

WEST CHICAGO INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM

May 11, 2007

Minutes

ATTENDEES

John Coakley, City of Warrenville
Emily Larson, City of Warrenville
John Wills, CBBEWL, Local Communities
Richard Allen, IEMA/DNS
Thomas Williams, IEPA
Chuck Grigalauski, IEPA
Gerald Karr, Illinois Attorney General's Office
Don Feld, TAG
Jim Kleinwachter, Conservation Foundation
Kim Smart, DuPage River Coalition
Mark Krippel, Tronox
Sandra Hartman-Riese, property owner
Mark Sargis, Bellande & Sargis
Rupa Shenoy, Daily Herald
Rebecca Frey, U.S. EPA, Superfund
Mary Fulghum, U.S. EPA, Office of Regional Counsel

INTRODUCTIONS / COMMENTS

Everyone in the room introduced themselves because there were some new attendees present.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS SITE

Becky noted that the 676 known contaminated properties at the Residential Areas Site have been cleaned up. There are still a few outstanding issues to resolve: (1) there are three "no access" properties in EPA's study area that have not yet been tested; and (2) there is still the "old cleanup residual" issue that needs to be resolved. The 2nd issue is based on the fact that Kerr-McGee and the City conducted a voluntary cleanup in the mid-1980s using different cleanup criteria than that used by EPA during the more recent Superfund cleanup. EPA's current cleanup criterion is based on a soil concentration, with soil samples sent to a lab for analysis. The cleanup criterion used in the 1980s was based on a dose rate using hand-held instruments. The question is whether there is a potential at some of the old properties for residual contamination at the base of the old excavation that could exceed the current cleanup standard. EPA is evaluating this issue and looking at all the information from the old cleanup compared to the more recent Superfund investigation and cleanup. This evaluation is being done to determine if there is a need to do additional testing at some of the old properties.

Mark Sargis asked if there was a mechanism or process in place to deal with situations where redevelopments are taking place or where a property owner is digging down in their yard to put on an addition or a swimming pool and they hit a hotspot. No cleanup can be totally certain that it found and cleaned up each and every hotspot. Is there a procedure to deal with this? New property owners might not even know that there was a cleanup on their property, and there is nothing on the property records. Becky said that this is only a potential issue for the residential properties that underwent the cleanup in the mid-1980s, and the issue about potential residual contamination on those old properties is being evaluated and will be resolved before the Residential Areas site cleanup is closed-out. Becky said that the consent decree does not specifically address this issue, but that EPA could discuss possible options for addressing that kind of situation. Mark Krippel stated Tronox's position that they believe there is not an issue with the 1980s cleanup and that a fairly straightforward technical analysis demonstrates that the cleanup of those properties is consistent with and relatively equivalent to the Superfund cleanup.

REED-KEPPLER PARK SITE

As reported at the last meeting, Tronox had submitted the data from the groundwater monitoring rounds that they had conducted since the consent decree. Becky said EPA is conducting the first five-year review for the RKP site and will route the draft report to IEPA for review, probably within the next month. EPA is trying to complete the five-year review report early, sometime this summer, rather than the official due date of late September. Also, Tronox will be conducting the next groundwater sampling round on June 5th.

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT SITE, river portion

As mentioned at the last meeting, Reach 5A of the river (which goes from the STP to Gary's Mill Road) is the only reach of the creek or river that is in the maintenance & monitoring phase following completion of all remedial action construction activities.

Reach 5B of the river (which goes from Gary's Mill Road to the confluence with Kress Creek) is getting close to having all remedial action construction work complete. This reach of the river still needs some spring restoration plantings. The planting process has started and should be completed in May and June. Completion depends on when the specified plants are made available by the nursery. The Forest Preserve District has provided drawings to Tronox that show where they want the remaining restoration plantings to go.

Within 30 days after all restoration plantings have been completed, Tronox will set up a post-construction inspection to identify any minor "punchlist" items in Reach 5B that need to be addressed. Once all punchlist items are addressed, Reach 5B will move into the maintenance & monitoring phase until all restoration performance standards have been met.

