

June meeting minutes 2023

6:30 pm 6/08/2023

Attendees: Elaine Caccoma, Lise Prown, Kay Barthelmes, Carmen D'Angelo, Ian Berger, Courtney Williams

- 1) a) CAC Letter of Support for IRA grant for Westchester County tree canopy study, workforce development, etc.
 - b) Pugsley Park walkabout with Peter Erwin 6/2 – Lise, Elaine
 - c) Releaf3 Workshop on Friday, 6/9 in Yonkers – Carmen, Elaine
 - d) Westchester Land Trust to present at the June 13th Planning Commission meeting
 - e) Jan went to PCB's in the Hudson webinar.
- 2) Review/Acceptance of Previous Month's Meeting Minutes (March, April, May)
- 3) CAPI Update - Jamie (greenhouse gas report ICLIE data)
- 4) Food Scraps - ongoing (possibility of daily drop off)
- 5) Environmental Film Series - Jan, Marie going to try to get **Radioactive** for Peekskill Film Festival
- 6) Urban and Community Forestry Grant (Tree Inventory) – Jamie, Kay, Lise, Elaine. We are hoping to submit it early and get feedback.
- 7) New Business
 - a) CSC and Task Force - Jamie
 - b) Tabling at Farmers Market – need to agree on some dates & volunteer sign up. Plan for June 24th, September 9th, October 14
 - c) CAC- No meeting in August
- 8) Meeting Close

Next meeting - July 6 2023

PCAC Report on PCBs in Hudson

EPA Region 2 Administrator, Lisa Garcia

Community Advisory Group for the HR/CAG, encouraging EJ outreach, and smaller communities; meets regularly and meetings are open to the public.

How can join the CAG?

Answer: actively trying to expand, particularly lower Hudson representation

Attend CAG meeting, join Hudson River listserv, email Larisa, can find out more about expansion, reach out to CAG Facilitator, Ona Ferguson, oferguson@cbi.org, 617-844-1127

GE agreement to fund water, fish tissue, water column, and sediment testing/sampling in the lower HR; no interference with human use of the river.

GE still responsible for cleanup, monitoring and maintenance

EPA kick in and support, also NYSDH monitoring fish contamination; Troy to southern tip of Manhattan

Focus on PCBs but also metals, mercury, dioxin, cadmium

Through 2025 to inform cleanup plan; next steps will be communicated then

3 levels of sediment, cores, high resolution sediment samples give a profile of how deposition is changing over time, recently deposited

Closest Primary Stations sampling locations to Peekskill will be Newburgh and Tappan Zee locations, how were these determined; categorized as primary and secondary stations, closest secondary "Hudson Highlands", initial sampling will inform the latter sampling

Focus on 14 fish species that people would catch and eat, eel and crab

Quantitative relationships between sediment concentration and fish concentration, higher water flow stirs up contamination into the water column and increases fish contamination; already know this relationship from past study; will apply that knowledge to the sampling to understand what is happening and where.

Purpose:

- Compare to 1990 sampling
- How has deposition happened over time
- How much recovery has occurred

Presentation and recording will be available on FB?

GE is legally responsible for PCBs in lower H., but other polluters, as well.

Gary Klawinski, EPA

Hudson Falls to NYC, 200-mile Superfund site, GE dumped in Hudson Falls

Dam in Troy defines lower from higher; all fresh above the dam

Buildings demolished, sites still contaminated, 1940-70s

Redistribute, benthic organisms feeding on bottom ingest and go up the food chain, bioaccumulate in fat cells of organisms, biomagnification

No fish eaten by women under 50 and children under 15; others see specific guidelines in lower Hudson, above Troy; really recommended that no one eat any fish from the Hudson

CERCLA 1980

Dredging project done 2015, completion certified 2019, 5-year monitoring cycles, ongoing

Floodplain remediation of upper River in planning stage, PCBs pushed onto shores due to flooding; prioritizing areas that sample high and are a threat to health due to proximity to people

Buildings in Hudson Falls that belongs to another company need to be deconstructed and there is a continued threat of contamination from this; deconstruction of one building completed this fall, other begun in 2024

5-year reviews assess how effective the already completed cleanup has been and not to inform new interventions

5-year review team; EPA, CAG, reviewing the upper Hudson

3rd 5-year review occurring currently and report will be released this summer

Larisa Romanowski

Gary Klawinski, Project Director

Larisa Romanowski, Community Involvement Coordinator

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To join the site email list to receive

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Althea Mullarkey, Scenic Hudson

The proposed sampling and investigation of the water column, sediment, and fish in the Lower Hudson described in the Sampling Plan is unlikely to yield useful information to resolve the spatial distribution of PCBs and other contaminants in the Lower Hudson. The Lower Hudson is a much larger and complex ecosystem than the Upper Hudson.

Why is the sampling plan so limited? developing a statistically and qualitative understanding of the nature and extent of PCB contamination in biota throughout the estuary with only five planned sampling locations over the 150-mile length of the Hudson estuary and without a more comprehensive survey of what, when, who and where anglers are fishing, is not feasible.

Answer: best way to sample such a long stretch is to start with “quick hitting” at this step to determine future testing needed elsewhere; not proper procedure to take samples at many different sites at first just to cover the length of the impacted site

To be clear, **Federal Superfund law requires EPA to conduct a study every five years of hazardous waste cleanups that do not completely remove all contaminants from the site. The purpose of the study is to determine whether the remedy is achieving the agency’s goals for the cleanup, specifically whether the cleanup is protective of human health and the environment.**

Two primary data quality objectives (“DQOs”) for the Lower Hudson fish sampling program set forth in the SOW are (1) “to obtain data to better understand potential human and ecological risks associated with fish consumption,” and (2) “to provide sufficient spatial resolution to assess total PCB concentrations in various fish species at locations along the Lower Hudson”. These objectives are extremely vague. What does “assess” mean—observing the magnitude of total PCB concentrations at specific locations in the spring? Is the assessment expected to address human health and ecological concerns? What about identifying potential sources of contamination by evaluating PCB congener composition?

What measures will EPA implement to address the disproportionate adverse environmental and health impacts inflicted on environmental justice communities in the Lower Hudson?

Answer: “key is fish consumption - ‘need to get people to accept the advisory and not consume the fish’ - NO REAL ANSWER; understand economic need but...nothing offered

Althea Mullarkey, Scenic Hudson ends here

How GE held responsible if we can never eat the fish again?

Answer: suggested tributary fishing, “it will be a long time before people can consume HR fish w/o limitation” nothing about GE held responsible

Peekskill resident spoke about the EJ issue in that the CAG focused on white area impact, fish testing was not focused on areas where people were eating the fish according to other cultural norms i.e. POC, island cultures, Latinx, Eastern European; Natural resources damage and reparations for economic and health impact on people who have eaten fish or cannot safely eat fish; Aaron Mair

The Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) is a proposed high-voltage direct current (HVDC) underwater and underground power cable project linking the Quebec area to the New York City neighborhood of Astoria, Queens.[1] How is EPA proposing to monitor the impact of this project?

Answer: required under their permits from NYS to sample first before laying the cable, and assure the State that they will proceed in ways that will not cause damage or stir up PCBs; he doesn't believe it will stir up large amounts of PCBs, but still working with the companies and the State to reduce impact

Caps are designed to last how long? Answer: "Indefinite future with monitoring and care"

What about floodplain study in the lower Hudson?

Answer: sampling now will inform if that is part of the next steps in the plan

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