



February 24, 2003

Dear Peconic River Working Group:

This letter recalls highlights from our January 28 meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR JANUARY 28, 2003 MEETING

Present: John Hall, Kevin McAllister, Tom Talbot, Skip Medeiros, Andrew Rapiejko, Amy Juchatz, John Carter, Jen Clodius, Tim Green, Denise Speizio, Adrienne Esposito, Anthony Graves, Ken White, Doug Warren, Keith Grigoletto.

All working-group members were mailed a copy of the Draft Final Risk Assessment just prior to the January 28 meeting. They were also sent a copy of the Phytoextraction report that underscores why this technology is inappropriate for Peconic River sediment cleanup and dismisses the technology as a viable cleanup alternative.

Ken White, Community Relations, explained the status of the Risk Assessment:

- Although the Risk Assessment is still in draft form, it's been internally reviewed and all regulatory review comments have been addressed.
- Distributing the Risk Assessment still in a draft form is unusual but the Laboratory wanted the working group to have it. As such, working group members can begin reviewing information that will become part of that used in developing cleanup options for the river sediment. Feedback from the working group will assist the project team in preparing for the development of the proposed remedial action plan, which is fed by the risk assessment.
- The key risk driver is mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). A lot of effort was put into formulating the many risk-based scenarios that explore potential human health risks. The variety of scenarios will enable community members to evaluate possible remedies based upon their own individual perceptions about the upstream portion of the Peconic River.

Next, Skip Medeiros, Group Manager for the Peconic River Sediment Cleanup, delivered a presentation on the Peconic River Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment. A key goal of the presentation was to summarize the Risk Assessment:

- Skip explained some of the key terms such as Central Tendency (CT) and Reasonably Maximally Exposed (RME), how cancer risks are interpreted, and expressions of radiological risks. The Risk Assessment evaluates hypothetical scenarios to determine the potential for excess cancer and non-cancer health risks.
- Among the human exposure pathways, Skip noted soil, fish, and deer. Working group members later questioned whether turtles should be considered as a possible exposure pathway. Tim Green noted that he was not aware of any studies on bioaccumulation in turtles.
- Skip explained the chronic daily intake (CDI) parameters, as used in the Superfund program and detailed their application for fish consumption, a primary pathway for humans. He also reviewed the way in which excess risk is evaluated using guidance provided by regulatory agencies.

- Several follow-on actions were identified in the Risk Assessment including the recommendation to evaluate Peconic specific conditions to help reduce some of the uncertainties related to key issues such as fish consumption.
- Continued monitoring was recommended beyond the cleanup to ensure effectiveness.

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- At the close of the presentation, working-group members discussed whether a significant fish population exists, or could exist, in the upstream portion of the Peconic River. One of the members, who lives along the river, noted that he is not aware of anyone eating fish out of the river—he had questioned a number of residents along the upstream area. Others questioned whether upstream portions of the river could at some point support a significant fish population. The project team is currently evaluating potential fish biomass in the upper Peconic during low, mid, and high-water levels to assess actual and projected conditions .
- The risk assessment is built on a lot of assumptions, as noted by one of the working group members. The project team responded that this is typical of risk assessments. It is important to note that the scenarios included in the risk assessment bracketed the potential risk influencing assumptions.
- One member noted that a creel survey conducted for Suffolk County indicated that many people were catching and consuming fish from the lower Peconic. Recognizing that the Laboratory focus is on the upstream portion, one of the working group members noted that the Peconic is one river and perhaps should be evaluated that way. Another member questioned whether fish could realistically be expected to migrate upstream during times of high water.

OTHER NEWS

On January 30 Brookhaven Science Associates announced the selection of Dr. Praveen Chaudhari as Director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory. To learn more about the appointment of Dr. Chaudhari, read the press release here:

<http://www.bnl.gov/bnlweb/pubaf/pr/2003/bnlpr013003.htm>

OUR NEXT STANDING MEETING

Our next meeting of the Peconic River Working Group is scheduled to take place on February 25, from 6:30-8:30 pm. On the 25th, we will meet in the Building 51 Conference Room. As you pass through the front gate, make a left turn at the traffic light; then make a second left turn at the second traffic light. Building 51 is the last building on the right.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE FEBRUARY 25 MEETING

Our tentative agenda includes the following:

- Risk Assessment
- Methyl mercury content of river sediment
- Implications of various levels of sediment removal
- Set tentative date and agenda for next meeting

VISIT YOUR WEBSITE

The Peconic River Working Group Website can be accessed over the Internet at:

<http://www.bnl.gov/erd/peconic/WorkingGroup/peconicgroup.html>

Thank you for your continued interest and participation in the Peconic River cleanup project. We look forward to seeing you on the 25th.

Keith Grigoletto

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