KRESS CREEK/WEST BRANCH DUPAGE RIVER SITE

Becky noted that John Wills will be leading a site tour immediately following the Forum meeting, for those participants that are interested in attending.

Cleanup Progress

Becky reported that the 2007 construction season began at the beginning of April. EPA approved the Final Design/Remedial Action Work Plan for Reaches 5C & 5D of the river on April 4th and the preconstruction meeting was held on April 5th. Tronox started work at the northern end of Reach 5C of the river, which is located just south of the creek/river confluence. (Reach 5C goes from the confluence to Mack Road, and Reach 5D goes from Mack Road to near the River Oaks subdivision.)

For the northern end of Reach 5C, Tronox is using 3-sided sheetpile enclosures to remove the areas of targeted material along the river banks rather than using full pump-bypass systems. Becky said the cleanup work has been going fairly well this season. One issue came up recently that was discussed at yesterday's technical progress meeting regarding the method of installing and removing the steel sheets and impacts to the stream corridor resulting from that work. Tronox may need to do some additional mitigation work in Reaches 5C & 5D that was not in the FD/RA Work Plan, and any agreed-upon procedures & additional mitigation work for future reaches will be included in the FD/RA Work Plan for those future reaches.

Becky also noted that Tronox is still in discussions with some of the property owners further south in Reach 5D regarding property access and sign-off on the restoration plans for those properties.

Similar to Reach 5B of the STP site, the spring planting process has started for Reaches 1 through 4 of the creek (from the storm sewer outfall to the creek's confluence with the river). That planting work should be completed during May and June, and then there will be a post-construction inspection for each reach. Once all punchlist items have been addressed, those reaches will then move into the maintenance & monitoring phase until all restoration performance standards have been met.

John Wills noted that the cleanup work is proceeding well. The west side of the river from the confluence down to the staging area has essentially been excavated, and work is beginning on the east side of the river, including installing the temporary floating bridge, and a minor in-stream crossing already is in place. John said that work in the river to install the piping in preparation for bypass pumping could begin as early as next week.

Design Activities

The next set of reaches being designed are Reaches 5E (from River Oaks subdivision to Williams Road) and Reach 6 (Williams Road to Butterfield Road). The draft design is

still in internal review with Tronox and BBL. They anticipate making the draft document available for regulatory review within the next week or two.

Tronox and BBL also are sending out letters this week to the Reach 5E & 6 property owners, so property owner input on restoration will not yet be reflected in the initial draft of the design. BBL will be meeting next week with Emerald Green representatives (in Reach 5E), and BBL, EPA and the Local Communities met with the Warrenville Cenacle (in Reach 6) on April 26th to discuss issues related to cleanup of that property.

John Wills noted that there are still many outstanding design issues related to Reach 5D, where a number of property owners are not yet on-board in terms of access and approval of the restoration plan for their properties. Becky noted that when the Reach 5C and 5D design was approved, EPA noted that not all property owners had agreed to the work and that there might need to be some minor changes to the design as a result of those negotiations with property owners.

John also noted that the Local Communities have worked with Tronox on some of the design issues raised at the public meetings, specifically regarding proposed truck routes for Reaches 5E and 6. Some members of the public had suggested using a truck route through Forest Preserve District land instead of using public roadways, and the Forest Preserve and BBL are evaluating whether that is a viable alternative.

Jim Kleinwachter raised the issue of having an established residential planting plan that could be packaged and presented to homeowners so they would have a somewhat narrowed, recommended list of plants and/or seed mixes from which to choose. This could help create more uniformity and would recognize that homeowners' needs are different from the Forest Preserve. Many homeowners don't really know what is best and would benefit from a standard planting plan/seed mix that had been reviewed and approved/ recommended by a number of different parties. John agreed that this was a good idea, but also said the property owner ultimately has the right to select how they want their property restored, and we need to be careful of anything that limits their options. John said he was willing to help out in any way he could, but if a committee or some other group is going to be formed, it needs to happen very quickly and there needs to be productive movement on the issue. Jim agreed to take the lead on this and to move quickly. He said the DuPage River Coalition would be willing to make the land owner contacts with the help of the Conservation Foundation, and they might even pursue a 319 grant to follow-up, to patch-in more continuity regarding restoration of the river corridor. John said that the Conservation Foundation should already have a copy of the Conceptual Mitigation and Restoration Design Plan from several years ago that formed the basis of the restoration design, but also agreed to send Jim the most recent plant/seed mix information in the Reach 5C/5D design.

