

OUR RIVERS TODAY

EPA's newsletter about cleanup activities in and along the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay



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Turning the Corner to the Saginaw River

For several years, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been working with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) to clean up Tittabawassee River sediments and floodplain soils. Last fall, EPA completed river channel and bank work in Segments 6 and 7 of the area of the Tittabawassee River just upstream where it meets with the Shiawassee River to enter the Saginaw (see timeline, Page 2). The photos on this page show some of the work in these areas. This year, EPA, EGLE, and the Dow Chemical Company will focus on collecting sediment and soil samples from the Upper Saginaw River and Saginaw River floodplain (see map, Page 2). This information will be added to existing information that the agencies will study to understand what work may be needed in these areas in the future.



Excavator cutting the bank at BMA 7-3 and removing soil.

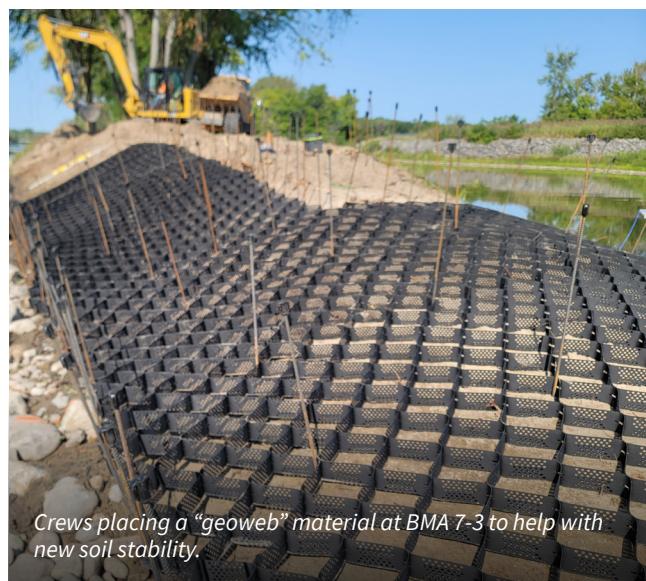
ATTENTION!

Floodplain owners along the Saginaw River!

EPA and Dow Chemical Company need your help as we begin to investigate the Saginaw River and Bay. Recently you may have been contacted by Dow requesting permission to sample your floodplain, the portion of your property adjacent to the river that is prone to flooding during periods of heavy rain or snowmelt.

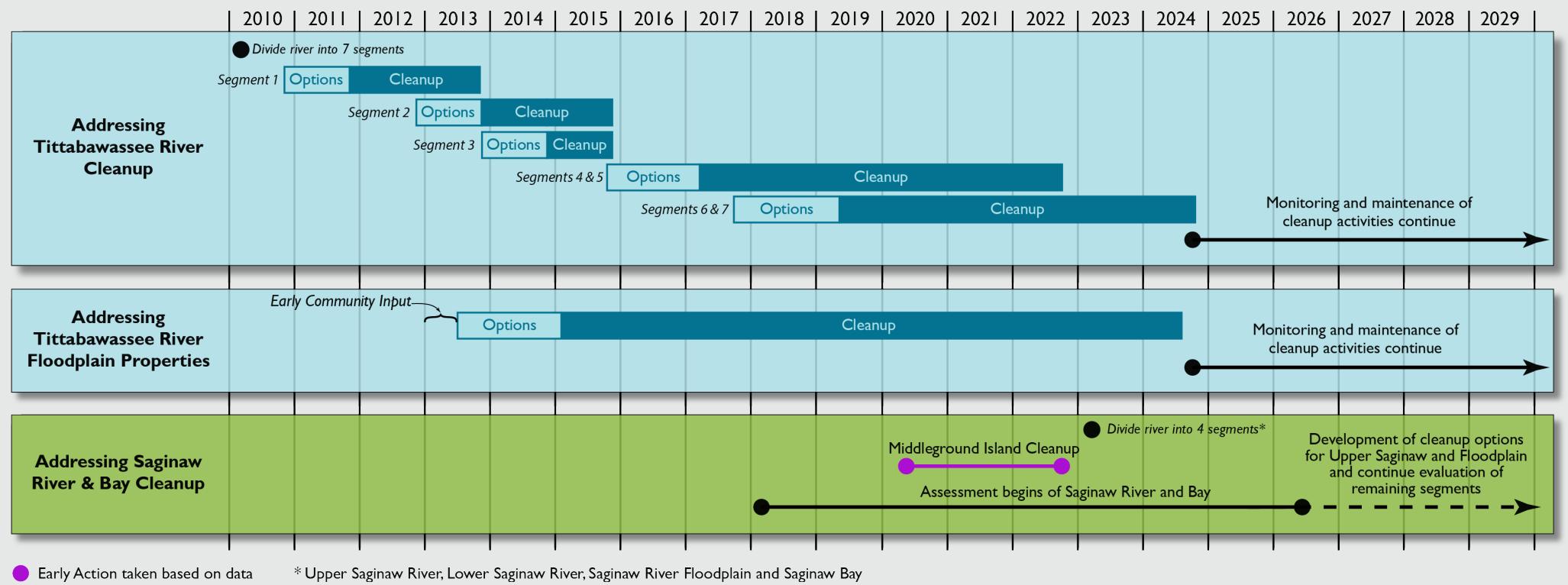
Please consider participating to help EPA understand the footprint of the floodplain that will require further evaluation or cleanup. Your assistance will provide key information to help protect human health and the environment.

