

NPL Site Narrative for Sheboygan Harbor & River

SHEBOYGAN HARBOR & RIVER Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Conditions at proposal (September 18, 1985): The Sheboygan Harbor and River Site extends 8 miles through the communities of Sheboygan Falls, Kohler, and Sheboygan in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. According to tests conducted by EPA in July 1985, some river sediments contain high levels of PCBs, some as high as 190 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). Concentrations in the Sheboygan Harbor basin and turning basin are generally lower than 5 mg/kg but do exceed 50 mg/kg in spots within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' official navigation dredging channel. The channel has not been dredged since 1973.

In early 1975, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) detected PCBs during routine sampling of fish. Every year since then, PCBs have been detected in fish, water, and sediments in the harbor and river. In April 1978, WDNR and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services advised residents not to eat fish from the Sheboygan River and two tributaries, the Mullet and Onion Rivers, because PCBs in all samples analyzed exceeded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's temporary tolerance level of 5 micrograms/gram. The ban is still in effect in some places.

WDNR investigated to find the sources of PCBs. The highest concentrations were detected in sediments immediately downstream from Tecumseh Products Co.'s die-casting plant in Sheboygan Falls. Concentrations declined further downstream from the plant. After discovering PCB wastes on the plant property, WDNR ordered the company on May 12, 1978 to stop disposing of solid waste on its property. On June 21, 1978, WDNR issued a second order requiring the company to excavate, collect, and store properly all materials likely to contain PCBs. The company excavated contaminated soils and disposed of them off-site. On August 15, 1978, WDNR issued a letter to the mayor of Sheboygan Falls and the Tecumseh plant manager indicating that the June 21, 1978, order had been satisfied.

A March 1980 report of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimated that about 163,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil containing 3.5 tons of PCBs would have to be dredged from the mouth of the river and the harbor to protect human health and the environment.

The Sheboygan River drains into Lake Michigan, which is the source of drinking water for the Sheboygan/Sheboygan Falls/Kohler metropolitan area (approximately 58,000 people). EPA has detected PCBs in sediments within 1 mile of the drinking water intakes.

Both Sheboygan Harbor and River are used for recreational activities.

Status (June 10, 1986): EPA is considering various alternatives for the site.

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 [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.