Access Issues

At the last meeting Becky reported that she had gotten access to one of the Reach 5E properties that had not yet granted access. Tronox has since completed the surface

gamma scan work and identified some proposed borehole locations based on the surface gamma data. Tronox will be officially transmitting that information to EPA and the Local Communities for review.

There are still three “no access” properties along the river where owners have not yet given access for testing. All three properties are located in Reach 8, the furthest downstream section of the site.

OTHER ITEMS

NOAA Grant Projects

John Wills provided an update on a series of projects that are being funded using some of the \$10 million grant funding the County received through the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The projects are separate from the Superfund cleanup, but are being done as follow-on projects to help restore and improve the West Branch of the DuPage River.

The first project is the Deep Overwintering Pool project and is proceeding well. It essentially creates an off-line lake in connection to the river to increase the habitat and spawning area available. The lake is being designed specifically for diversity of biological habitat.

The second project is the Side Channel project and is in the area where the pipe corridor was located in Reach 5B of the river. It is designed to take advantage of the different hydrology that already exists in that part of the river. The existing chemistry of the river will only support a certain type of biological diversity. There is a lot of groundwater movement and seepage from the DuPage Valley Bluff (what Route 59 is sitting on) that discharges into an area between the base of that bluff and the river channel. The Side Channel project will create a series of pools and channels in that area that will have different water chemistry from the river, and will provide more diversity in habitat and conditions for the aquatic and biological communities. The only time the channels and pools would be connected to the river would be during certain flood events, but generally would be driven by groundwater hydrology.

John said that both of the above projects were designed and submitted to NOAA, who is conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA document). This document is required for any project that is federally-funded. Both projects should be completed this year.

Another project in the design stage is a Fisheries Research Center. Land acquisition issues are being explored with the Forest Preserve District, preliminary discussions are ongoing with the City of Warrenville regarding what this project would look like, and quite a bit of research is being done on issues related to the project.

Additionally, other projects are waiting until the thorium cleanup is complete before they can move forward. The most southern of those potential projects is to modify the dam in

Warrenville, although there is still a lot of input and discussion that needs to happen before anyone can say what that project would consist of. One good thing about this potential project is that all of the sediment behind the dam will already have been removed by the thorium cleanup project. Someone asked whether the mill race just below the Warrenville Dam would be preserved. John said a number of alternatives have been considered regarding potential modifications there, and a lot more discussion needs to happen; the answer right now is not known.

Effects on Animals/Species Diversity

Mark Sargis asked whether certain species or animals would show certain signs or effects that would signal potential risks or be an indicator for contamination. For example, fish kills in a river would indicate that there was a problem with the river. Would there be anything similar related to this radioactive contamination that would show up in animals before people? John Wills said that there is not any particular species or any impact that we can point to and say it is an indicator. There are so many other things that can affect plants and animals (lawn fertilizer, motor oil, battery acid, pesticides, etc), and any impacts to plants or animals are more likely due to those other things than any low-level radioactivity. Any potential health effects from low level radiation are related only to long term, chronic exposure. Rich Allen noted that the best studies come from places like Hanford in Washington state where they have radiation going into the Columbia River millions of times higher than what we are talking about here. Rich said that with those radiation levels you can actually see something in terms of diversity and numbers of species, but it does not translate to the low levels and the tight cleanup standard we are using at these sites.

NEXT FORUM MEETING

The next meeting of the West Chicago Intergovernmental Forum is scheduled for Friday, July 20, 2007, at 10 a.m. in West Chicago City Council Chambers, West Chicago.

West Chicago Intergovernmental Forum Agenda

West Chicago City Council Chambers
May 11, 2007
10:00 am

INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

SITE STATUS UPDATES

- **Residential Areas Site**
- **RKP Site**
- **STP Site (River Portion)**
- **Kress Creek Site**

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS / ISSUES

- **Update on NOAA Grant Projects**

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURN

SITE TOUR