

Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers Contamination CAG

Input to the EPA Contaminated Sediments Technical Advisory Group (CSTAG)

9/25/14

Overall, the CAG has enjoyed a constructive relationship with EPA throughout this process. EPA staff have been accessible and helpful to the CAG and has supported the CAG process throughout.

Our comments on the identified topics are probably best represented by our Community Values which are attached to this document. Some additional specific comments are included below.

Progress and Schedule

- EPA has clearly laid out the upstream to downstream phasing and this appears to be working well.
- Activities have been on schedule.
- The CAG gets great information on what is going on in the river.
- There was a postcard that went out and provided a lot of information in a small package.
- Last newsletter had a very good description of the schedule.
- Overall, the CAG would like to see the overall project completed faster, however we do understand the complications of the process
- The CAG appreciates the EPA efforts to accelerate cleanup of the Tittabawassee River Floodplain

Current and Future Uses of the Rivers and Bay

- The CAG points the CSTAG to the public process and comments on the floodplain soils project. Cleanup of the floodplain has highlighted this issue and the CAG is concerned about how land use changes will be managed over time.
- On private property, we want to be sure that landowners are able to use the property appropriate to their ownership.
- Landowner access and use on the floodplain is a major issue. Folks are concerned about everything, including the floodplain lands, need to ensure we are taking a holistic approach, not just focused on the river.
- Cleanup needs to consider future use in addition to the current use.
- Ultimately, the CAG believes the point of cleanup should be to lift the restrictions on fishing and agriculture that are currently in place and would like to see that as a long-term aspiration of the project.

Potential Impact of the Project on the Community

- Active cleanup has focused on the property close to the Dow plant and is only now moving to populated areas of the river, so we will be looking to understand the impacts on the community as this occurs.
- EPA has been responsive to CAG concerns about working with the community in planning access and impacts on private property.
- The main concerns moving forward are ones of institutional controls management, managing caps in the river and on the floodplain, and the long-term monitoring of contaminant levels.

- Floodplain use and future use of the river are equally important.
- Ultimate ability to remove fish and agriculture advisories is a main purpose of cleanup in the community's view.
- Any restrictions that will be put on property as part of the cleanup will have a major impact, and the associated compensation and impacts need to be thoughtfully planned.
- How people view federal and state involvement with their private property is an important issue.
- In addition to that actual impacts, any miscommunication or misinformation can lead to very negative reactions.

EPA Information and Opportunities for Meaningful Stakeholder Involvement

- The CAG appreciates efforts to produce information and conduct stakeholder outreach, support to the CAG, and the formation of a Saginaw field office.
- Timely and accurate information is always a top priority, and it is important that this emphasis continue.
- More press releases should be used, the news media is still a very effective way of communication in this community, the EPA information just does not go to enough people, there needs to be more effort to reach general public.
- Saginaw/Midland/Bay City News are very supportive, EPA should develop a better relationship with them.
- The EPA Newsletter is good but does not go to enough people.
- Folks who are not in the loop don't see the information about the project, they don't know where to go for that information.
- The website is not automatically a source of information for many people, EPA needs to find ways to get more information into people's hands.
- Consider creating an app for smartphones as this is an increasing point of access to information.
- Public meetings are lightly attended, if it's not directly impacting them, most folks don't really pay attention.
- As the project gets more visible on the river, people will see more activity and ask more about the project, need more visible information, success stories would be good.
- It would be very useful to understand the level of broader community interest and knowledge about the project. Consider working with local universities to study what people really know and understand. Misunderstanding is significant.

Improvement to Site Management

- The CAG has found the site management to be a very responsive group.
- Reasonable approaches to cleanup, and has been explained well.
- Have worked closely with property owners.
- Not far enough down the road yet to know overall the impacts of how actual work is managed, just now getting outside of the Dow property.

STATEMENT OF VALUES FOR THE SAGINAW-TITTABAWASSEE RIVERS CONTAMINATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

The following values were developed by the Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers Contamination Community Advisory Group. (hereafter the “Saginaw-Tittabawassee CAG”). These values, which represent the consensus ideals of the community which the Saginaw-Tittabawassee CAG represents, are intended to guide federal agencies and other stake holders so that decisions and actions are promptly made and taken for the cleanup, restoration and long term stewardship of the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay.

Protection of Public Health

- Design all decisions and activities to protect the health and safety of the residents, visitors and workers.

Environmental Protection and Restoration

- Respect and preserve the natural resources within the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay, including fish and wildlife.
- Coordinate and balance the short and long term goals to ensure that the rivers and Saginaw Bay continue to serve as natural resources continue for future generations.
- Be mindful of the historic and traditional, as well as the current, uses of the river in formulating restoration activities.
- Strive for a positive outcome of a clean and sustainable watershed.

Provide Economic and Community Benefits

- Plan and manage activities in order to protect ongoing uses of the rivers and bay, including commercial, tourism and recreation uses.
- Incentivize and support environmentally sustainable development of riverfront properties.
- Promote economic growth of the Great Lakes Bay Area for both current and future commercial and industrial development.
- Encourage activities which protect property values within the communities in which the rivers and bay are located.

Consider Diverse Factors in End Uses

- Be mindful that no single use predominates or controls the decision making process.
- Strive to achieve a balance between uses such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - Recreation.
 - Agriculture.
 - Groundwater recharge.
 - Quality of life.
 - Commerce.

Cooperative Cleanup Process

- Respect the opinions and views of others.
- Build and strive for cooperation, trust and collaboration in the decision making process.

Integrity of the Process

- Recognize that the actions of the CAG are for and on behalf of the greater community which is represented, and not the members themselves. To that end, proceedings should endeavor to be:
 - Open and transparent.
 - Rational and analytical, not led by emotions.
 - Factual based.
 - Fair, equitable and consistent.
- Work toward prompt completion of the CAG's review and recommendation responsibilities
- Encourage timely completion of response activities
- Work cooperatively with all stake holders, including the greater community, to address issues and solve problems.