

FOX RIVER CURRENT

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Update from the Lower Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership

DNR, EPA Announce \$30 Million Cleanup Near De Pere Dam

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

A \$30 million expedited cleanup plan was announced by Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, then-U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Tom Skinner and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Hassett on April 12 at De Pere's Voyageur Park.

The cleanup, to be done under a federal agreement called a consent decree, will involve the removal of PCB-contaminated sediment in the Lower Fox River, adjacent to the De Pere Dam.

The agreement states that NCR Corp. and Sonoco-U.S. Mills, Inc. will remove about 120,000 cubic yards of highly contaminated sediment downstream and west of the dam. (See related article on Page 2.) The governor explained the agreement's importance.

"This agreement is the next logical step in the process as we move forward with the Fox River cleanup project," he said. "DNR and EPA have been working cooperatively with the companies to expedite the cleanup of this area as soon as possible, instead of waiting until an overall agreement is reached for the cleanup of the rest of the river from Appleton to Green Bay."



Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle (left), former EPA Regional Administrator Tom Skinner (center) and Wisconsin DNR Secretary Scott Hassett announce a \$30 million cleanup near De Pere Dam.

"The Fox River is the biggest source of PCBs flowing into Lake Michigan," Skinner added. "Cleaning up this hot spot is a major step toward removing the Fox River and Lower Green Bay from EPA's list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern."

The companies agree to design and implement the cleanup project to dredge, dewater and dispose of the contaminated sediment in this portion of the river. Design of the project is already underway. Dredging will start in spring 2007.

————— See \$30 Million Cleanup, Page 7

Hot Spot to be Removed in 2007

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The first phase of cleanup in the downstream portion of the Lower Fox River is scheduled to begin next year in the reach that spans from De Pere to Green Bay.

Two paper companies, NCR Corp. and Sonoco-U.S. Mills Inc. (formerly U.S. Paper Corp.) have committed to doing the cleanup under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources supervision. This agreement, called a consent decree, which was filed in federal court in April, also contains a statement of work detailing what will be done and when.

Specifically, NCR and Sonoco will be responsible for removing about 120,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment in a "hot spot" along the west bank of the river just downstream of the De Pere Dam. This hot spot will need to be dredged or excavated as outlined in a design document to be approved by EPA and DNR.

"This is a 'hot spot' because it has much higher concentrations of PCBs than any other area in the river," explained EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg. "In fact, this area has concentrations of PCBs that are more than four times higher than the next highest concentration known to reside in the river."

The companies will remove and dewater (squeeze water from sediment) sediment, treat any wastewater and dispose of the leftover sediment off site in a state-approved landfill. In addition, they will build access roads, staging areas, and any other structures necessary to successfully complete the work. When this phase of the cleanup is done in 2007, the companies will restore the on-shore area to its original condition.

Sampling after the work has been completed is critical to ensure that all of the highest concentrations have been removed and the higher levels of risks due

to the contamination are reduced. Samples and surveys will be done to ensure that the agencies' cleanup goals have been met. While this project will only remove about 1.5 percent of the total volume of contaminated sediment above the cleanup level, it will remove about 10 percent of the PCBs.

EPA, DNR Propose Cleanup Changes

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

A plan to recommend some changes to the current cleanup plan for portions of the Lower Fox River and Green Bay should be available to the public by July.

New information collected while the original cleanup plan was being designed led U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to propose a combination of capping with dredging as opposed to dredging alone, as detailed in a July 2003 decision document. Their proposal separates the site into smaller areas which will allow the cleanup to be tailored to meet individual conditions in each of those areas. This plan would also cost less, make the cleanup go faster, and make better use of limited landfill space.

Details on the recommended cleanup plan can be found in documents called the proposed plan and basis of design. They will be placed at the information repositories listed on Page 7 and online at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver.

EPA and DNR will be asking for public input this summer during a formal comment period and at a public meeting in Green Bay. Information on how to submit comments will be available on EPA's Web site.

Third Year of Lake Dredging Resumes

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Year three of dredging in Little Lake Butte des Morts began in earnest in early May with two dredges working around the clock, five days a week along the east and west shorelines.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are overseeing the work being done by WTM I and Glatfelter's contractors. The goal is to beat last year's total of 88,000 cubic yards. This year, they are planning to remove 100,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment.

"This is a very workable plan since we are starting a lot earlier this year," said EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg. "Last year, we didn't get started until mid July."