If you have any questions about this work or the letter you've received requesting access to your property, please contact EPA's project manager, Colleen Moynihan at 440-250-1702 or moynihan.colleen@epa.gov



Crews placing a "geoweb" material at BMA 7-3 to help with new soil stability.

CLEANUP TIMELINE

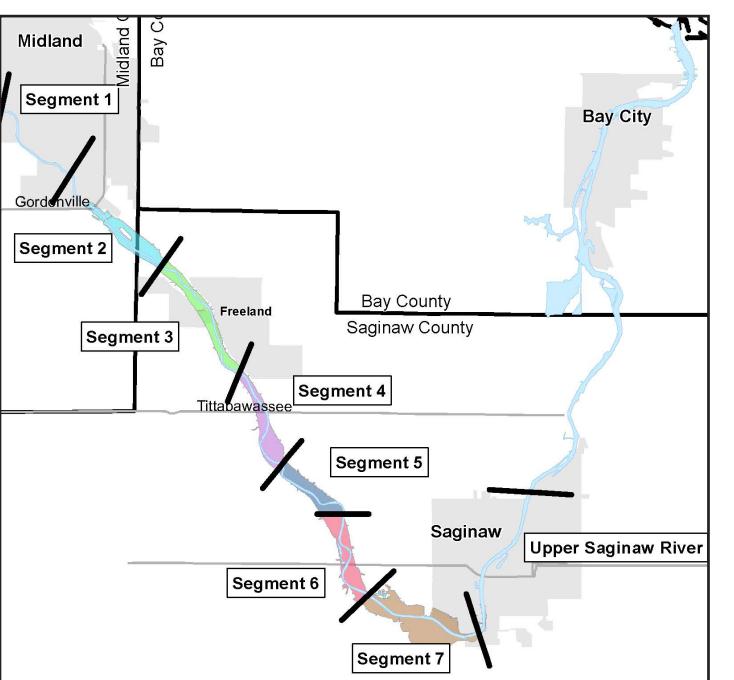


This work is a continuation of work started in 2010. EPA and EGLE divided the 24-mile lower Tittabawassee River into seven segments ranging from three to four miles each. Crews completed work from upstream to downstream along the Tittabawassee River, segment-by-segment. Cleanup work targets dioxin and furan deposits in sediment and riverbank areas in each segment. This work manages contamination at the site from Dow Chemical Company's past waste disposal practices.

The video "Historical Influences on the Tittabawassee River" explores the significant historical events and industrial activities that have shaped the river's current state. It delves into past logging operations, industrial developments, and their environmental impacts, highlighting the challenges faced in restoring the river's ecological balance. View it by visiting vimeo.com/958483431

What's ahead for 2025

The Dow Chemical Company plans to clean up several floodplain properties along the Tittabawassee River (Segments 3, 4 and 6), under oversight from EPA and EGLE. Dow will continue sediment and soil data gap sampling activities in the Saginaw River and its floodplain. Field work includes site-wide project monitoring, where completed cleanups are inspected and monitored to ensure long-term effectiveness. Each year, Dow will also continue to collect fish data in the Saginaw and Tittabawassee Rivers.



