

Community Advisory Group (CAG)
Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site
Meeting Notes
Thursday March 24, 2009
1:00 PM – 3:45 PM
Fort Edward, NY

Members and Alternates Attending: Phil Dobie, Richard Fuller, Robert Goldman, Manna Jo Greene, Jane Havens, George Hodgson, Preston Jenkins, Bill Koebberman, Roland Mann, Warren Reiss, John Reiger, Lois Squire, Ken Watson.

CAG Liaisons Attending: John Davis (NYSDOJ), Joan Gerhardt (General Electric), Richard Harris (NYSCC), David King (USEPA), Deanna Ripstein (NYSDOH), Kristen Skopec (USEPA).

Others Attending: Lee Coleman (Daily Gazette), Robert Conway (NPS-Saratoga NHP), Tom Cronin (Atlantic Testing Laboratories), Justin Deming (NYSDOH), Greg Dixon (Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce), Kevin Farrar (NYSDEC), David Gargill (Harper's Magazine), Clark Johnson (Permian Basin Railways), Gary Klawinski (E&E), Tim Kruppenbacher (General Electric), Larisa Romanowski (E&E), David Rosoff (USEPA), Sharon Ruggi, Mary Tedisco (Tedisco for Congress), Andrew Timmis (D.A. Collins Companies), Lois Triely (resident).

Facilitators: Ona Ferguson, Patrick Field.

Members Absent: Shawn Connelly, Cecil Corbin-Mark, Chris DeBolt, Mark Fitzsimmons, Gil Hawkins, John Lawler, Aaron Mair, David Mathis, Dan McGraw, Merrilyn Pulver-Moulthrop, Judy Schmidt-Dean, Julie Stokes, Rebecca Troutman, Mary Wachunas, Mindy Wormuth.

Next meetings: The next CAG meeting is scheduled for May 28.

Action Items

- All – Send suggestions for who might fill the CAG agricultural seat to Ona Ferguson.
- Tim Kruppenbacher – Find out if vessel names will be read by commercial transport vehicles and let Rob Goldman know.
- CBI and EPA – Find someone to fill the agriculture CAG seat.
- CBI and EPA – Review and consider increasing community representation on the CAG.
- CBI – Invite the Mayor of the Village of Fort Edward to join the CAG with a new seat.
- CBI – Update the groundrules to include the option to send a different representative when neither CAG member nor alternate are available to attend a CAG meeting.

Welcome, Introductions, Review of February Meeting Summary and Action Items

Facilitators welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the draft of the February meeting summary distributed in CAG folders was approved with no changes. All presentation slides from the meeting can be seen at: <http://www.hudsoncag.ene.com/documents.htm>.

In-River Logistics and Habitat Update

Tim Kruppenbacher, of General Electric (GE) gave a status update on the in-river logistics of the dredging project. Phase 1 is scheduled to run from May to November, starting after the locks open and operating 24 hours a day, six days a week, with the seventh day for make-up as needed. Cashman Dredging and Marine will perform the dredging. Twenty one-way lock trips daily are anticipated when dredging is at peak levels, and the project team will try to piggyback them as much as possible (so that one full and one empty barge move during the same locking event). There will be up to nine mechanical excavators with environmental clamshell buckets dredging simultaneously. Dredge equipment will be on flexi-float platforms anchored to the bottom of the river. Dredge operators will use a GPS-based system to map each bucket cut.

Twenty barges will be used. They will receive sediments and will move alongside the dredges. The barges are 195' x 35' x 12', and it will take up to 24 hours to load each to capacity. Dredges may not be filled daily, as some areas will have less to be dredged. If not full, barges will be moved to another location for fill up so that the process is efficient as possible. In shallow waters, mini hoppers will be used and then decanted onto the barges. No idle time is expected, as the barges will continuously be moving back and forth between the processing facility and the dredge area. There are mooring locations for all vessels that keep the navigational channel open if all vessels were idle simultaneously. The barges are currently en route from Louisiana. Seventeen push boats, operated by captains from Local 106 and 112, will be used to maneuver sediment barges and dredge platforms.

