

# PCB Cleanup Proceeding for Portage Creek

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site

Kalamazoo, Michigan

May 2012

## Informational meeting

The EPA is holding a public meeting **Thursday, May 31**, to update the community about the ongoing cleanup at the Portage Creek site.

The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, 100 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo.

EPA representatives and officials from other government agencies will make formal presentations and then be available to discuss the cleanup. If you need special accommodations at the meeting, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Don de Blasio (see below) by May 25.

## Contact EPA

For more information, or if you have comments about the Portage Creek cleanup, contact:

### Don de Blasio

Community Involvement Coordinator  
EPA Region 5  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
312-343-6666  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays.  
deblasio.don@epa.gov

## For more information

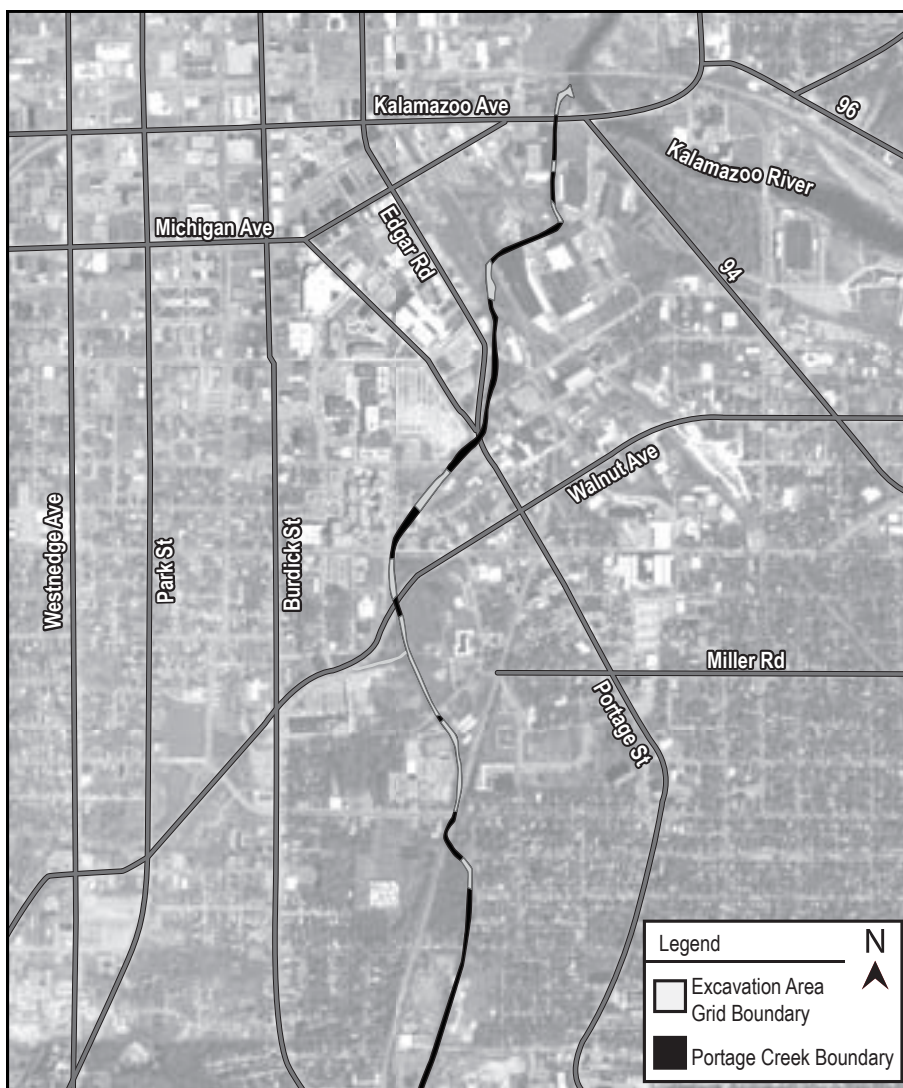
You can learn more about the Portage Creek cleanup online at:  
[www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/kalproject](http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/kalproject).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup of PCB contamination in Portage Creek continues on schedule this spring. The \$15.8 million project began last September. PCB is the shortened form of polychlorinated biphenyl, a hazardous chemical compound that in this case was used in paper processing.

The EPA will have a public meeting (see box, left) to explain the cleanup, which could take two or more years to complete.

## Cleanup overview

Workers will remove sediment (mud) from Portage Creek, dig up soil next to the stream, stabilize creek banks where necessary to prevent future contamination and erosion and dispose of contaminated materials at a



Portage Creek Excavation Areas

chemical waste landfill. Fences will be put up and signs posted to keep people from being exposed to PCBs during the cleanup. Once the contaminated material is removed, workers will test and monitor the area, fill excavated sections with clean material and topsoil, and plant native vegetation. The EPA expects to remove about 17,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment.

