

HUDSON RIVER PCBS SUPERFUND SITE

Community Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday, June 25, 2025



Today's Agenda

Third Five-Year Review Next Steps – Upper Hudson River

- Background/Overview
- Addendum Process
- Special Studies

Project Updates

- Powerhouse & Allen Mill Deconstruction (schedule and next steps)
- Floodplain Investigation Upper Hudson River (brief update and next steps)
- Lower River Investigations (brief update and next steps)



Upper Hudson River Update – Third Five-Year Review Next Steps



What is a five-year review?

- *Purpose: To ensure that cleanups are working as intended and protect people's health and the environment*
- Legally required under the Superfund law
- During the review, the EPA determines if the cleanup work is functioning as intended, if the assumptions made at the time of the cleanup decision are still valid, and if new information calls into question the effectiveness of the cleanup remedy



What is a five-year review? (continued)

- If the EPA identifies any issues during the review that could affect protectiveness, the Agency makes recommendations to address them. These could include additional studies to gather more information
- The process is intended to assess protectiveness of the selected cleanup; not to explore alternative cleanup options or strategies
- The 3rd five-year review was released in January 2025
- The addendum to the 3rd five-year review will be no later than 2027



What did EPA review?

Upper Hudson River PCB cleanup (In-River Sediment):

➤ **Two-part cleanup plan** (Record of Decision) signed 2002: targeted environmental dredging followed by an extended period (decades) of natural recovery

- Gradual improvement in water, fish and sediment would occur over more than 50-year timeframe
- Key objective: lowering PCB levels in fish tissue (reduce risk to people and wildlife)



Summary of Five-Year Review Conclusions

PCB levels in water and fish are going down overall, but EPA needs more data before the Agency can make a protectiveness determination.

- More years of fish data is needed before a decision can be made about whether the cleanup in the upper river is meeting the expectations of the original cleanup plan.
- Consistent with the Agency's 2019 2nd Five-Year Review, EPA needs at least eight years of fish data after dredging to begin to draw science-based conclusions about the rate of recovery in the fish and EPA still does not have that.

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Dredging ended	Year of Equilibrium	Year 1 Sediment collection	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 Sediment collection	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10 Sediment collection	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Upstream dredging Work ended in late November	Fish were collected in April – May (about 4 to 5 months after dredging ended) Demobilization of dredging equipment and habitat work	First full year of recovery						Preliminary data shows continued fish decline	3 rd Five-Year Review	Addendum - possible determination based on previous years data. Example: decision in late 2025 would be based on 2024 data				4 th Five-Year Review

FYR Conclusions Summary (continued)

The EPA is enhancing monitoring of the river to see what's happening.

- The latest report identifies several uneven patterns of recovery. To understand these patterns better, the report contains a series of recommendations and follow up items, which include carrying out special studies to take a closer look at water, fish and sediment in specific areas of the river.
- Some of these studies are already underway.
 - These studies will help the EPA understand how the river is recovering and guide the Agency's next steps.



Addendum Process – Process for Estimating Trends

- Compile/prepare annual post-dredging fish PCB data including supplementary information such as lipid content, weight, length, and sex for the 2016 to 2024 data
- 2024 detailed PCB fish data will be available in July - allowing for 2024 fish data to be finalized (Aug-Sept)
- Evaluate and use various methods for calculating trends in fish tissue PCBs (Oct-Nov).
- Calculate rates of decline in PCB levels in individual fish species, by station, by reach, by river section, species weighted average (ROD method for overall comparison)
- Compare trends to expectations of recovery (various comparisons)
- Prepare addendum and conduct briefings

Schedule and Next Steps

- The eighth year of fish data was collected in 2024. The results of that sampling will be available this calendar year (2025)
- EPA will initiate special studies in 2025 to help the Agency understand how the river is recovering
- EPA will evaluate the fish data and assess whether a protectiveness determination could be made as early as this year
- If not, EPA will report out its analysis and continue to actively monitor the river (including 2026 water, fish and sediment sampling) and evaluate data until sufficient data is available to determine protectiveness
- No later than 2027, EPA will issue the addendum with a protectiveness determination