



# Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site Project Update

**Community Advisory Group Meeting**  
Thursday, June 03, 2021  
Virtual Meeting

# Hudson River Project Update



- Floodplain Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study
  - 2020 activities and work planned for 2021
- Habitat Restoration Program
  - 2020 work and plans for 2021
- Lower River
  - Activities and next steps
- Champlain Hudson Power Express – Lower River
  - Overview of the project
- (moved up) Old Champlain Canal – Schuylerville – Floodplain
  - Work completed to date and next steps

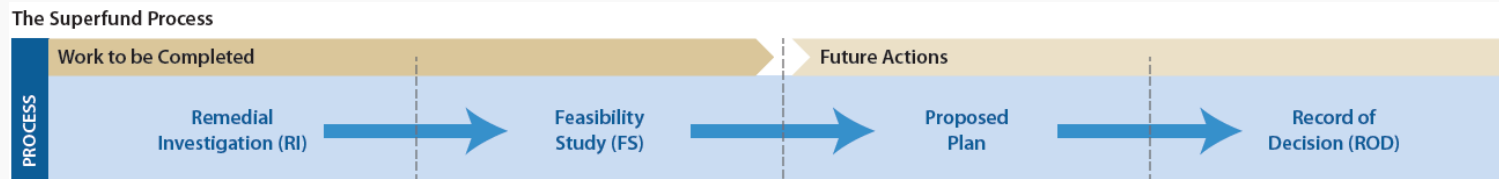


# Floodplain Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Update

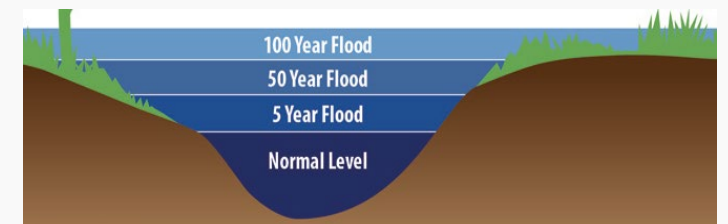
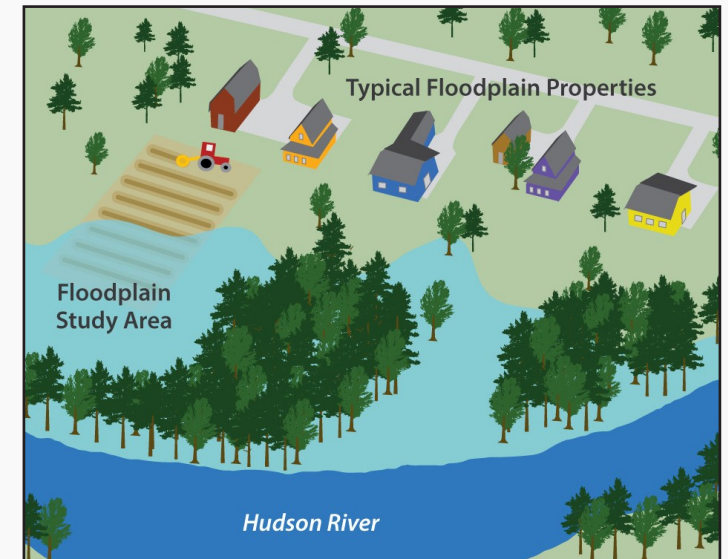
# Summary of Ongoing Activities



- Comprehensive Study – assess the risk PCB contamination poses to human health and the environment



- 43-miles (Hudson Falls to Troy)
  - 5,500 acres – 1,800 properties
  - Sampling (to date – more planned for 2021)
    - ~10,000 soil/sediment samples
    - Water and some initial biota samples collect
- More PCBs upstream and closer to the river
- Areas regularly used by people have been prioritized for sampling
- Sampling associated with community projects are also prioritized



# Ongoing Activities



- Actions taken to address immediate threats to human health (generally >10ppm)
  - Topsoil with grass or gravel covers (45 areas – 2 last season)
  - Signage - along trails and less frequently used areas (23 areas)
  - Areas are inspected and maintained on regular basis
- Ongoing sampling
  - Multiple rounds in past years and more this year
    - Various properties to better understand spatial distribution and variability of PCBs in soil
    - Properties with projects where subsurface work in floodplain is planned
    - Community projects
    - Human use areas – EPA in collaboration with DEC/DOH continue to identify these areas as property use along the river changes
      - Areas of river bottom that are exposed during low river levels
    - Biota associated with ecological assessment



