

**Community Advisory Group (CAG)**  
**Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Thursday, November 15, 2007**  
**1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**  
**Saratoga Spa State Park, NY**

**Members and Alternates Attending:** Philip Dobie, John Dutka, Joe Gardner, Robert Goldman, Robert Goldstein, Manna Jo Greene, George Hodgson, Bill Koebbeman, Betty Koval, Roland Mann, David Mathis, Warren Reiss, Lois Squire, Julie Stokes.

**CAG Liaisons Attending:** Danielle Adams (Ecology & Environment), John Callaghan (NYSCC), William Daigle (NYSDEC), Joan Gerhardt (Behan Communications), John Haggard (General Electric), David King (USEPA), David Rosoff (EPA), Deanna Ripstein (NYSDOH).

**Others Attending:** Mark Behan (Behan Communications), Kenneth Blanchard (Hudson River Otter Stewardship Program), Lee Coleman (Daily Gazette), Tom Cronin (Atlantic Testing/Thew Assoc.), Rami Cummings (Empire State College), Joe Finan (Saratoga NHP), John Hyson, Ed Kennedy (Kingsbury resident), Gary Klawinski (Ecology & Environment), Brian Nearing (Times Union), Nick Reisman (Post-Star), Diane Simonelli (Maximillian Technologies), Thaus Tricky, Julie Vaughese (Times Union).

**Facilitators:** Ona Ferguson, Patrick Field.

**Members Absent:** Dan Casey Cecil Corbin-Mark, Mark Fitzsimmons, Richard Fuller, Mark Galough, Harry Gutheil, Gil Hawkins, John Lawler, Aaron Mair, Dan McGraw, Merrilyn Pulver, John Reiger, Judy Schmidt-Dean, Mindy Wormuth.

**Next meetings:** The next CAG meeting will be held on January 24, 2008, at the Firehouse in Fort Edward.

**Action Items**

- A construction site tour will be scheduled once the dynamite issue has been resolved.
- Greg Dixon will share the URL of the Tourism website with CAG members for feedback once it is ready to be made public [update: done - [www.champlaincanal.org](http://www.champlaincanal.org)]

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

Facilitators welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that they were making an audio recording of the meeting to be used by the facilitator (if needed) when preparing the written meeting summary. There were no objections raised by the CAG to recording the meeting. The notes from the September meeting were approved without any changes.

**Plans for Addressing Unexploded Ordinance (Dynamite)**

David King of USEPA presented on how EPA and GE are addressing the dynamite found at the dewatering facility site. Please see <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/> for the PowerPoint presentation. See last meeting summary for background on this issue.

Next steps are to get all areas of concern addressed by the end of 2007. EPA will be removing soil or trenching using armored excavators (back hoes with blast shields to protect the operators). Any dynamite encountered will be turned over to NY State police to be burned on site. Once this is addressed, GE will continue with the site construction.

### **Water Supply Update**

David King stated that EPA staff met with representatives from the Towns of Waterford and Halfmoon to discuss options for providing alternative water supply. EPA is working on developing a solution that will be acceptable to the towns.

A CAG member asked if there is data on PCB levels coming into and leaving the towns' treatment plants. Deanna Ripstein of NYSDOH indicated that both towns are required to measure PCB levels at their water intakes. EPA will fund the health department to collect samples using a different analytical method than used by the treatment facilities, consistent with the method being used to generate baseline water quality data for the river. NYSDOH hopes to do that sampling in the spring of 2008. The first step will be to develop a contract with a lab to analyze the water samples.

### **Landfilling of Dredge Material after Dewatering**

John Haggard of General Electric told the group that GE has entered into a contract with Waste Control Specialists. That company owns a landfill in Andrews, Texas that is permitted to accept PCB-laden material above 50ppm. GE has also entered into contracts with rail companies and has entered into a contract to lease 450 rail cars. The facility in Texas is modern and has been in operation since 1997. GE will work with WCS to ensure that the landfill's infrastructure is able to handle the bulk of materials coming from the project. EPA Region 2 staff will work closely with their counterparts in Texas. The overall message was that many pieces necessary for transporting the waste are now in place. All the dredged materials will go to the Andrews landfill.

### **Update on DEC State Projects**

Kevin Farrar of NYS DEC presented on the ongoing remedial work at the GE Hudson Falls Plant Site and the Fort Edward Plant Sites. Please see <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/> for the PowerPoint presentation.

#### *The Hudson Falls Plant Site*

The 2004 Record of Decision (ROD) identified several remedial actions to be taken, which included a bedrock groundwater remedy. A tunnel drain collection system is being built to address bedrock groundwater concerns. The tunnel is designed to intercept contaminated

groundwater that now flows toward the river. It will take about two years to install the tunnel, which will extend below the bottom of the river. Tunnel installation involves blasting a shaft and the excavation of tunnels that will intercept the contamination. Contaminated groundwater and oils containing PCBs will be pumped from the tunnel and treated at the recently expanded GE treatment plant. GE has a continuing public outreach program and has worked to minimize the impacts of noise and vibration on the community.

