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Dear Peconic River Working Group:

This letter recalls some highlights from our April 23 meeting, and announces our next standing meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR APRIL 23 MEETING

Skip Medeiros, the Peconic River Group Manager opened the meeting with a discussion on revised risk assessment protocols. In particular, he responded to the principal concerns of the November 28, 2001 risk assessment protocols:

- Deer consumption risk will be considered for all deer within a one-mile radius.
- Working group members discussed the synergistic effect of contaminants. Risk Assessor, Amy Juchatz-Camanzo, of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services noted the difficulty in extrapolating to a wide range of chemicals. She explained that synergy does occur, but not for the wide range of chemicals. Each contaminant contributes to the total risk and they are all added together. The lack of data on synergy is one reason the EPA calls for conservatism in estimating risk.
- Regarding a request to minimize the number of scenarios, Skip explained that having a set of multiple scenarios helps in the understanding of risk. Many scenarios help to bracket the risks. For example, when the river is full, it has a higher fish-carrying capacity, and the risk assessment protocol for a higher fish consumption rate may be appropriate. When the river is low, it may have more exposed river sediment to play in; but the river can't support as many fish. Limiting the number of scenarios would not allow both of these conditions to be evaluated. Accounting for a range of possibilities gives fair representation to each pathway. Skip explained that creating too many scenarios is possible, but in this case, the objective is to achieve a benchmark of what's low and high. The values have to be framed and bracketed and different populations that may be at risk must be assessed.
- Skip circulated a table of exposure pathways. The table is the basis for determining the exposure pathway.
- Preliminary risk assessment results are anticipated to be ready for the next working group meeting.
- Skip reviewed with the working group some of the tables contained in the revised risk assessment protocols. These protocols were distributed to the working group.

Skip continued with an update on fish data, recalling the working group's request for the data, even in the absence of an interpreting report. Skip turned over the discussion on the New York State Department of Health letter report on fish data from the Peconic River to Les Hill, Associate Laboratory Director, Environmental Management. Les explained that fish data and the pending report are the responsibility of New York State. As a result, he said it's not appropriate for BNL to release the fish data. We will wait until the New York State report, which interprets the data, is ready before distributing it.

- Skip also asked for input from the working group to confirm that the diversity of comments heard from the many stakeholders is incorporated into the risk assessment protocols.

The meeting continued with Kevin Shaw, project manager, who presented a photo-chronology of the pilot studies covering events since the last working-group meeting.



A tray of soft rushes: One of the slides that Kevin displayed for the working group showing the native wetland plants, soft rushes, taken on April 4 when much of the revegetation took place.

- Area D plantings were largely completed by April 18. Additional plantings of bur reeds are expected in the early summer
- The Area A vacuum guzzling project is expected to be complete by 4/26.
- In the spirit of a pilot-study project, vacuum-guzzled sediment in excess of 350 cubic yards, will be dried at the riffle beds. Area A sediment up to 350 cubic yards was dried using a gravity drain system. The two drying systems will be compared for efficiency. Kevin said that the project team will also conduct “shaking” tests on dried sediments to see whether any water pools at the top. This is critical for the shipping process to ensure acceptance at the licensed disposal facility.
- Completion reports are nearly done and will become part of the feasibility study.

WORKING GROUP TOUR

A Working-Group tour of the pilot-study areas will take place on June 4. If you would like to attend the tour, please arrive at Berkner Hall at 6:00pm on June 4 for carpooling to Area D and A.

OUR NEXT STANDING MEETING

Our next standing meeting will take place on June 4, 2002 from 7:00-9:00pm (start 1/2 hour late due to tour) here at Brookhaven National Laboratory, in Berkner Hall, Room "B."
NOTE: Our scheduled May 28 meeting is being changed to June 4 to accommodate the Memorial Day holiday.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JUNE 4 MEETING

- Working-Group Tour
- Pilot-study closeout reports
- New York State Department of Health Fish Letter

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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