

SAGINAW-TITTABAWASSEE RIVERS CONTAMINATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATION

I. Subject: The Saginaw-Tittabawassee CAG has received a request for recommendation for the following:

Preferred Cleanup Method or Methods for Sediment Management Areas 1 through 6 in Segment 1 of the Tittabawassee River

II. Background and Information Considered:

EPA presentation on general cleanup options at March 2011 CAG meeting.

EPA presentations on Segment 1 cleanup options at March, June, July and August 2011 CAG meetings.

EPA document entitled *EPA Proposes Cleanup Plan For Polluted River Section*, dated August 2011.

III. Agency Proposal:

SMA 1: Place a clean cap over contaminated sediment to isolate and stabilize it.

SMAs 2 and 3: Remove and treat a pollutant called dense non-aqueous phase liquid or DNAPL; isolate contaminated sediment with sheet pile and a cap; and capture water within the sediment (hydraulic control) and treat it.

SMAs 4 and 5: Place a clean cap over contaminated sediment.

SMA 6: Dredge and dispose of sediment contaminated by a chemical called ethyl parathion; remove and treat DNAPL; isolate remaining contaminated sediment with sheet pile and a cap; and hydraulic control and water treatment.

Treat and dispose of materials at approved locations.

Monitor during and-after cleanup work.

Operate and maintain the cleanup systems.

IV. Summary of CAG Discussion:

The CAG recognizes that Segment 1 is fundamentally different than every other cleanup segment. The choices and decisions that will be made in Segment 1 will not set a precedent for approaches to future segments. Because this is the first major cleanup decision, this uniqueness has the potential to confuse the public regarding the nature of contamination and future decisions. Public understanding and reaction regarding this first cleanup is important and clear communication will be critical.

Key attributes of Segment 1 that are important to communicate and keep in mind when making decisions include:

- The stretch of river comprised by Segment 1 is completely industrial on both banks, therefore, public use of the shoreline is limited. However, the river itself is often used by the public for recreation and fishing in this area.
- Significant efforts have already been taken to manage dioxin and furan contamination in Segment 1. Dioxins and furans are not the major concern or risk driving cleanup in Segment 1.
- Risk is being driven by six major groups of contaminants that result from the long-term industrial use of this stretch of river and include DNAPL (dense non-aqueous phase liquid) at the interface between sediment and till. These contaminants have not been a significant part of public knowledge or debate and are not expected to be present at these high concentrations in subsequent Segments.
- Segment 1 is adjacent to the Dow property and therefore has immediate access to important waste management infrastructure including the RGIS and wastewater treatment plant.

The CAG recognizes the long-term importance of managing areas of significant contamination in Segment 1. Our primary concern is the long-term protection of downstream properties and residents from the transport of contamination located in Segment 1. In general, we support remedies that quickly isolate the most significant contamination from ongoing releases downriver, provide long-term protection of human health and the environment, and take advantage of the existing treatment infrastructure at the Dow plant.

Some specific observations on the cleanup technologies being evaluated include:

- Based on available information, it appears that the disadvantages (disruptions, potential mobilization of contaminants and costs) which are the consequence of traditional dredging outweigh the benefits of removal, treatment and off-site disposal. This approach should only be used where these benefits clearly outweigh the costs and impacts.

- Where capping and/or sheetpiling can provide sustainable long-term isolation of contamination, this will allow removal and onsite treatment and/or natural attenuation to reduce contamination over time. However, we have some concerns about any remedy that does not include ultimate removal of these contaminants.
- The use of natural attenuation by itself does not appear to provide the source control necessary for effective remediation or to satisfy community concerns about long-term risk.
- Hydraulic control and extending the use of the RGIS System makes sense if the capacity of RGIS and the wastewater treatment system can accommodate this function.

Additional considerations that are important to the public include:

- The ability to maintain long-term institutional controls on the river bottom, particularly creating a full understanding of ownership, access, and the ability to maintain constructed isolation systems in perpetuity.
- Assuring the long-term public trust about the use and cleanliness of the river, so that future generations can enjoy boating, fishing, and other recreational activities that might be reasonably expected on this stretch of river.

V. Comments received from members of the Public

One member of the public made two comments during the August 15 CAG meeting:

1. EPA should take care in using the term "dredging" because the public associates that term with sediment removal done to deepen a river channel. The term "environmental dredging" is preferable.
2. Environmental dredging would be a better remedy than capping the contaminants.

VI. CAG Values which pertain to the resolution of the subject:

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

- Strive to achieve a clean and healthy environment.
- 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, 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.
- 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:
 - Commerce.
 - 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.

VII. Recommendation:

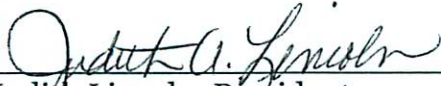
It is the consensus of the Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers Contamination Community Advisory Group that:

- EPA proceed with the design, engineering and implementation of its recommended alternatives.
- EPA continue to keep the CAG and the public informed of the progress and results of the cleanup in Segment 1 and any changes in the proposed methodologies.

The above constitutes the response for recommendation of the Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers CAG. A formal response is requested from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Dated: August 31, 2011

Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers Contamination
Community Advisory Group

By: 
Judith Lincoln, President

Response by Environmental Protection Agency (to be attached)