Project vessels will coordinate with commercial transporters on VHS13 and project vessels and captains will have a coordinator tracking their movement. GE will find out if commercial transporters read project vessel names on their AIS.

Pre-dredging activities are underway, including tree removal, dock installation, and testing and calibrating equipment. The dewatering facility system continues to be tested, modified and improved and will be ready to go in early May. Debris that is removed from the river in advance of dredging will go through the processing facility and monitoring systems will be up and running to detect any changes in water quality.

General Electric has hired AECOM to do habitat restoration work. In October of 2008, in-river and wetlands plants were harvested north of Hudson Falls and taken to greenhouses. The plants are currently being grown so they will be ready to transplant when habitat restoration work begins in 2010. The restoration will be done by up to six dive teams at a time, who will plant underwater and along the shore. All areas are to be seeded. There will be no habitat restoration in the navigational channel. Habitat restoration will occur only in the photic zone. Backfill and capping will be placed on river bottom that is out of the photic zone after dredging is complete in each five-acre certification unit. The clean fill and cap will be comprised of a variety of materials and will average 12" of backfill. The backfill is currently being sourced and manufactured at mines in local counties.

A member of the public asked about likely traffic impact on Fort Edward and was told that pre-construction traffic surveys were done in the Village and on Route 196, including school buses.. Responding to local concerned about additional traffic through the Village, GE moved the access point to Route 196. GE has done significant traffic research and expects minimal impacts, such as a predicted 3% increase in truck traffic to the Route 4 staging area. The Remedial Action Workplan

includes information on which towns and which side of the river will be affected by trucks. GE has met with Fort Edward and Moreau supervisors and is working to limit traffic impacts to the greatest extent possible.

Another member of the public asked how GE or EPA would notify towns and residents when the water tests at levels not safe for consumption. David King described near field and far field in-river water monitoring for PCBs, sampling turnaround times, and the 500ppt federal drinking water standard trigger for PCBs that would stop dredging. EPA will contact the towns to switch over to Troy water if the 500ppt resuspension standard is exceeded or if there is too short a time of travel to get monitoring results.

In regard to questions from the CAG about how resuspension further north would affect subsistence fishermen in the lower Hudson, Deanna Ripstein of NYSDOH added that DOH will not relax fish advisories during dredging and may tighten them. Deanna distributed a handout on fish consumption advisories and stated that DOH is working to enhance communication and outreach to subsistence fishing communities.

Joan Gerhardt of Behan Communications described how GE communicates with river residents about water concerns and stated that GE has done three rounds of outreach to residents along the river north of Schuylerville: one in 2005-2006, one in 2007, and one recently, in 2009. They have spoken with or gotten surveys back from approximately 80% of these residents. They identified those using river water in their homes or for irrigation and gave that information to EPA and NYS. GE reached out individually to those who use river water. GE called and mailed the 20% of residents who were not reached, and they did not respond, but they do not appear to be using river water. David King (EPA) added that from Schuylerville to Troy, GE contacted anyone who had a visible pipeline in the river (approximately 25 intakes). GE will be testing representative wells to collect data.

In response to questions about whether there will be some sort of ceremony to recognize the start of dredging Kristen Skopeck (EPA) stated that that a ceremony planning committee is being formed and that there will be some sort of event.

CAG Outreach and Membership Update

Patrick Field and Ona Ferguson, CAG facilitators, reviewed general CAG membership participation. CAG members discussed their preferences for CAG membership, which included being inclusive and having members that are interested in the dredging project. They described the CAG as beneficial and imperfect, and noted the difficulty for some members to attend because their role as CAG members takes them away from their jobs or require extensive costs or travel. One member described the CAG as an effort that will help ensure that the clean up is better than it would otherwise be.

One CAG member suggested that evening meetings might increase participation. It was mentioned that it is good the public can participate in some question and answer sessions during CAG meetings, and that it is a priority that CAG members control their own agenda.

