



New Talks Will Explore Dioxin Cleanup Process

Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay Sites

Tri-Cities area, Michigan

December 2008

Stay informed

EPA and MDEQ want to engage you and other stakeholders in the cleanup of the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and bay. Talks between EPA, MDEQ and Dow are already under way and here are some steps you can take now to stay involved:

Attend the public meeting

EPA and MDEQ will host an open meeting on **Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m.**, at Saginaw Valley State University, Seminar Rooms, 7400 Bay Road, Saginaw. This is an opportunity for people to learn more about what is being done about contamination in the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and Saginaw Bay. EPA and MDEQ staff will be available for informal discussions beginning at 6:30 p.m. *(See back page for contact information.)*

Read the documents

You can view documents related to the contamination issue in information repositories set up by EPA and MDEQ in Midland and Saginaw. The files contain the Dec. 15 special notice letter issued by EPA that outlines the goals for the current negotiations. The repositories are located in the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews St., Midland, and at the Hoyt Main Library, 505 Janes Ave., Saginaw.

Go on the Web

Dioxin investigation:

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/dowchemical>

<http://www.michigan.gov/deq>
(click on "Dioxin Information")

Superfund Alternative Approach:

<http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/cleanup/superfund/saa.html>

The parties involved in talks concerning dioxin and other contaminants in the Saginaw Bay watershed want the public involved in the long-term cleanup process. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, state partner Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and The Dow Chemical Co. of Midland, Mich., are in confidential negotiations to investigate and then clean up contamination in river sediment along the banks and in the floodplains of the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and in Saginaw Bay.

EPA issued a "special notice letter" Dec. 15 calling on the parties to negotiate a process that can be used to develop a comprehensive cleanup for the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers as well as Saginaw Bay. The talks will be taking place over the next 60 days, but the timeline can be extended by an additional 30 days if progress is being made. If an agreement is reached, there will be an opportunity for public comment before it is made final. The focus of these talks is the Tittabawassee River adjacent to and downstream from Dow's Midland plant, the Saginaw River, and Saginaw Bay in Lake Huron.

Community involvement

Because a confidentiality agreement is in place for the negotiations, all parties involved must agree in advance before progress reports or updates from the talks are released. Confidentiality agreements are a normal part of EPA's negotiations. Because this is a new process, EPA and MDEQ are going to reexamine the best ways to involve the public. The first such opportunity is a meeting scheduled for Jan. 15 at Saginaw Valley State University. *(See adjacent box for details and ways you can stay involved in the cleanup process.)*

Goal of negotiations

The desired outcome of the talks is for all the parties to sign a legal agreement known as an "administrative order on consent" or AOC. The AOC would outline the duties and responsibilities of the parties and a process for investigating and addressing contamination in and along the Tittabawassee and Saginaw rivers and Saginaw Bay. EPA and MDEQ want to build on the work already done. Extensive dioxin sampling data exists for the Tittabawassee while more investigation may be needed on the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay. The work will be done in stages and the environmental agencies expect Dow to develop cleanup options based on the sampling data. EPA and MDEQ would then work closely to pick one or more of the options and the recommended cleanup plan would be available for public review and comment before any final decision is reached.

Many of EPA's cleanups are performed under the authority of the Superfund law. In this case EPA and MDEQ want to treat the rivers and bay under the "Superfund Alternative Approach." The alternative approach uses normal Superfund procedures such as developing cleanup options and public participation through meetings and hearings.

Recent cleanup activities

This year EPA and MDEQ supervised the cleanup of the residential Riverside Boulevard neighborhood in Saginaw, Mich., that was subjected to frequent flooding from the Tittabawassee River. The flooding deposited dioxin on yards and roads in the neighborhood.

Last year EPA oversaw the cleanup of several areas of the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw River with high levels of dioxin. These locations or “hot spots” were sources contributing dioxin to the rivers and Saginaw Bay. Under the direction of MDEQ, Dow will continue addressing contamination at the Dow plant site and in the city of Midland as part of its responsibilities under its hazardous waste management facility operating license. In addition, EPA and MDEQ are working on a strategy for activities in the Tittabawassee River directly adjacent to the Dow plant site.

Talk to us

EPA and MDEQ have many people working on this site. To ask questions or to raise concerns, you can start by contacting:

EPA:

Patti Krause

Community Involvement Coordinator
Region 5 Superfund Division
312-886-9506
krause.patricia@epa.gov

Don deBlasio


Community Involvement Coordinator
Region 5 Superfund Division
312-886-4360
deblasio.don@epa.gov

Region 5 toll-free: 800-621-8431,
9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., weekdays

MDEQ:

Cheryl Howe

Project Manager
Waste and Hazardous Materials Division
517-373-9881
howec@michigan.gov

Reproduced on Recycled Paper 

**TITTABAWASSEE RIVER, SAGINAW RIVER AND SAGINAW BAY SITES:
New Talks Will Explore Dioxin Cleanup Process**

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency
Region 5
Superfund Division (P-19J)
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

