



# PCB Cleanup Begins near Otsego Township Dam

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site

Otsego Township, Michigan

August 2016

## Informational meeting

EPA is holding a public meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 23, to update the community about a cleanup at the Otsego Township Dam area. The meeting will start at 6 p.m. at the Otsego District Public Library, Program Room, 401 Dix St.

EPA representatives and other officials will make formal presentations and then be available to discuss the cleanup.

## Contact EPA

If you want to know more about the Otsego Township Dam Area cleanup, contact:

*For technical questions:*

### EPA Project Managers:

#### **Paul Ruesch – Otsego Township Dam TCRA**

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#### **Jim Saric – Kalamazoo River (OU5)**

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#### **Michael Berkoff – Allied Landfill (OU1)**

312-353-8983

berkoff.michael@epa.gov

#### **Sheila Desai – Plainwell Mill (OU7)**

312-353-4150

desai.sheila@epa.gov

*For general questions:*

#### **Diane Russell**

EPA Community Involvement  
Coordinator

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You may call EPA toll-free:

800-621-8431, weekdays, 9:30 a.m.  
to 5:30 p.m.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the removal of PCB-contaminated sediment and soil along the Kalamazoo River near the Otsego Township Dam. Georgia-Pacific LLC, Weyerhaeuser Co. and International Paper Co. have been required to carry out all cleanup activities. Throughout this project, EPA will be coordinating with Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The cleanup will focus on a 1.7-mile long area of PCB-contaminated sediment and soil immediately upstream of the Otsego Township Dam. This portion of the Kalamazoo River is located in what EPA calls Area 3 of Operable Unit 5 at the Allied Paper Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site.

EPA will hold a public meeting (see box on last page) to explain the cleanup, which could take two or more years to complete.

## Cleanup overview

Workers will dredge sediment from the Kalamazoo River, dig up soil adjacent to the river, stabilize riverbanks to prevent future contamination and erosion, and dispose of contaminated materials at an approved disposal facility. Fences will be put up and signs posted to keep people from being exposed to PCBs during the cleanup. Work crews will access the area from Lincoln Road (M-89), Jefferson Road, River Road, 19th Street, and Covault Lane. Once the contaminated material is removed, workers will test and monitor the area, fill excavated sections with clean material, and restore the stretch with native plants.



*The sediment and soil in a nearly 2-mile-long stretch upstream from the Otsego Township Dam will be cleaned of PCBs during a project that begins this summer.*

## Site history

The Otsego Township Dam removal area begins at the intersection of M-89 and the Kalamazoo River in Otsego and follows the stream west about two miles to the Otsego Township Dam (see map, page 3). The area is bordered mostly by recreational areas but contains some residential properties.

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. Until 1970, wastewater from the recycling process was released into Portage Creek and the Kalamazoo River.

In 1977, the MDNR issued a public health advisory regarding PCB contamination at the site and advised residents not to eat fish caught from the river. In 1990, the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/ Kalamazoo River Superfund site, including 80 miles of the Kalamazoo River, was placed on the National Priorities List, a roster of the nation's most hazardous waste sites that are eligible for cleanup under EPA's Superfund program.

Since 1990, several parties responsible for the contamination, including Georgia-Pacific LLC and Millennium Holdings, have investigated the Kalamazoo River under agreements with EPA and the state of Michigan. In 2014, Georgia-Pacific submitted a Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report for the Otsego Township Dam Area of the Kalamazoo River. This report identified high levels of PCB contamination in soil and sediment, as well as significant riverbank erosion.

## Kalamazoo River cleanup progress

In September 2015, EPA signed a document called the "record of decision" for Area 1 of the river. (Area 1 is the portion of the Kalamazoo River between Morrow Dam and the former Plainwell Dam, and includes Portage Creek between Cork Street and the Kalamazoo River.) The cleanup for Area 1 includes excavation of PCB-contaminated hot spots in a 2-mile section of the Kalamazoo River near the confluence of Portage Creek, and floodplain soil removal in the Plainwell Impoundment near the former Plainwell Dam. Work should start in 2018.

Last March, EPA received a document called the "feasibility study report" for Area 2 of the river. (Area 2 is the Kalamazoo River between the former Plainwell Dam and the Otsego City Dam). This report details various cleanup alternatives for this area.

Last February, EPA approved the Area 3 site investigation report. This report also shows high levels of PCB-contamination in soil and sediment. (Area 3 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego City Dam and the Otsego Township Dam.) This June, Georgia-Pacific submitted the Alternative Screening Technical Memorandum, which evaluates various technologies that may be available to manage contamination in this area.