CAG members reviewed some membership changes (see below) and decided that if neither the CAG member nor the alternate for a particular seat is available to attend a meeting, the member may send someone to sit at the table in their place by (a) preparing that individual for the meeting, and (b) notifying the facilitation team at least a day before the CAG meeting.

Hudson Falls and Fort Edward Project Update

Kevin Farrar, NYS DEC, presented progress made on the remedial programs for the GE Hudson Falls and Fort Edward Plant sites.

The Hudson Falls Plant Site – The tunnel and drain system is now in place to prevent PCBs from draining from the bedrock to the river. Floors and sumps were completed in January 2009. The troughs in the floors collect water drainage from the rock, which then goes to the treatment plant. There are circular workrooms at both ends of the tunnels. Piezometers, instruments that measure hydraulic pressure, are being installed, and Phase 3, drain well installation, is currently underway. Air monitoring is conducted during these construction activities. The last phase, Phase 4, Tunnel Fit Out, will likely start this summer and will take approximately six months to implement. A CAG member asked if ventilation could cause PCB volatilization in the tunnel, and Kevin Farrar said that exhaust air won't need to be treated generally, and the tunnels will be ventilated only when people are in them.

The Fort Edward Plant Site – The bedrock investigation in the 004 Outfall area is ongoing. GE is doing the work with state oversight. The goal of this effort is to learn the vertical and horizontal extent and location of the PCB oil. Monitoring wells have been installed at a number of locations in the vicinity of the former outfall structure, and to the south, east, and west. Well locations are being added as needed. To date, PCBs have been identified at depths of approximately 300' at the former outfall site and to the south. The migration directions vary, but generally the hydraulic gradient is to the south. In regard to PCB oil movement through the rock, Farrar noted that there is some fracturing of the limestone but that PCB oil moves more quickly through shale than limestone.

While some of the DNAPL (dense nonaqueous phase liquid) is TCE (Trichloroethylene), most of it is PCB oil. GE will continue to do DNAPL bail-down tests to evaluate the potential for oil recovery in existing wells.

The overall goal is to look at the receptors and reduce impacts, for example making sure no one is drinking or using this water. All residents using wells within a mile were offered hook ups to public water funded by GE.

The amount of PCBs coming off these two projects is much smaller than what is currently in the river. In the coming months, when more is known, they will decide what to do about the contamination. In regard to questions about sites that were capped (Site 518, Buoy 212, 204 Annex, and Newland Island on the west side of the river), the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study investigating PCB groundwater contamination should lead to a remedy selection this summer, and Kevin can present that to the CAG in fall 2009.

Brief Updates

Community Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) and Consent Decree Modification Public Comment Process: David King (EPA) said that the Consent Decree Modification was filed with the court and so has become final. EPA received comments on the CHASP and will send them to GE for further revisions. EPA is open to ongoing input on the CHASP.

Waterline Construction Update: David Rosoff said the waterline is complete between Troy and Halfmoon. It is ready for manual operation immediately, and should be ready by mid-April for automated operation. The system will be tested in mid-April. The carbon filtration system in Stillwater is 15% complete and should be entirely completed in May. A CAG member noted that this work was undertaken as a result of community concerns and good work by the CAG.

Public Meetings: Kris Skopeck provided information on upcoming meetings about Phase 1 to be held in Albany, Poughkeepsie and Moreau.

CAG Membership: Mary Wachunas will replace Dan Casey in the Rensselaer County seat. Rebecca Troutman will replace Robert Goldstein in one of the Environmental seats, as Robert no longer works at Riverkeeper. CAG members would like the facilitators to invite the mayor of the Village of Fort Edward to join the CAG in a new seat for the Village, and the CAG is seeking someone to fill the agricultural seat.

CAG Admin Committee: George Hodgson joined the CAG admin committee. Members are: John Lawler, Warren Reiss, Chris DeBolt, Merrilyn Pulver-Moulthrop and George Hodgson.

Committee Business

CAG Agenda Topics: CAG members suggested the following topics for upcoming meetings: notification and monitoring, floodplain sampling data from 2008.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.