



managed by Brookhaven Science Associates  
for the U.S. Department of Energy

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Dear Peconic River Working Group:

This letter recalls some highlights from our February 26 meeting, and announces our next standing meeting.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FEBRUARY 26 MEETING

Skip Medeiros, the Peconic River Group Manager was out of town. Kevin Shaw, the Peconic River Project Manager, filled in to present updates on the Pilot Studies.

#### \*Sediment Trap\*

Kevin opened the meeting with a status on the sediment trap. Kevin said progress on the construction of the sediment trap was advancing very well, and showed slides of the nearly completed structure.



**Area D: Stones that make up the sediment trap are individually raked into place by workers .**

- The trap will be in place for the duration of the Peconic River restoration program.
- The primary purpose of the trap is to slow down or stop particulate matter from moving off the BNL site boundary. Secondly, it serves as a barrier for any offsite migration of contaminated fish.

#### \*Vacuum Guzzler Pilot Study\*

Next, Kevin introduced Bob Litzke, the project engineer responsible for the vacuum guzzler project. Bob provided a status on preparations underway at Area "A," the site for the vacuum guzzler work.



**Area A: Sandbags cross the river at the site of the upcoming pilot study that will evaluate the vacuum guzzler technology. The sandbags help dry up the portion of the river slated for the vacuum guzzler study.**

- Bob noted that contracts have been awarded to firms that will do the vacuum guzzler work.
- Trucks and crews will mobilize the week of March 4. Work will commence the week of March 11. A silt fence will surround Area A-1.
- Working group members questioned the permitting process for pilot study work. Jim Lister of the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) responded by explaining that an official permit is not required, however permit-equivalency was required and in fact granted. Mr. Lister further assured the working group that the DEC was following the pilot study projects very closely and could revoke the permit-equivalency if dissatisfied.
- The vacuum guzzler is a 10-ton, six-wheel truck whose vacuum hose can extend 800 feet into the wetland—a length many times more than necessary for the pilot study.
- Working group members asked when the Lab will know that the vacuum guzzler has reached the right depth. Kevin and Bob explained that based on previous characterization sampling, the material containing contaminants is confined within the mud layer 6-12 inches from the surface. Generally, all material above the sand layer will be removed. In addition to reviewing the depth of material removed, confirmatory sampling will be conducted to assure that contaminant levels will be below any potential levels considered for cleanup.
- Working group members also questioned the work being done in the absence of cleanup goals. It was clarified for the working group that the purpose of the pilot-study projects is to evaluate how well the cleanup technologies work. We're measuring whether the guzzler can surgically remove the necessary sediment without disrupting vegetation. If it can do that, we are confident that these technologies can be part of the solution in achieving cleanup goals when they are defined. These pilots will also be part of an important learning process for the final cleanup.

**\*Sediment Removal/Wetland Reconstruction\***

Kevin next gave a status on the preparatory work underway for the sediment removal and wetlands reconstruction project being conducted in Area D.



**Area D: Project team members discuss preparations for the upcoming sediment removal and wetlands reconstruction project.**

- A contract has been awarded to a wetland remediation firm to provide work on the sediment removal and wetlands reconstruction project.
- Pilot-study work will begin the week of March 11 with the sediment removal.
- Amanda Ludlow, of the remediation firm, discussed some preliminary re-vegetation objectives:
  - A combination of compost and topsoil is being considered to replace the excavated sediment. The working group asked that the pH of the soil in which the new plants were grown be considered. This concern was founded in a desire for improved survivability of the plants. Amanda responded that the plants being sought are comparable to those in the river and are quite hardy. The pH issue was noted for consideration. Working group members also expressed concern regarding the presence of arsenic and other contaminants often found in commercial topsoil. The project team and its contractor acknowledged this concern and will follow up with analytical screening of sources of topsoil/compost.
  - Following sediment excavation, a mixture of 50% Switchgrass and 50% annual rye will be used to cover the area and to control invasive species.
  - Plantings will include soft rushes, sedges, and bur reeds.
  - A broadcast spreader will be used to plant seedlings as another method of erosion control. Every seed source is rated for purity. The open water areas will not be seeded.
  - Local Nurseries will provide native wetland plants for re-vegetation.
- Kevin noted that a re-vegetation plan will be available at the CAC meeting, March 14. All working-group members were invited to attend that meeting in the medical building conference room at 6:30.
- Phragmites will be monitored and will be removed by hand from the pilot study areas.
- Coconut mats will be used to control erosion and provide another source of organic material. A sample of the coconut mat was displayed to the working group members.

## OUR NEXT STANDING MEETING

Our next standing meeting will take place on March 26, 2002 from 6:30-8:30pm here at Brookhaven National Laboratory, in Berkner Hall, Room "B".

## PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR THE MARCH 26 MEETING

- Final Revegetation Plan
- Preliminary sampling results from pilot studies
- Risk Assessment

## VISIT YOUR WEBSITE

The Peconic River Working Group Website is set up and can be accessed over the Internet at: <http://www.bnl.gov/erd/peconic/WorkingGroup/peconicgroup.html>

Thank you once again for participating on the Peconic River Working Group. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience:

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