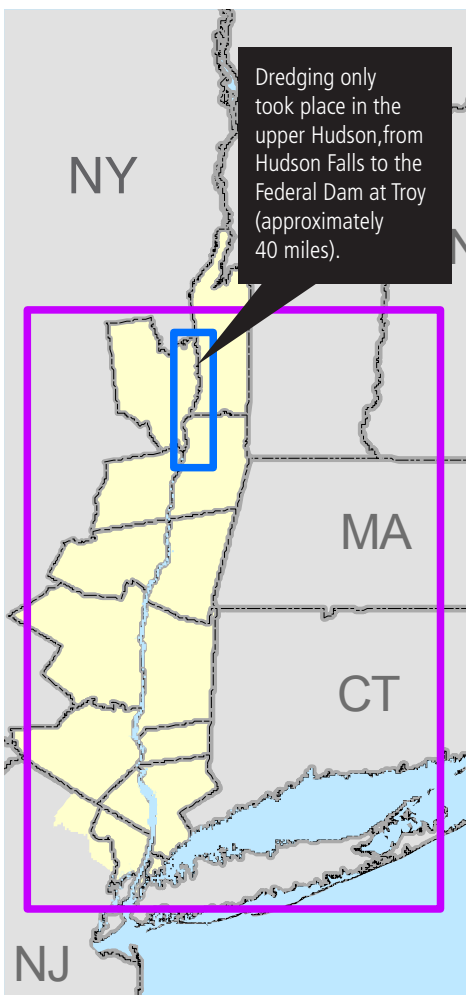
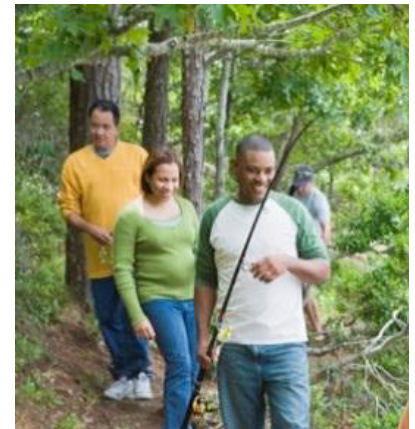


Hudson River Superfund Cleanup

Public health, environment and economy remain at risk

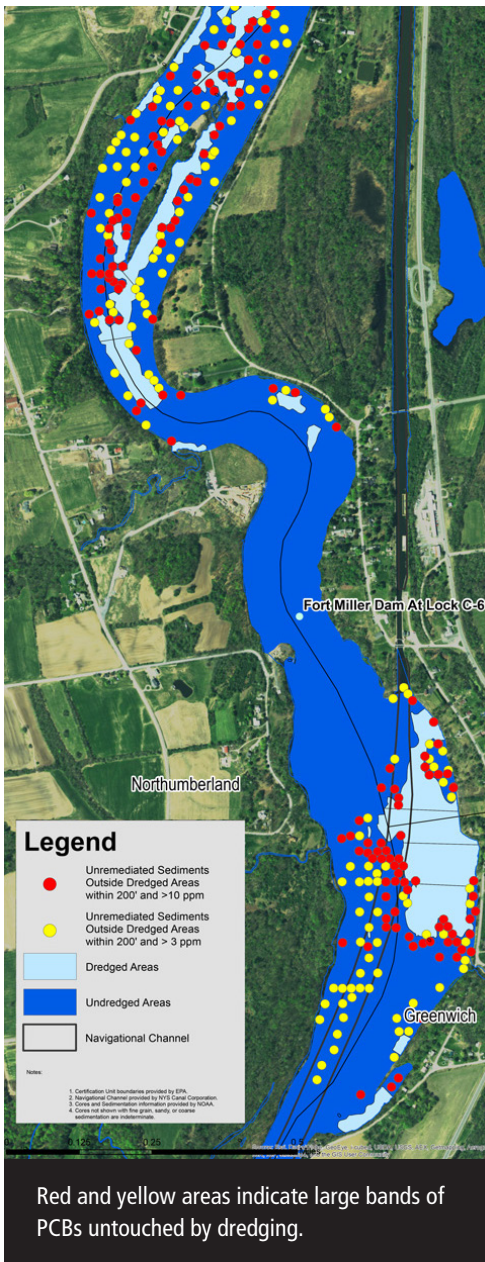


The Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site encompasses a nearly 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River in eastern New York State from Hudson Falls to the Battery in New York City. It includes communities in 14 New York counties and two New Jersey counties.

Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is poised to officially declare “victory” in General Electric’s cleanup of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the Hudson River – despite clear scientific evidence that GE has left behind hundreds of acres of highly contaminated sediment. Without removal of this contamination, one of America’s most iconic waterways will also remain its largest federal Superfund site. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) – the officially designated trustees of the river’s natural resources – have stated the need for additional remediation. The EPA also ignored calls by NOAA and USFWS to postpone decommissioning of GE’s dredging operations until the agency completed its legally required review of whether cleanup goals have been met.

Background: In 1983 the EPA declared a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River a Superfund site due to millions of pounds of PCBs that GE dumped in it between 1947 and 1976. A known human carcinogen, PCBs are found in most Hudson River fish at levels exceeding state and federal health standards for safe consumption. Women of childbearing age and children under age 15 are advised to “eat none” of its fish. The PCBs also have contaminated drinking water supplies, and as airborne contaminants they pose a range of documented health threats to residents of riverfront communities. In addition, people who come into contact with the river are advised by the New York State Department of Health to “take certain precautions after working or recreating in areas along the shoreline where flooding may have occurred.”

Although GE has undertaken a six-year dredging program under an agreement with the EPA, the limited scope of this negotiated cleanup ignored a large volume of contamination. Unless additional dredging occurs, restoration of the river’s health will be postponed for decades. People will continue eating contaminated fish – especially low-income minority communities, raising environmental justice issues – and riverside towns and villages will not be able to realize the full economic potential of their waterfronts due to this toxic legacy.



Prior to the dismantling of GE’s cleanup operations, as little as two more seasons of dredging could have achieved the cleanup’s environmental and public health goals.

Who has the power to require GE to conduct additional dredging?

The EPA has the authority and duty to compel GE to conduct more dredging to meet cleanup goals. Alternatively, the EPA could transfer lead agency status for the cleanup to New York State.

Who thinks more cleanup is needed?

In addition to the three natural resource trustees, the following have called for additional dredging by GE:

- 161 members of the New York State Senate and Assembly
- 81 riverfront communities (by municipal resolution)
- Dozens of community organizations, from Chambers of Commerce to sportsmen associations
- The *New York Times*, *Albany Times Union* and other Hudson Valley newspapers and editorial boards

What does the science say?

The USFWS and NOAA have identified many acres of upper Hudson River sediment that remain highly contaminated with GE’s PCBs, posing a health threat through fish consumption, airborne exposure and drinking water. These agencies have stated that the goals of the cleanup will not be reached for generations longer than expected – well into the 22nd century – unless more dredging is done. Furthermore, commencement of critical restoration projects will be delayed as long as the river remains contaminated.

What needs to be done?

The EPA must be convinced to join with other federal and state agencies and require GE to perform additional cleanup to ensure the Hudson’s health is restored.

What can you do?

Tell Gov. Cuomo that we’re so close to having a cleaner Hudson River, but action is needed to remove more toxic PCBs and get the job done right, once and for all!

Contact Governor Cuomo:

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
 Governor of New York State
 NYS Capital Building
 Albany, NY 12224



Contact your member of Congress: Ask them to contact EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and express that more contaminants need to be removed from the river.