This summer, Georgia-Pacific is expected to submit the draft Area 4 site investigation report. This document shows where and how soil and sediment sampling was conducted in Area 4 of the river. (Area 4 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego Township Dam and Trowbridge Dam.)

This fall, the investigation of Area 5 is scheduled to begin. (Area 5 is the Kalamazoo River between the Trowbridge Dam and Allegan City Dam.)

## Plainwell Mill update

EPA signed a record of decision for the former Plainwell Paper Mill in September 2015. The selected cleanup plan requires the excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil from the former mill site. Weyerhaeuser Paper submitted to EPA the Remedial Design Work Plan in March 2016. EPA has provided comments to Weyerhaeuser on the plan. A Pre-Design Investigation is expected to be conducted this fall.

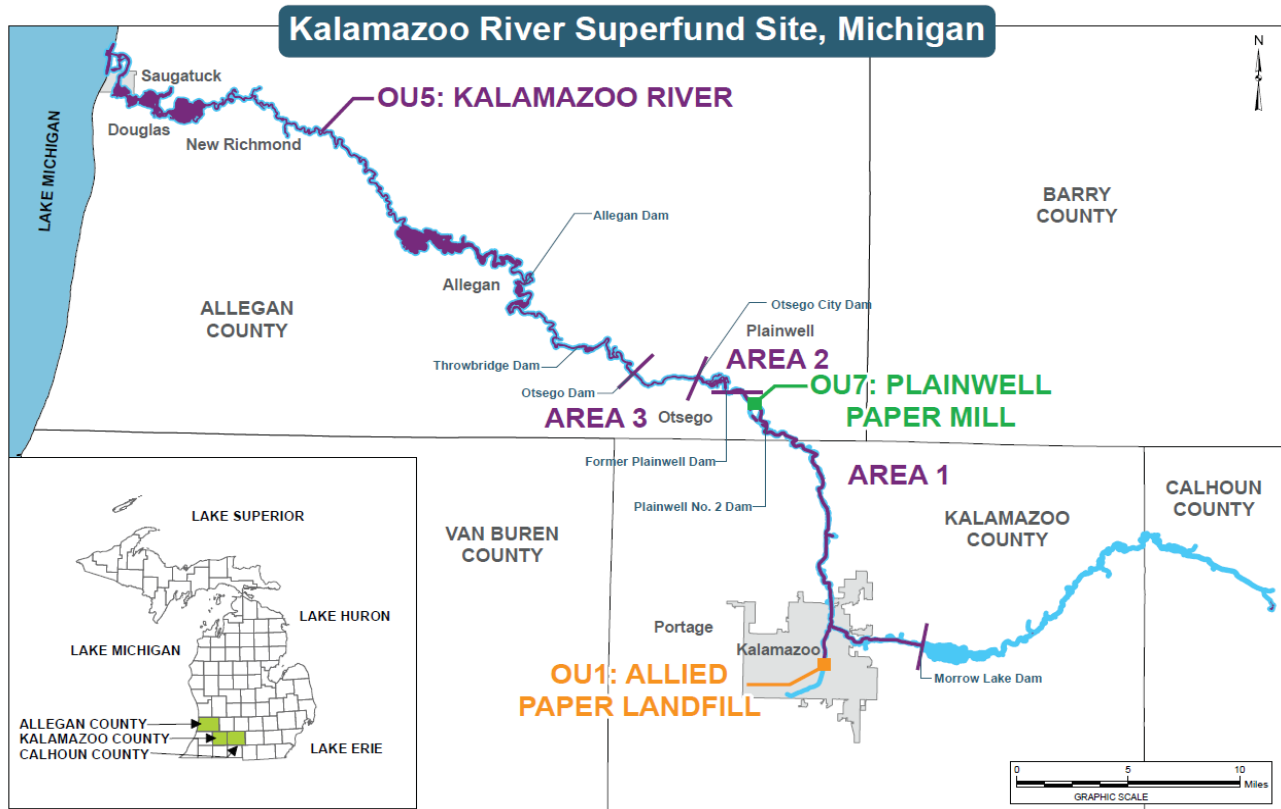
## Allied Paper landfill update

The proposed cleanup plan for Allied Landfill is called Alternative 2D in official documents. This alternative includes consolidation of materials to a 27-acre area on the property, installation of a cap and a long-term groundwater-monitoring network. Areas outside of the cap would be available for commercial/industrial redevelopment and the capped area would be available for some recreational reuse. Alternative 2D meets the evaluation criteria, offers a high degree of long-term effectiveness and permanence and represents the best balance of long-term and short-term effectiveness, execution, and cost.

