File Hammond

John P. Cahill
Commissioner

RECORD OF DECISION
Fact Sheet

Site No.: 5-10-017
Name of Site: CUMBERLAND BAY SLUDGE BED - WILCOX DOCK SITE
City and County: Plattsburgh, Clinton County

PREPARED BY:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Remediation, under the State Superfund Program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM:

The Cumberland Bay of Lake Champlain has received waste from various local industries for several decades. The result of some of these discharges over time has been the creation of a sludge bed in the northwest corner of Cumberland Bay. The sludge bed is adjacent to the Wilcox Dock and is contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). This sludge bed is approximately 34 acres in size with an estimated volume of 93,000 cubic yards. This site is listed in the Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites as a Class 2 site. A Class 2 site poses a significant threat to the public health or environment. Contaminated debris from the sludge bed is currently washing up on the beaches of Cumberland Bay. Several species of fish within Cumberland Bay have elevated levels of PCBs and there is a health advisory in effect concerning the consumption of fish in Cumberland Bay. There is also a commercial fishing ban on yellow perch in Cumberland Bay.

ACTIONS TO DATE:

The NYSDEC has taken several actions since the listing of the site in November, 1994. The Department has been performing an Interim Remedial Measure to remove the PCB contaminated materials washing up on the beaches of Cumberland Bay. This has been ongoing since 1995. More than 400 tons of PCB-contaminated material have been removed to date. Additional fish sampling and analysis determined that the yellow perch in Cumberland Bay exceeded Food and Drug Administration limits for PCBs. Therefore, the fish consumption health advisory was expanded to include yellow perch and a ban on the sale of yellow perch from Cumberland Bay was ordered in 1995. Also during 1995, an investigation to determine the nature and extent of the contaminated sludge bed was initiated. A draft Feasibility Study evaluating the different remedial alternatives was released in 1996 for public review and a public meeting was held to present the results of the site

characterization report and remedial alternatives under consideration. The final Feasibility Study and Baseline Health and Environmental Risk Assessments were issued in May 1997. The Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) was issued in July 1997. Two public meetings were held, the comment period was extended and additional meetings were held to inform various groups on the PRAP. A Responsiveness Summary was prepared to address public comment and the Record of Decision was finalized December 1997. The Department is currently preparing the design documents for the site.

ACTIVITIES OVER THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS:

In July 1997, the Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) for the site was issued to the public. Two public meetings were held, the comment period was extended to September 1997 and additional meetings were held to inform various groups on the PRAP. During that time the Georgia Pacific Corporation and the NYSDEC reached an agreement regarding that companies liability for the remediation of the sludge bed. The Department received numerous comments during the public comment period and has made some revisions to the remedy based on public input. The Record of Decision was signed on December 30, 1997 and the referral to begin design was received on January 20, 1998. The Department is currently finalizing the work plans for the design documents and will be gathering additional site data. The design of the remedy is expected to be completed during 1998.

DESCRIPTION OF THE REMEDY:

The remedy for the site includes isolating the sludge bed with temporary sheet piling and silt curtains, removing the sludge bed by a combination of hydraulic dredging and dry excavation, constructing and operating a temporary sludge dewatering facility and wastewater treatment facility, transporting and off-site disposal of the dewatered sludge, conducting confirmatory sampling and fish monitoring and continuing the beach cleaning IRM as needed. Provisions will be made in the design to identify methods to shorten the time required for the removal of the sludge bed along with minimizing the impacts of the remedial action on the community.

COSTS:

There would be no long term operation and maintenance costs with this alternative as all waste materials would be removed from the site. The total cost for the Proposed Alternative is $18,366,000. This does not include the cost of the beach cleaning IRM or post-remedial fish monitoring. That cost is estimated at $150,000 per year for as long as needed. The volume of material washing ashore should diminish quickly after the sludge bed is removed.

ISSUES:

Although the proposed remedy appears more costly than other on-site alternatives, it is consistent with the Department's policies and State law concerning wetland protection, shoreline and lake development. It eliminates the construction of an in-lake or shoreline hazardous waste disposal cell on site and eliminates the requirement of long-term operation & maintenance. It also is the most permanent and effective remedy for environmentally restoring the site and the local fishery. This alternative will also allow for unrestricted future recreational or commercial use of the site that would

not be provided by the other alternatives.

PROJECT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Record of Decision and project reports may be reviewed at the following document repositories:

Plattsburgh Public Library, Oak and Brinkerhoff Street, Plattsburgh, NY;
NYSDEC Region 5 Headquarters, Route 86, Ray Brook NY; - Daniel L. Steenberge, P.E. 518-897-1241
NYSDEC Central Office, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY; - Robert Edwards 518 457-5677.

A public availability session will be held during the spring of 1998 to provide the public information on the status of the remedial design for the project.