Did you know?

Sediment and Bank Management Areas Community Guide

When you read about EPA's cleanups in the Tittabawassee River, you may read about sediment and bank "management areas." These areas, called Sediment Management Areas, or SMAs, and Bank Management Areas, or BMAs, target specific areas in each segment where dioxins and furans have been found at levels that could pose a risk to human health and the environment. You can read more about EPA's cleanup approach by viewing our guide at: semspub.epa.gov/src/document/05/700424

More Environmental Projects Near You

Saginaw River & Bay Area of Concern

The Saginaw River and Bay is designated as an Area of Concern (AOC) under the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Contaminated sediments, fish consumption advisories, degraded fisheries, and loss of significant recreational values are among the reasons for the AOC designation. Recently, a collaborative group of local, state, and federal partners and community members began meeting monthly to develop a framework for remediation and restoration of the Saginaw River and Bay AOC, as well as an outreach strategy to engage local communities throughout the Saginaw Bay watershed. Members of the public and any other interested parties are encouraged to reach out to Trent Henry at henry.trent@epa.gov for more information on how to get involved.

Tittabawassee River Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration

Under a settlement agreement with natural resource Trustees¹, Dow is implementing several restoration projects identified in Midland, Bay, Saginaw, and nearby counties. Dow provided funds to the Trustees to implement additional projects. These projects include fish spawning and fish passage improvements; restoration of thousands of acres of wetlands and other habitats; creation of multiple public nature areas with nature trails, fishing platforms, and a bike trail segment; protection of a green corridor along the Tittabawassee River; and expansion of boating access at the mouth of the Saginaw River. To stay informed about ongoing projects, visit: www.fws.gov/project/tittabawassee-river-natural-resource-damage-assessment-and-restoration

¹Trustees are the State of Michigan, acting through the Director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, the Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Attorney General of the State of Michigan; the United States Department of the Interior, acting through its representatives, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.



Project Spotlight

River Walkers Continue Educating Anglers about Fishing Risks

June started this year's season of the Eat Safe Fish River Walker program, where trained staff from Saginaw's First Ward Community Center (FWCC) talk to fish anglers about how to safely consume fish from local waterways. This program is sponsored by a partnership between EPA, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and FWCC. The River Walker staff will distribute Michigan "Eat Safe Fish" materials which explain the advisories about the types of fish that may be contaminated and harmful to eat. The advisories also include recommendations on how to cook fish to be less harmful.

At the end last year's season, River Walkers Ed and Dennis interacted with 2,716 individuals and/or anglers along the Saginaw and Tittabawassee Rivers, providing fish advisory materials and education. Learn more about the "Eat Safe Fish" program by visiting: www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish

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About this Publication

This newsletter covers topics related to EPA's cleanup of the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay site. We welcome feedback and ideas for future articles. Send ideas to EPA's Community Involvement Coordinator, Diane Russell, at russell.diane@epa.gov

Stay Informed, Get Involved!



**Saginaw - Tittabawassee
Rivers Contamination
Community Advisory Group**

You can learn more about the cleanup by attending informational meetings with the community. EPA meets with the Saginaw-Tittabawassee Rivers Contamination Community Advisory Group quarterly to provide updates on site progress. To learn more about the group and upcoming meetings, visit saginawcag.org

You can also stay up to date on the project or read current or future additions of this newsletter by signing up for EPA's email list. Send a blank email to dow_dioxin@lists.epa.gov or visit our website at: www.epa.gov/superfund/tittabawassee-river

BY THE NUMBERS

5.4 miles
of banks stabilized

21 areas
of in-channel
sediments removed
or capped

110 floodplain
areas
eligible for cleanup complete

37,000 cubic
yards
of soil and sediment removed
and properly disposed

Progress made along the Tittabawassee River through the end of 2024.