

Black River, Lower, Main Stem (0801-0202)

Minor Impacts

Waterbody Location Information

Revised: 04/17/2007

Water Index No: Ont 19 (portion 2) **Drain Basin:** Black River
Hydro Unit Code: 04150101/180 **Str Class:** A Black River
Waterbody Type: River **Reg/County:** 6/Jefferson Co. (23)
Waterbody Size: 4.5 Miles **Quad Map:** RUTLAND CENTER (F-17-2)
Seg Description: from Watertown to Black River

Water Quality Problem/Issue Information

(CAPS indicate MAJOR Use Impacts/Pollutants/Sources)

Use(s) Impacted	Severity	Problem Documentation
Water Supply	Stressed	Known
Fish Consumption	Stressed	Possible
Aquatic Life	Stressed	Suspected

Type of Pollutant(s)

Known: SILT/SEDIMENT
Suspected: NUTRIENTS, PRIORITY ORGANICS (PCBs), Oil and Grease
Possible: Pathogens

Source(s) of Pollutant(s)

Known: COMB. SEWER OVERFLOW (Watertown), STREAMBANK EROSION (during high flow)
Suspected: TOX/CONTAM. SEDIMENT (upstream sediments), Agriculture, Failing On-Site Syst, Urban Runoff
Possible: Unknown Source (PCBs)

Resolution/Management Information

Issue Resolvability: 1 (Needs Verification/Study (see STATUS))
Verification Status: 4 (Source Identified, Strategy Needed)
Lead Agency/Office: ext/WQCC **Resolution Potential:** Medium
TMDL/303d Status: n/a

Further Details

Public water supply use in this portion of the Black River is impacted by high turbidity/suspended solids and during period of high flow (spring runoff/snowmelt). During these periods, the water treatment plants use additional treatment. Aquatic life support also experiences some minor impacts. The cause of these impacts is thought to be municipal discharges, CSOs and/or inadequate septic systems in areas not served by municipal sewers. Fish consumption in this reach may be affected by PCBs sources upstream of this reach in Carthage.

Although the turbidity/suspended solids during high flows is generally a natural characteristic of the river and the watershed, a number of other sources have been cited as contributing to the water quality impairments along this portion of the river. These include failing and/or inadequate on-site septic systems, CSOs in the Watertown area, agricultural activity in the Towns of Rutland and Champion, hydrologic fluctuations in the river due to hydroelectric generation, runoff (including severe wind erosion) from the Fort Drum Military Reservation, and snow removal and dumping into the river. (DEC/DOW Region, April 1998)

Regional sewer service for previously unsewered areas along the Route 3, corridor which runs along the river, has been

completed for a number of areas. These areas include Great Bend (Town of Champion), Town of LeRay/Town of Pamela, and the northern section of the Village of Black River. Additional phases are under construction or slated for construction. It is now estimated that approximately 4 million gallons per month of previously untreated sewage is now receiving adequate treatment. However, 16 active CSOs in the Watertown area continue to discharge to the river during wet-weather conditions. (DEC/DOW, Region 6, June 2006)

Another issue along this section of the Black River concerns the effect on fish consumption of PCB contamination from an unknown source above this reach near Carthage. Sediment sampling of the river near Carthage was most recently conducted by NYSDEC in 2002. This sampling identified high levels of PCBs downstream of the Carthage WWTP. Some levels were found to be greater than ten times the Probable Effects Concentration (PEC). These more recent findings are consistent with previous bioaccumulation studies conducted on fish from the Black River by USEPA. In those studies, high levels of PCB have been found in non-game fish. No fish consumption advisories have been issued for game fish species. Previous monitoring by USEPA and NYSDEC has shown the Black River to be a significant source of PCBs to Lake Ontario. (Black River Sediment Assessment, DEC/DOW, SAMS, May 2004)

A few inactive hazardous waste sites located along the banks of the Black River in Watertown are also possible sources of PCBs. Nearby sites include Niagara Mohawk - Watertown MGP (6-23-011), Bomax Manufacturing (6-23-009) in Watertown and Carthage Machine Company (6-23-012) in Carthage. Another potential source of PCBs -- Abe Cooper Surplus Company (site no. 6-23-006) -- has been remediated and is no longer considered a possible PCB source. The Carthage Machine Company site (6-23-012) in Carthage has also been remediated. (Haz Waste Remed, Inactive HW Disp Sites, Vol 6, 4/98)

This segment includes the portion of the Black River from the Watertown WTP intake in Watertown to a point 2 miles above the eastern end of Huntington Island near Black River. The waters of this portion of the stream are Class A. Tribs to this reach/segment are listed separately.