# Next Steps



- Continue to review various work plans submitted by GE
- Oversee all work conducted by GE in coordination with NYS DEC/DOH
- Human Health Risk Assessment
  - Complete screening level risk assessment - EPA is coordinating with NYS DEC/DOH on a property-by-property assessment
- Ecological Risk Assessment
  - Screening level risk assessment under preliminary review
- Continue to provide PCB data to property owners
- Continue flood mud sampling program
- Continue close coordination with municipalities
- Follow up with community members who have provided EPA information about how the floodplains are used



# Habitat Restoration Update



# Habitat Program



- Post dredging - each delineated habitat area was reconstructed (complete)
- The following season the areas were required to meet a series of requirements called “Benchmarks”
  - Non-destructive surveys (plant density, species identification etc) that are specific to each area
  - Required responses when areas were underperforming
  - Generally expected to be at least a 5-year period
  - Once areas are appropriately meeting the benchmarks the next step is to compare them to project “Success” criteria (many areas are transitioning to this step)
- Certain areas have underperformed
  - Challenge – there is a lot of variability in nature (seasonal, annual, temperature, flow, light, river use ...)
  - EPA has been collaborating with NYS (and its contractor) regarding these challenging areas
    - Included adjustments to survey approaches and timing
  - Several meetings held since 2018 that resulted in GE initiating pilot studies for several new approaches (to enhance recovery in areas not recovering as quickly as anticipated)
    - These pilot studies were conducted in 2019 which informed adjustments to 2020 work
    - 2020 pilots are being assessed currently and will inform the scaled-up scope of work for later in 2021



# Ongoing Habitat Work



- Work completed in **2020**
  - River Fringing Wetland
    - 1,150 plants (multiple areas) appropriate for water depth and conditions in the area
    - Seeding - several areas
    - Wave energy abatement – pilot study – five areas
  - Subaquatic Vegetation
    - Seed buoy pilot studies
  - Other improvements to survey and reporting approaches
- Work planned for **2021**
  - Overall general scope of work (scaled up) - under review by agencies
  - Pilot study results from 2020 will inform scope – areas to be assessed in late spring
  - Plant/seeding/other actions to be implemented later this year



# Habitat Monitoring and Evaluation in 2021



- Other Considerations (more detail) – related to 2021 work
  - Negative impact from wave action
    - Species composition (adding woody species)
    - Type of wave break structures (logs, rocks)
  - Subaquatic Vegetation – survey improvements
    - BioSonics Aquatic Habitat
    - Possible drone images
- Expanded use of seed buoy
- Invasive species and herbivory control as appropriate
- Continued oversight and coordination between EPA and DEC