### **Progress to date**

The EPA removed 1,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated soil from an area of Portage Creek this April. The Agency also conducted sampling in nearby Upjohn Park but determined no PCBs were present in park soil. The EPA will begin cleanup activities in the creek channel between Stockbridge Avenue and Lake Street. This activity was scheduled to start on May 21 and be completed in June. To dig within the creek channel, it is necessary to pump creek water around the part of the creek being excavated. The pumps required to do this are quite large, so residents may notice additional noise.

### **Planned additional work for 2012**

After the cleanup in the Stockbridge Avenue and Lake Street area is complete, the EPA plans to clean up a section at Axtell Creek starting this July. After completing the Axtell Creek cleanup, the Agency will work on a stretch of creek along Upjohn Park beginning around late August. If weather conditions are favorable, the EPA may also dig up sediment between Crosstown Parkway and East Vine Street before the end of 2012.

### **Site history**

The Portage Creek removal area begins at East Cork Street and follows the stream north about three miles to the Kalamazoo River (see map, page 1). The area is bordered by residential, commercial and industrial properties as well as undeveloped parcels.

Between 1954 and the early 1970s, the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site was used by several paper companies that recycled carbonless copy paper. The recycling process used PCBs, resulting in large amounts of contaminated waste upstream from the Portage Creek area. Until 1970, wastewater from the recycling process was released directly into a 29-acre pond within Portage Creek.

In 1977, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued a public health advisory regarding PCB contamination at the site and advised residents not to eat fish caught from the creek. In August 1990, the Portage Creek area, as part of the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site, was placed on the National Priorities List, a roster of the nation's most hazardous waste sites.

Between 1990 and 2000, several parties responsible for the contamination, including Georgia-Pacific LLC and Millennium Holdings, investigated the Portage Creek site under an agreement with the EPA and the state of Michigan. In November 2010, the MDNR collected soil and sediment samples that showed high levels of PCB contamination.

### **Kalamazoo River cleanup studies**

In April 2011, Georgia-Pacific submitted a site investigation report, which showed where and how soil and sediment sampling was conducted in Area 1 of the site. (Area 1 is the Kalamazoo River between Morrow Dam and the former Plainwell Dam, and also includes Portage Creek between Cork Street and the Kalamazoo River.) The report was revised in October 2011 and February 2012. The EPA anticipates approving the revised report for Area 1 this June. Another separate report, which provides potential cleanup options for Area 1, will be submitted by Georgia-Pacific to the EPA this fall.

Additional soil and sediment sampling will be conducted in Area 2 this summer and the site investigation report for Area 2 will be submitted to the EPA this November. Area 2 is the Kalamazoo River between the former Plainwell Dam and the Otsego City Dam.

The plan to conduct sampling in Area 3 was approved by the EPA in May, and soil and sediment sampling will begin later this summer and fall. Area 3 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego City Dam and the Otsego Dam.

### **Plainwell Mill update**

The EPA is reviewing the revised site investigation report that was submitted by Weyerhaeuser in April 2012. Additional site investigation activities, including underlying groundwater monitoring, will be conducted until September. An addendum to the site investigation report describing additional investigation activities for the Plainwell Mill area will be submitted to the EPA in October.

### **Landfill updates**

#### **12th Street Landfill**

Weyerhaeuser has completed most of the cleanup activities at the 12th Street Landfill. The EPA is reviewing how Weyerhaeuser will operate and maintain the landfill site in the future. Weyerhaeuser submitted the cleanup report to the EPA and is now reviewing the Agency's comments. When the EPA approves this report, the cleanup activities at the 12th Street Landfill will be complete.

#### **Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill**

In the spring of 2011, Georgia-Pacific began construction of a landfill cap at the Willow Boulevard/A-Site Landfill. The cleanup also includes removing contaminated soil



from nearby wetlands and removing sheet piling at the A-Site part of the landfill. In 2011, Georgia-Pacific completed the majority of the cleanup activities at the Willow Boulevard section of the landfill and the cleanup of the wetland area east of Davis Creek. Georgia-Pacific expects to complete most of the work at the A-Site portion of the landfill by 2013.

### Allied Paper Landfill

The EPA is evaluating cleanup alternatives for an area of the site called Operable Unit1 or OU1. EPA sometimes

divides complex Superfund sites into smaller sections called operable units. The EPA will choose a final cleanup option after the Agency has provided the public an opportunity to comment on the recommended cleanup plan. The EPA anticipates proposing a cleanup plan for public comment by this fall. The EPA will send out the proposed plan to begin the comment period and announce the date and location of the associated public meeting.



*Portage Creek Removal Areas*

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Thursday, May 31  
6:30 p.m.  
Radisson Plaza Hotel  
100 W. Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo

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## ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SITE: PCB Cleanup Proceeding for Portage Creek

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Region 5  
Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

