

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Final Site

September 2010

BLACK RIVER PCBS | Jefferson County, New York

Site Location:

The Black River PCBs site is located in northern New York State, east of Watertown, NY.

Site History:

The Black River PCBs site consists of PCB-contaminated sediment that was at least in part the result of wastewater discharge from the Carthage/West Carthage Water Pollution Control Facility (i.e., the sewage treatment plant [STP]). Historical information indicates that tanneries, paper mills, and other industries have operated along the Black River in the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage since the 1890s. Two active paper mills, one inactive paper mill, a machine shop, the Carthage/West Carthage STP, and a hydroelectric power plant are currently located along the Black River in the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

The source under consideration consists of PCB-contaminated wastewater discharge from the Carthage/West Carthage STP. The STP treats industrial and municipal wastewaters from the surrounding area and discharges its effluent to the Black River. The hazardous substances affecting the effluent and downstream sediments are PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). Sampling and analysis by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) in 1998 showed the presence of PCBs in wastewater at the Carthage/West Carthage STP. Analytical results indicated PCBs in both paper mill and municipal wastewaters.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

Effluent samples collected by NYSDEC in 1997 and 1999, and the sediment samples collected by EPA in June 2009, document PCB contamination of the Black River fishery.

Response Activities (to date):

In June 2009, EPA completed extensive sediment sampling and confirmed the presence of PCBs downstream of the past and present paper mills and the STP.

Need for NPL Listing:

The State of New York referred the site to EPA because the PCB contamination warrants further investigation. EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html> or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.