

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting

Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site

December 5, 2024 (Virtual)

Meeting Summary

MEETING IN BRIEF

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site met virtually on Thursday, December 5, 2024. EPA gave presentations on the Floodplain Investigation, Upper River Habitat Restoration and Sampling work, and brief updates on the Third Five-Year Review, Powerhouse and Allen Mill Deconstruction, Lower River Investigations and Community Outreach. EPA responded to follow-up questions from CAG members as each topic was discussed.

Presentation slides and materials for this and previous CAG meetings are available on the CAG's website: <https://hudsoncag.wspis.com/documents.htm>

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

- EPA to provide an estimate of the ratio of public to private land in the floodplain (as requested by CAG member Gil Hawkins – to be provided at next meeting)
- EPA to provide PCB results for areas people frequently occupy at Hudson Crossing Park. EPA is coordinating with Kate Morse.
- Five-Year Review Special Studies – Admin Team to discuss potentially scheduling a Technical Session so more detail can be presented and discussed.

NEXT MEETING

- The next CAG meeting has not yet been scheduled. EPA anticipates a meeting in late spring.

DISCUSSION NOTES

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ona Ferguson, facilitator from the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), opened the meeting with a review of the agenda and welcomed all members to introduce themselves.

CAG BUSINESS

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

FLOODPLAIN INVESTIGATION UPDATE

Key points of the floodplain investigation discussion included:

- **Early Actions and Timeline for Permanent Decisions:**
 - **EPA** mentioned that temporary actions (short-term response actions) could become permanent and might shorten the overall timeline. After EPA studies are complete, the Agency will propose a cleanup plan for the floodplain which will include the opportunity for public input.
 - **EPA** noted that the current phase is complex due to how the PCB were distributed to the floodplain from the river. The work takes time and involves a large number of individual landowners. Ecological risk must also be assessed.
- **Human Health Risk Criteria:**
 - **EPA** confirmed that the human health risk assessment is based on the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) and other criteria are also considered.
- **Public vs. Private Ownership and Fish Studies in the Floodplain, and Studies on Eagles and Other Birds:**
 - **EPA** explained that there are more privately owned properties in the floodplain, but public properties are larger and more frequently used. Fish studies include consideration of near-shore areas (referred to as the “wedge”) to determine where fish may also be exposed to PCBs associated with the floodplain.
 - **EPA** said a biological assessment, which included eagles and mink, was conducted before dredging and the information is being incorporated into the floodplain investigation.
- **Hudson Crossing Park Wetland Areas:**
 - **EPA** is following up with Hudson Crossing Park to further discuss details of past and potential future sampling.
- **Erosion Problems and Cap Soil Depth:**
 - **A CAG member** asked about the depth of the soil caps, why stone isn't used, and what IRIS is.
 - **EPA** explained that the cap soil depth is at least 6 inches. Where applicable, stone is placed to shield the shoreline areas from river flow and ice scour. They also mentioned that property owners are appreciative of the work and the work is often viewed as improvements to the property. Owners have been very cooperative with allowing access for the work and follow-up inspections. IRIS is an EPA database of risk studies. **A CAG member** expressed concern that IRIS hasn't been updated recently and could potentially underestimate PCB toxicity.
- **Property Deeds and Institutional Controls, Signage on Public vs. Private Property and DOH Fish Advisories:**
 - **EPA** expects some of the actions may become a permanent part of the final cleanup decision. The overall goal will be to permanently remove unacceptable levels of PCBs from the floodplain.
 - **EPA** indicated that signs have been posted on both public and private property, with permission, and most are on public lands. **DOH** mentioned challenges in

getting signs posted on municipal lands. EPA indicated it plans to assist DOH with making sure signs get posted where needed.

- **A CAG member** noted that crabs caught from the Hudson can be sold on the open market and that fishers may not check DOH advisories while fishing. EPA was not aware of crabs being sold on the open market and any such activity should be reported to NYS and EPA.