As work is completed this summer, the dredges will be moved around the lake near the navigation channel, north of the Menasha Locks. Contaminated sediment removed from the lake will again be taken to the treatment area along the west shore. It will be mixed with chemicals that will help bind sediment particles together before being pumped into large tubes that will let the water drain out. From there, the cleaned sediment will be trucked to a state-approved landfill in the nearby town of Chilton.



A swinging ladder cutterhead hydraulic dredge that will be used in Little Lake Butte des Morts. This dredge digs into sediment and has a suction pump that pumps the sediment and water to an on-shore facility where the water is treated and the solid material is collected for off-site disposal.

Hahnenberg said that based on last year's experience, many improvements have been added to the sediment removal process. "Although the system worked well last year, it should be even better this year," he continued. "We have some new equipment that should help us process the sediment quicker. We think it will make the overall system run more efficiently."

Although dredging is scheduled to continue into early November, boaters will have access to the channel the entire time. Those using the lake should watch for areas marked by buoys and lighted markers that are in place for safety reasons.

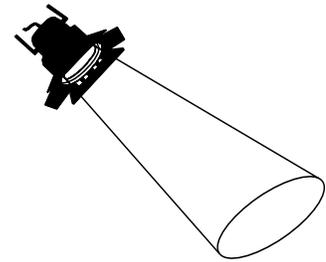
Updates will be provided on www.littlelakecleanup.com.

The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:

Habitat Preservation on Washington Island

By Colette Charbonneau, Fish and Wildlife Service



After five years of work and negotiations, the Door County Land Trust protected one of Washington Island's most unique hidden jewels, 53 acres of wetlands, forest and a large stretch of undeveloped shoreline on the shores of Little Lake and Green Bay. The Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council funded \$298,000 of the habitat preservation project. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources funded \$265,000 from the Knowles-Nelson State Stewardship Fund and \$10,000 came from support of land trust members.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DOOR COUNTY LAND TRUST

This small peninsula that extends into Door County's Little Lake is part of the shoreline that was purchased through the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council.

The land protected by the land trust includes over 1,300 feet of shoreline and a small peninsula that extends into Little Lake. In addition, the ground-water springs that feed Little Lake as well as a five-acre, spring-fed low wetland (known as a fen) and 10-acre, lowland cedar forest have been preserved. The area includes the dwarf lake iris (*Iris lacustris*) and a Great Lakes plant known only from the shores of Lakes Michigan and Huron. Also of significance on the protected property is the possible presence of the federally endangered Hine's Emerald dragonfly in the wetlands. In addition, Little Lake supports a productive small pan fish population, composed of perch, rock and smallmouth bass, and a large population of breeding waterfowl. The northeast

corner of the lake, where the dip occurs, is a major breeding site for a host of amphibians.

Little Lake is the only inland lake located on Washington Island and spans 24 acres with a maximum depth of only six feet. This small, landlocked lake was created thousands of years ago as the shallow bay of glacial Lake Nippising was slowly closed off from Green Bay by sand and gravel deposits. As the glacial waters receded, a 250-foot wide cobblestone ridge was formed to create Little Lake.

See **Spotlight**, Page 5

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“Little Lake is one of Door County’s ecological gems and is an area most deserving of protection,” according to Terrie Cooper, Door County Land Trust’s land program director. “Unlike most inland lakes in Wisconsin, the majority of Little Lake’s shoreline remains undeveloped.”

In December 2005, Cooper worked with DNR to designate Little Lake as one of Wisconsin’s newest state natural areas, a designation reserved for those places that still possess outstanding examples of the native plant and animal communities found before European settlement.

The land trust is celebrating its 20th year as a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting lands and water that contribute significantly to the scenic beauty, rural character and ecological integrity of Door County. For more information on Little Lake and other natural areas in Door County visit the land trust’s web site at www.doorcountylantrust.org.

The natural resource trustees are comprised of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Attorney General, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For further information on natural resource damage assessment projects, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau, FWS, at Colette_Charbonneau@fws.gov or at (920) 866-1726.



Out and About...

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership is made up of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. These partners, as well as other supporting agencies, regularly provide speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following people recently made presentations:

May

- ◆ *Betsy Galbraith*, Oneida Tribe: Oneida High School GIS and biology classes, Oneida; Lower Fox River/Green Bay natural resource damage assessment and Oneida fishery restoration project.
- ◆ *Colette Charbonneau*, FWS: Baird Creek Preservation Foundation, Green Bay; general restoration and land acquisition.
- ◆ *Betsy Galbraith*, Oneida Tribe: Oneida High School students, Menasha; tour of Little Lake Butte des Morts cleanup and dredging areas.