# Lower Hudson River (LHR) Update



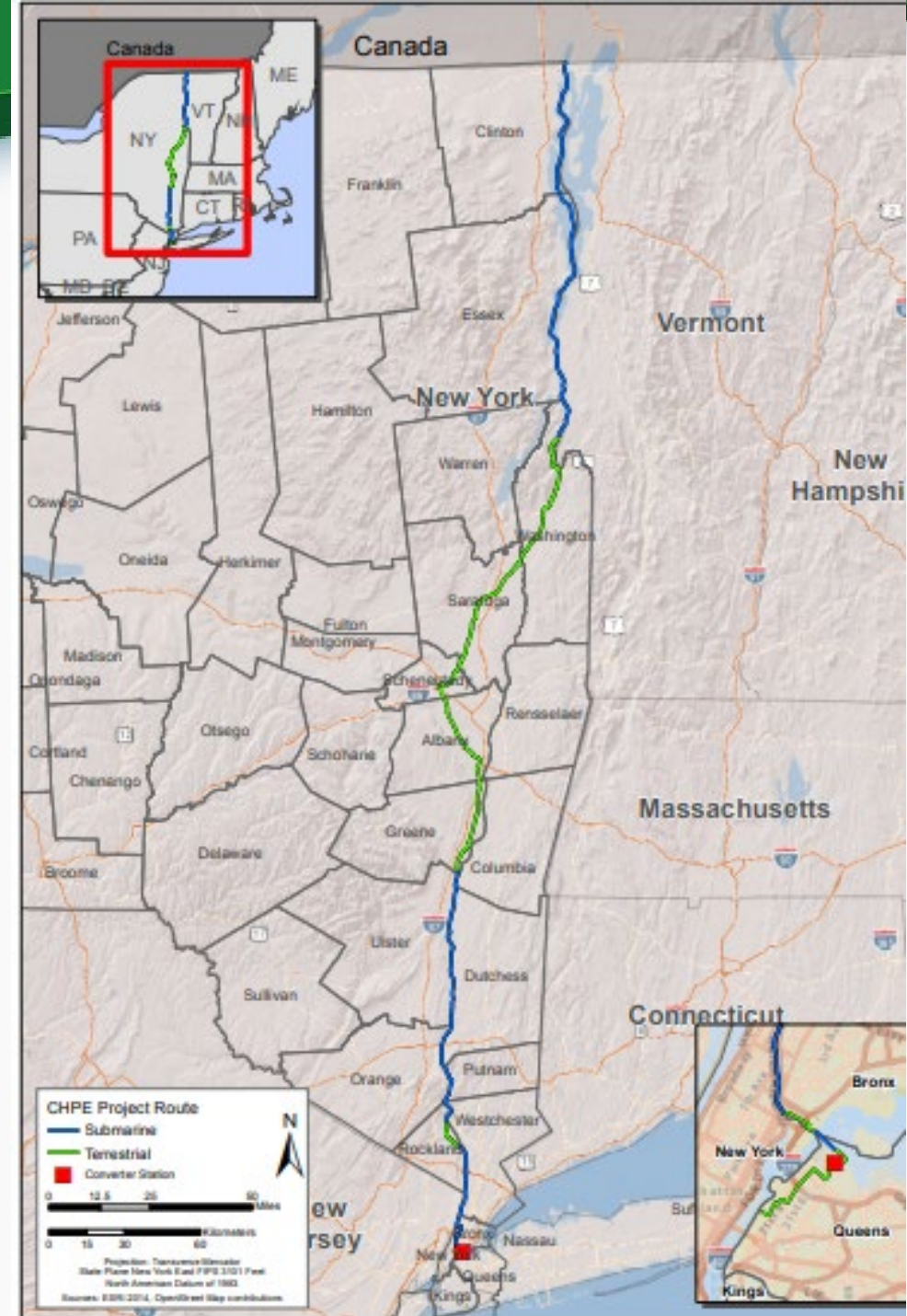
# Supplemental Studies – Work Continues



- Continuing to collect LHR fish and water data under the long-term monitoring program
- Continuing to collect, review and summarize existing data/information/studies
  - Coordinating and exchanging information with Hudson River Foundation, USACE, NYSDEC and others
  - Downloading and gathering data and reports (including project archives and literature searches)
  - Coordinating with USACE regarding navigational dredging-related data and permit information
- Augmenting database of existing/historical chemical and physical data
- Incorporating available information into an evolving system understanding
- Refining scopes of work – additional fish, sediment and water data collection planned
  - Sediment data collection includes coring program
- Continuing internal EPA discussion and coordination
- Discussion ongoing with others

# Champlain Hudson Power Express

- EPA has done preliminary review of available information and plans - with focus on Hudson River portion
- Overview of the project (project has been evolving)
  - Power from Canada to Queens, NY (overall 339 miles)
  - Transmission Developers, Inc. - portions of the Lower Hudson River
  - Two 5-inch copper cables buried 7 ft into bottom of river – by jet plowing
  - Lower River
    - In-river from Catskill to North Haverstraw and between South Rockland and the Harlem River (about 88 in-river miles)
  - 1,250 MW capacity sourced from hydroelectric dams in Canada



# Power Express – Other Information



- Resuspension of river sediments an important consideration
  - PCB and other contaminants
  - In-river municipal water intakes also an important consideration
- Upcoming activities:
  - Environmental Management and Construction Plan to examine resuspension effects
  - Benthic Survey to evaluate river-bottom habitat
  - Others
  - Potential installation 2024-2025
  - Permit process continues
- EPA plans to coordinate with various parties involved
  - Incorporate collected data into the Supplemental Studies
- Project has a web site: <https://chpexpress.com/project-overview/>

# Questions



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\*Updated web addresses for EPA site webpage and CAG webpage:

<http://www.epa.gov/hudsonriverpcbs>

<https://hudsoncag.wspis.com>