Each series of blasts takes the tunnel shaft approximately 10 feet deeper. GE contractors lowers tools and workers down into the shaft as needed with two cranes to advance the construction. Video of some recent blasts were shown.

DEC is monitoring the dust generated by each blast. Readings to date have been within DEC's dust standards. GE is also monitoring for vaporized PCBs. GE is vibration monitoring the Baker's Falls dam to make sure there are no adverse affects on the dam from the blasting. Studies were done prior to construction to determine how close the tunnel could safely be built to the dam. Rock debris removed from the tunneling is staged, tested and properly disposed of (at a TSCA landfill if above 10ppm PCBs).

GE does weekly water data collection in the river. GE is also performing ongoing monitoring of noise, ground vibration, and air and geotechnical monitoring and is providing monthly reports to DEC. The pumps will be in operation for the foreseeable future, as it is difficult to get all the PCB contaminated oil out of the bedrock. Kevin Farrar (NYSDEC), Deanna Ripstein (NYSDOH) and Joan Gerhardt (GE) are the contacts for the project.

CAG members asked about the cost of the project, which is not published, but the DEC decision document of four years ago estimated the costs at \$50M. They asked what type of rock GE is finding and were told that that at this time it is primarily grey shale, but there are lower areas with different types of shale and that rock could behave differently in response to the blasts. CAG members also wanted to know where the PCB oil is disposed. John Haggard of GE responded that the water pumped out contains dissolved PCBs and goes through a filtration system. The PCBs are then put into a solid cake and sent to an incinerator in Texas that can manage their disposal.

#### *The GE Fort Edward Falls Plant:*

The ROD was issued in 2000. GE is currently doing remediation; investigations were conducted at different times between 2000 and 2007. In 2007, PCB oil was found in 20' deep wells. GE is currently implementing a remedial investigation with state oversight. Monitoring wells were initially installed at a depth of 50 feet near the former outfall. Samples have been collected nearby. Some wells were moved in response, and new ones were added. Initial investigations indicate that the size of the impacted area and the amount of the PCBs may be larger than initially anticipated. The next step is to extend the investigation to determine the limits of contamination. Regarding the area of the outfall at the river, it is possible that PCB oil in the bedrock may not be limited to the immediate vicinity of the former outfall.

#### *Residential Area Groundwater Plumes*

CAG members asked about the remediation of groundwater plumes from the Fort Edward Plant into the residential area. Kevin Farrar indicated that there have been pumps and treatment systems in-place since the 1990s. He indicated the plumes have shrunk substantially, but that the

rate of shrinkage has slowed over time (as expected). In general these plumes do not extend into the Hudson River.

CAG members asked about the levels of trichloroethylene (TCE). Kevin Farrar indicated that 5ppb is the groundwater standard for TCE and that near the core of the plume (about 100 feet from the plant) the levels are in the 20-50ppb range. The plume does extend below residences in the area.. Deanna Ripstein indicated that NYSDOH did a cancer incidence study in the area.

CAG members also wanted to know if the groundwater plume moving westward would reach the Hudson River. Kevin Farrar indicated that this contamination is not expected to reach the Hudson. He also noted that groundwater springs in a limited area do release low levels of TCE to surface water that may drain to the Hudson River. However once TCE enters surface water it generally volatilizes quickly.

Some CAG members expressed interest in hearing a more detail (possible presentation) on the groundwater plume in Fort Edward, including the area under the GE Plant parking lot. However, it was noted that this site is not directly related to the dredging project.

## **Brief Updates**

### *Construction Update, 2008 Look Ahead, Phase 2 Dredge Area Delineation (DAD), Contract 4 (Dredging) and 5 (Habitat)*

David King of USEPA gave some quick updates to the CAG. The dewatering facility construction is on schedule. The rail yard is essentially complete with some minor details remaining. The wharf is being excavated and piles have been installed. The roads to the site are paved. The dynamite issue isn't influencing anything on the critical construction schedule path. A presentation of what to expect on the project in 2008 could be presented early in 2008 along with the Phase 2 Dredge Area Delineation (DAD) report. Contracts 4 and 5 on dredging and habitat are close to approval by EPA and will go out to bid by GE once approved.

### *Floodplain Update*

David Rosoff of USEPA, gave a brief update on the floodplain work. The interim remedial actions to prevent exposure, included covering some sites with clean fill, is complete. The sites are now in the maintenance phase which will continue indefinitely. GE is preparing a final report on the interim measures that will be available to the public once completed. The preliminary draft work plan for the completion of a Remedial Investigation of the floodplains is under review by EPA. EPA is almost ready to submit their comments to GE. One CAG member noted that the floodplain capping was done very well and looked good.

### *Site Visit*

Once the dynamite issue is resolved at the site and weather permitting the CAG tour of the site will be provided. CAG members would like this to occur as soon as possible.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.