

FACT SHEET
Cumberland Bay Site
City of Plattsburgh
Site No. 5-10-017
May 10, 1995

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) will implement a remedial clean up action to remove for disposal PCB contaminated wood chips along the Cumberland Bay beaches.

INTRODUCTION

The NYSDEC will pick up PCB contaminated wood chips which wash ashore along the Cumberland Bay beach from the Wilcox Dock area to the City and State-owned beaches on the north side of the bay. After the pick up, wood chips will be transported to the Wilcox Dock area for temporary staging and sampling. After sampling and testing, the PCB waste will be transported to a solid waste management facility for proper disposal. If found hazardous, the waste will be disposed at a permitted Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (TSDF). This beach cleanup, financed under the State Superfund Program, will be performed to reduce human exposure to the hazardous waste.

REMEDIAL MEASURES INCLUDE

- Initial pick up and removal of wood chips scattered along the Cumberland Bay beach in locations south and north of Wilcox Dock.
- Temporary staging of the waste in Wilcox Dock area. Samples will be taken from the staged waste to determine the disposition of waste. If concentration of PCBs in the waste exceeds 50 ppm, the waste will be disposed at a TSCA permitted TSDF. If PCB concentration in the waste is lower than 50 ppm, the waste will be transported to a solid waste management facility.
- Periodic pick up and removal of the PCB waste from the beach (maintenance cleanups) through the end of September 1995. The maintenance cleanups will be performed whenever a significant accumulation of wood chips is found during weekly site inspections.

The initial beach clean up is scheduled to begin on May 15, 1995.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Clough, Harbour & Associates, Inc., consultant for the Cumberland Bay project, is preparing plans for the installation of a floating curtain around the sludge bed located north of Wilcox Dock (see the attached map). This curtain will reduce mobility of wood particles within the bay and is expected to significantly reduce the quantity of waste washed ashore.

A long term remedy for this site will be investigated and may include dredging of the sludge bed and proper disposal of dredge spoils.

SITE BACKGROUND

For several decades prior to 1973, wood product industries (sawmills and paper manufacturing/processing facilities) near Plattsburgh discharged their processing wastes into Cumberland Bay in Lake Champlain. These wastes either settled or were directly discharged into the northwestern part of Cumberland Bay between Wilcox Dock and Scomotion Creek. This disposal of untreated waste ended in 1973 when the Plattsburgh Sewage Treatment Plant went into service and began treating waste from local industries.

For several years, the sludge bed was considered nothing more than a nuisance, emitting unpleasant odors, hampering boating and swimming activities in that area, and washing up wood chip debris along the shore. However in 1992, several compounds including PCBs, polychlorinated dibenzodioxins (PAHs) were found in a sample of the sludge. The sample was collected as part of a study of Lake Champlain done by SUNY at Plattsburgh and the University of Vermont with support from the Lake Champlain Management Conference.

In June 1993 and in March and August 1994, the NYSDEC collected sludge and sediment samples near Wilcox Dock and sediment samples in other parts of the Bay. These sample results show that the sludge is contaminated with high levels of PCBs and lower levels of several other compounds. The results also show that some areas outside the sludge bed are contaminated with lower levels of PCBs and various levels of several other compounds. The high levels of PCBs in the sludge bed near Wilcox Dock are the major concern.

Wood chip debris resembling chainsaw cuttings often washes up on the shore of Cumberland Bay. The wood chip debris is probably from the sludge in the Bay. In August 1994, the NYSDOH analyzed samples of the wood chip debris from the shore, of the lake water near the shore and of beach sand for PCBs. In November 1994, NYSDOH took additional samples of the wood chip debris and of a mixture of sand and wood chip debris. The levels of PCBs in the wood chip debris varied from nondetectable to 210 parts per million (ppm). The beach sand was not found to be contaminated with hazardous waste.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any site-related health questions or concern, please contact:

Susan VanPatten or Richard Fedigan
1 800 458-1158, extension 402
NYSDOH
2 University Place
Albany, NY 12203

Clinton County Health Department
(518) 565-4840
133 Margaret Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

If you have any questions or concerns about the remedial action, please contact:

Daniel Steenberge
(518) 897-1242
NYSDEC Region 5 Office
Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977

Lech Dolata
(518) 457-9285
NYSDEC Central Office
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12233-7010

or call 1 800 342-9296 and leave a message.

A document repository has been established for this site to provide people with information about the site. As documents related to this site become available, we will put them in the repository. The repository is located at the Clinton County Clerk's Office, County Government Building, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901, (518) 565-4700. They are open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.