UPPER RIVER HABITAT RESTORATION AND SAMPLING WORK UPDATE

Key points of the Habitat Restoration and Sampling Work Update discussion included:

- **Data Presentation:**
 - **A CAG member** complimented the improved presentation of data.
- **Special Studies:**
 - **EPA** said the results of completed special studies and the scope of the upcoming studies will be shared as requested, but suggested a separate technical session would be a more productive forum than a CAG meeting.
- **Habitat Restoration Success Criteria, Boat Washes and Biologs:**
 - **EPA** mentioned that while the success criteria remain the same, the success parameters are evolving. Most areas are doing well, though some are not and need continued attention and response actions.
 - **DEC** noted improvements in habitat restoration and mentioned the need for more permanent response actions in the floodplain.
 - **EPA** stated that if installed properly, biologs should not be affected by boat wash/wakes. Experience has shown that they need to be staked down well to avoid becoming boating hazards.
- **Fish Recovery:**
 - **EPA** confirmed the fish goals and targets and offered to again share the table showing progress toward these values.
- **Note on fish studies:**
 - “Species-weighted average” is the term associated with a group (composite) of fish a typical angler would take from the river. It’s the approach used to evaluate risk in the ROD.

PROJECT UPDATES

Key points of the Project Updates discussion included:

- **Powerhouse and Allen Mill Deconstruction:**
 - NAPL (Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid) is present in the bedrock near these buildings. The release of PCBs to the river has not occurred. The work is going well.

- **Fish Advisory Outreach:**
 - The meetings will be general in nature. As requested by a CAG member, DOH will bring maps that provide alternate fishing locations to avoid the consumption advisories and/or restrictions in the Hudson River.
 - **A CAG member** shared that there is a very large Latino presence near Sleepy Hollow and many are subsistence fisher people. They suggested posting flyers at churches and along the waterfront areas where people fish.
 - **EPA** indicated that for this meeting information has been sent out in English and Spanish, including to faith-based communities, and interpretation services will be available on site.

WRAP UP AND CAG BUSINESS

- The next CAG meeting has not yet been scheduled but is anticipated to be later in the spring.
- EPA will provide fish advisory meeting flyer by email for distribution.
- Correction will be made to reflect membership changes on the CAG website.
- Gil Hawkins mentioned that this year is the 135th anniversary of the Palisades Interstate Park and they are having an event on April 26.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CAG MEMBERS & ALTERNATES

Scott Croft (Hudson River Boat & Yacht Association and BoatUS), Jen Benson (Hudson River Sloop Clearwater), Maureen Ferraro-Davis (Sierra Club), Mike Dulong (Riverkeeper), Rich Elder, Drew Gamils (Riverkeeper), Laurie Griffin Gil Hawkins (Hudson River Fishermen's Association), Dan Jeanson (Hudson River Valley Greenway), Michelle Langa (NY/NJ Baykeeper), Ashley Leemans (Washington County SWCD), Dustin Lewis (Saratoga County Soil & Water), David Mathis (Recreational Boating), Kate Morse (Hudson Crossing Park), Gopika Muddappa (Albany County), Althea Mullarkey (Scenic Hudson), Bill Peck (Saratoga County), Richard Slingerland (Historic Hudson River Towns), Andrew Squire, Julie Stokes, Linda von der Heide

CAG LIAISONS & FACILITATOR

Danielle Adams (WSP), John Brodt (Behan Communications), James Candiloro (NYPA/NYSCC), Michael Cheplowitz (USEPA), John Davis (NYSOAG), John Fazzolari (WSP), Ona Ferguson (CBI), Abby Fullem (CBI), Gary Klawinski (USEPA), Angela Martin (NYSDOH), Ed McGowan (Palisades Interstate Park Commission), Larisa Romanowski (USEPA), Lisa Rosman (NOAA), David Tromp (NYSDEC).

OTHERS

Jared A, Emily Abbati, John Armitage, Padraic Bambrick, Joe Battipaglia, Margaret Bauer, Chris Bradley, Christine Bub, Gail Cabahug, Brian Cronin, Kerri Culhane, Jenna Dodge, Kevin Farrar, Emily Flores, Kevin Frazier, Marie French, George Goodwin, Susan Green, Dave Hargett, Casey Hellman, Joshua Hunn, Fabio Iwashita, David Keehn, Rachel Kish, Jennifer Koval, Chelsea Krieg, David LaMere, Chris Locci, Rebecca Martin, Meg Mitchell, Chuck Nieder, Marian Olsen, Bob O'Neill, George Pafumi, Jason Pelton, Denise Piechnik, Marion Powell, Suzie Ross, Armando Spagnoli, Thomas Sweck, Mike Traynor, Olivia Troiano, Audrey Van Genechten, Katherine von Stackelberg, Julie White, Matt Wiener, James Woods