

Screening and Assessment of Contaminated Sediment	
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	
DEC Policy	
Issuing Authority: Joe Martens, Commissioner	
Date Issued: 12/8/2014	Latest Date Revised:

I. Summary

This policy adopts the methods and procedures described in the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) publication entitled “Screening and Assessment of Contaminated Sediment” (http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/screenassessedfin.pdf) as appropriate guidance to be followed when conducting assessments of the toxic risks to natural resources from chemical contaminants in sediment.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Department that thorough, comprehensive, and scientifically-defensible methods and procedures should be used for the assessment of the potential toxicity of contaminated aquatic and marine sediments, in order to ensure the protection of benthic dwelling aquatic organisms and the fish, wildlife, and humans that either consume benthic organisms directly or that could be exposed to sediment contaminants through food chain bioaccumulation.

The procedures adopted herein are intended for the use and guidance of both DEC staff and outside parties engaged in assessment of contaminated sediment in order to provide a uniform and consistent process for assessing risks to aquatic and marine resources in New York State.

The provisions of this Policy are not intended to and shall not be interpreted to restrict the ultimate authority of the Commissioner. Further, the methods and procedures adopted herein are applicable to sediment aquatic toxicity assessment determinations. They are not intended to be used for projects being managed under Division of Water TOGS 5.1.9. Nor should they be used for characterizing the suitability of dredged sediment for upland placement or disposal, or for characterizing ecological risks associated with sediment placed in upland, terrestrial sites.

III. Purpose and Background

Protection of the ecological resources, specifically, fish, wildlife, and habitat thereof, within New York State is a responsibility of the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources (DFWMR). Division staff in both the Regions and Central Office can become involved in projects relating to the evaluation of contaminant concentrations in sediment (and other media, such as water, soil, wetlands, etc.), and for assessing the potential risk from such contaminants to aquatic or marine life. The “Screening and Assessment of Contaminated Sediments” document underlying this policy is intended to provide information and guidance to Division staff for screening,

classifying and assessing contaminated sediments in New York State; that is, for determining whether or not sediment is toxic and whether it potentially poses a risk to aquatic life.

In 1993, DFWMR published technical guidance for screening contaminated sediment which was widely used as the appropriate source of methods and procedures for assessing risks associated with contaminated sediment. However, considerable scientific material has been published since then. The new guidance is based on a thorough review of the current scientific literature related to sediment toxicity, and has been informed by input from other Divisions in the Department as well as from industry as a result of the public release and review of the document.

In addition to identifying specific numerical sediment guidance values, this document explains the technical basis for the derivation of the guidance values selected, and explains how those values can be modified as more information, such as site-specific data, becomes available. The document also discusses different lines of evidence for sediment quality assessment that can be used when additional studies are needed, and provides recommendations for sediment toxicity testing. The guidance integrates new technologies and concepts for conducting sediment risk assessments. It provides flexibility for tailored assessment methods applicable to different sediment types, locations, and contaminants.

IV. Responsibility

The Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources is responsible for maintaining and updating “Screening and Assessment of Contaminated Sediment,” and for assisting other Divisions in interpreting and implementing this guidance as policy. The Division of Water and the Division of Environmental Remediation have program and statutory responsibilities related to the disposal and cleanup of contaminated sediments not governed by this policy.

V. Related References

- Screening and Assessment of Contaminated Sediment, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources, June 24, 2014.
- Technical and Operational Guidance Series 5.1.9 In-Water and Riparian Management of Sediment and Dredged Material (http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/togs519.pdf)