June

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Lower Fox River Watershed Monitoring Program workshop, Green Bay; general tour of cleanup areas.

Neighbors Express Concerns Over G-P Landfill Plan

By Tom Turner, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Over 100 residents from a neighborhood bordering Georgia-Pacific's Green Bay West Landfill, where the company plans to accept PCB-contaminated sediment from the Lower Fox River, let their concerns be known at a public meeting hosted by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in Green Bay on June 1.

Georgia-Pacific, which owns a site near Austin Straubel Airport and the Oneida Bingo and Casino, has asked DNR to approve construction of a double composite lined cell within the site to dispose of the contaminated sediment to be dredged from the river. The cell must meet EPA's standards under its Toxic Substances Control Act. These standards are well-proven engineering and monitoring requirements that ensure effective long-term containment.

"The department is reviewing G-P's application to ensure it meets all applicable state requirements for landfills," according to Len Polczynski, DNR waste program manager. "EPA is simultaneously reviewing the application to see that all TSCA requirements are met. Both approvals are required before G-P can dispose of contaminated sediments at its landfill."

While company officials assured residents the site will not leak and that adequate design, operational and long-term monitoring will insure safety, residents expressed concern over their fears of the long-term health effects of PCBs, which are considered to be "probable cancer-causing" agents.

Georgia-Pacific's plan is to develop a cell liner in several layers. Ten to 16 feet of fly ash will be overlain with four feet of compacted clay liners, then a mix of plastic sheeting and non-woven textiles. When deposits to the cell are complete, it will be topped and sealed with similar layers and monitored for decades into the future.

Although the primary purpose of the meeting was to listen to the public's concerns, Georgia-Pacific's

consultant gave a very brief explanation of how the landfill would be constructed. This was followed by a listening session.

Among the comments was the suggestion that the site be located elsewhere, perhaps at the proposed county landfill in the town of Holland. According to Polczynski, this landfill has not yet been built and probably won't be until 2020.

Residents also proposed detoxifying, or destroying, the high-level PCBs before land filling them. Company officials cited a significant increase in costs associated with detoxification, and insisted that the design of the site and prior experience indicate that PCBs will not leak out of the engineered landfill cell. Site design and monitoring would have to assure that there will be no leakage into ground water or exposure release into the air.

PCBs have contaminated the Lower Fox River for many years. In the 1960s and 1970s, paper companies along the river discharged them as part of their process for making carbonless paper and other products. Seven paper companies have been identified as responsible for the contamination as well as the cleanup.

DNR will be considering the Georgia-Pacific proposal with its decision expected in mid-July. EPA must follow its own approval process, so the agency will hold its own public comment period and meeting in the Green Bay area later this summer.

Although DNR's public comment period has ended, questions may still be directed to Polczynski, at (920) 662-5170-phone; (920) 662-5197-fax; len.polczynski@dnr.state.wi.us; or at DNR, P.O. Box 10448, Green Bay, WI. 54307-0448.

\$30 Million Cleanup *from Page 1*

“This site contains less than five percent of the contaminated sediment in this portion of the Lower Fox,” said Hassett. “But it contains 10 to 15 percent of the total PCB mass in the Lower Fox River.”

PCB concentrations as high as 3,000 parts per million have been found in the sediment in this area of the river. EPA’s goal is to remove sediment containing at least 50 ppm of PCB contamination. However, in the areas to be dredged, all sediment with more than 1 ppm will be removed.

The consent decree was lodged in U.S. district court in Milwaukee on April 12. A 30-day public comment period was announced by U.S. Department of Justice on April 26. The court will consider all comments received, as well as the responses, before approving the agreement.



Check out these Web sites:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/foxriver/index.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver/>

<http://contaminants.fws.gov/Issues/Restoration.cfm>

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/nrda/index.html>

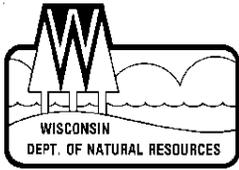
Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the local libraries listed below. Information repositories at the public libraries in De Pere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets are being maintained at these locations as well as at the following repositories:

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5205



An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan was based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 2nd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.



Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

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Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
 United States Environmental Protection Agency
 Region 5
 77 W. Jackson Blvd.
 Chicago, IL 60604-3590