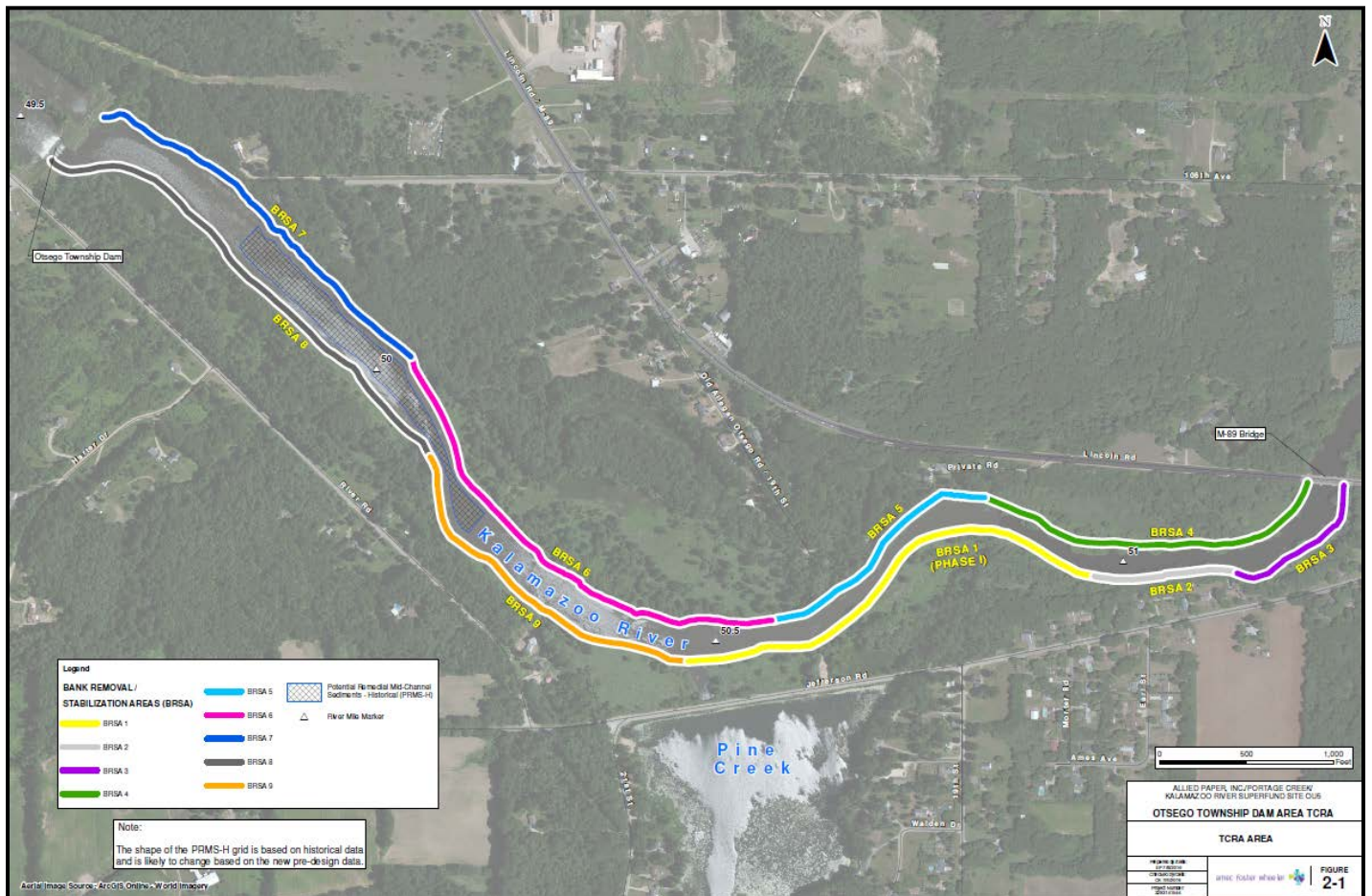
EPA expects to finalize this plan by issuing the record of decision in early fall. Once issued, EPA will determine the best way to design and then implement the cleanup.

### To learn more about

Allied Paper/Portage Creek/ Kalamazoo River site, visit [www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo).



Map showing Kalamazoo River Superfund site.




Map showing Otsego Township Dam Area Time-Critical Removal zone.

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**Public Meeting  
Tuesday, Aug. 23  
6 p.m.**

**Otsego District Public Library  
Program Room  
401 Dix St.**

EPA representatives and other officials 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 Diane Russell (see first page) by Aug. 18.

*Reproduced on Recycled Paper* 

**ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SITE:  
PCB Cleanup Begins near Otsego Township Dam**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Region 5  
Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
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