional sampling done to fill data gaps, and those results will be incorporated into the final design.

CAG discussion focused on the following topics:

- Several CAG members noted concerns about whether the decision to dredge less volume is actually a project shortcut. They mentioned a letter to the editor published in the Times Union on February 11, 2008 that cast doubt on the decisions in the P2DAD. David King stated that the large number of samples gives EPA confidence that they know where the PCBs are so dredging can be more efficient. He agreed to present on the key points in the letter to the editor at the next CAG meeting.
- Several CAG members requested independent technical assistance in reviewing the DAD. EPA staff described a new EPA program (replacing the TOSC program) that makes such technical assistance available to the CAG and other groups. Kristen Skopeck committed to send the CAG information on that program.
- The areas to be dredged have been refined, which leaves certain areas in need of navigational dredging outside of the boundaries of the cleanup project. One CAG member asked if this means that the NYSCC can safely dredge in those areas without having to worry about PCBs. David King stated that while there will be project dredging in many areas where navigational dredging is desired, it is possible that after project

dredging is completed and EPA standards are met there may be concentrations of PCBs in the channel that remain higher than what the state allows.

Waterline Update

David King presented an overview of the proposed waterline from Troy to provide an alternate water supply for Waterford and Halfmoon should it become necessary. EPA reviewed several options for contingency plans to provide an alternate water supply to the towns. The outcome of this review is that a waterline will be built from Troy to Halfmoon and Waterford. This outcome is what the towns wanted and is the approach EPA felt was most conservative. The proposed waterline would double Halfmoon's capacity. The proposed waterline will run along an abandoned rail spur and behind the industrial complex. The aerial of the proposed waterline can be found at <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/documents.htm>. The land on which the proposed waterline will be located is owned by the NYSCC, the City of Troy, Canadian Pacific Rail, and the City of Mechanicville, among others. Should an alternative water supply be needed, the towns will be able to activate it with the throw of one switch. EPA has done archaeological and geological studies, and they think the project is on schedule to have the alternative water supply infrastructure completed by May 2009.

EPA and the towns are now discussing the point at which the alternative water supply would be utilized. Towns would like to use the alternative water supply whenever any project dredging is underway, while EPA would want the towns to switch to the alternative supply whenever there was a question about water quality. Water takes two to four days to get from the Thompson Island Dam to the two towns, so if there is an exceedance, the towns can switch to the alternate water supply and then, a few days after the problem is resolved, they can switch back. With a sampling turnaround time of 24 hours, there will be plenty of time for switchovers during Phase 1 dredging. Phase 2 dredging contingencies may need to be handled differently due to the reduced time of travel from the dredging areas to the water intakes. Construction of the waterline will be an Army Corp of Engineers project, and it will be owned by EPA for the duration of the cleanup.

Julie Stokes and others would like to discuss the efforts underway to build hiking trails along the canal system with EPA. The trail proponents have had trouble getting access to the City of Mechanicville owned portion and would appreciate if help from EPA in negotiating recreational trail use in that area. Dave King offered to work with Julie Stokes on the issue.

Brief Updates

Construction Update

Dave King presented on the dewatering facility site construction. Substantial work has been done on the wharf area, while the canal is drawn down for the winter months. The wharf is almost entirely dug out, all the piles and steel are in. The dynamite has been removed from the site and a structure has been built for the filter cakes. The construction is on schedule.

Construction Activities Planned for 2008

David King stated that GE is getting ready to regrade the area by the wharf. GE will next pour the slabs for the wharf, then dress it. A liner will be put down, then the surfaces will be built up and GE will begin to bring equipment on site. The construction of the work support marina on the Moreau side of the River will begin in April and will include an archaeological review. The marina work is projected to be complete by July. There will also be some in-river work (pile driving) this summer. Dave King suggested there be another tour of the dewatering facility planned for the CAG in September/October so that everyone can see the progress.

CAG Member Outreach Needs

Ona Ferguson gave a summary of those resources CAG members indicated are most useful for outreach to their constituencies. Those resources identified include fact sheets, maps, CAG meeting summaries, site plans or illustrations and advanced notice of important press releases. At the next meeting, the CAG will discuss important resources and will give input on how the Community Involvement Plan should be updated.

Cultural Resources Update

John Vetter gave a presentation on ongoing cultural resources work, which can be found at <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/documents.htm>. There has been work done in connection with the dewatering site, the work support marina and the proposed water line, in addition to in-river Phase 2 area investigations.

There has been substantial work completed for Phase 1 dredge areas in the form of studies, consulting party meetings, and consultation with NYSDEC, the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other consultants. EPA will be working closely with National Park Service (NPS) in Phase 2, which includes dredging near an NPS site. EPA has asked GE to provide Phase 2 archaeological data and reasoning in a particular format, learning from the Phase 1 effort. EPA is seeking people or organizations interested in participating in the consulting parties meetings as the project moves further south (please contact the Field Office if you are interested.)

Recent investigations in the area of the proposed waterline uncovered an archaeological site on a bluff where the waterline from Troy to Halfmoon is planned. The site was a prehistoric chert quarry and a trading post. EPA is considering mitigations for this site; access for hiking trails may be considered among mitigation options.

At the work support marina, EPA has been working with GE to minimize the footprint of the facility by implementing changes such as using floating instead of ground-anchored docks, decreasing underground installation of utilities to keep the subsurface terrain intact, and building smaller truck ramps than initially planned to bring vehicles to the river.

112 cultural resources have been identified in Phase 2 areas. There will be surveys of these resources, perhaps starting in summer 2008. EPA's hope is that the archaeological work on this project will have a positive effect on the region, leaving behind new documents and information as well as a strong network of archaeologists and thereby contributing to a better understanding of the region and how to protect it.

Next CAG meeting

CAG members proposed the following topic ideas for the next CAG meeting:

- Habitat replacement (how will it occur, use of native plants, contract 5)
- Another river tour to observe hydraulic dredging
- CIP updates, outreach
- TAG/TOSC/TASC
- Construction Update

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.