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# PCB Cleanup Completed at Otsego Dam

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## Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Site

Otsego Township, Michigan

August 2018

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### Informational meeting

EPA is holding a public meeting on **Sept. 13** at 6:00 pm at Otsego City Hall to update the community about the time-critical removal action at the Otsego Township Dam area.

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 various cleanup projects along the Kalamazoo River, contact:

*For technical questions:*

#### EPA

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**Sheila Desai – Plainwell Mill**

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**Paul Ruesch – Otsego Township Dam Area**

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#### MDEQ

**Dan Peabody – Project Manager**

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*For general questions:*

**Diane Russell**

EPA Community Involvement

Coordinator

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You may also call EPA toll-free:  
800-621-8431, weekdays, 9:30 a.m.  
to 5:30 p.m.

You can learn more about the cleanup online at: [www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency completed 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. were required to carry out the cleanup activities. Throughout this project, EPA coordinated with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

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

### Cleanup progress to date

Work began in August 2016. Workers dredged over 50,000 tons (33,000 cubic yards) of sediment and soil from this stretch of the river, stabilized riverbanks to prevent future contamination and erosion, and disposed of contaminated materials at an approved landfill. Once contaminated material was removed, workers tested and monitored the area to confirm cleanup goals were met, filled excavated areas with clean material, and restored the area with native plants.

A temporary water control structure that was built in 2015 to replace the dam was removed, and the river is now an open channel (*see photo, below*). The area around the former auxiliary spillway has been restored as a wetland area. There are two public parking areas built at former project staging areas. The river is now open, and there is access to the river at these areas for kayaks and canoes.



*The Kalamazoo River flows freely through the location of the former Otsego Township Dam, which was removed during the project.*

## 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 2 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, which at the time contained PCBs. The recycling process resulted in PCB-contaminated wastewater. Until 1970, this wastewater 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 and Millennium Holdings, have investigated the Kalamazoo River under agreements with EPA and the state of Michigan. For Area 3 of the river, EPA approved Georgia-Pacific's Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report in 2016. This report identified high levels of PCB contamination in soil and sediment, as well as significant riverbank erosion. The Area 3 feasibility study (described in the next section) is underway. The status of this and other cleanup areas is provided below.

## 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 3-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.

In December 2016, EPA ordered Georgia-Pacific, International Paper, and Weyerhaeuser to conduct the Area 1 work by issuing a legal document called a "Unilateral Administrative Order." Since then, sampling is ongoing to support the cleanup design, and cleanup work is anticipated to start in 2019.

In September 2017, EPA signed a Record of Decision for Area 2 of the river (Area 2 is the Kalamazoo River between the former Plainwell Dam and the Otsego City Dam). The remedy for Area 2 includes construction of a new river channel, excavation of PCB hot spots, capping of several side channel areas and removal of the Otsego City Dam.

In July 2018, Georgia Pacific submitted a revised version of a document called the "Feasibility Study Report" for Area 3 of the river (Area 3 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego City Dam and the former Otsego Township Dam). This report details various cleanup alternatives for this area. EPA anticipates announcing a proposed cleanup plan in 2019 for public comment.

In November 2017, Georgia-Pacific submitted a revised Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report for Area 4 of the river (Area 4 is the Kalamazoo River between the Otsego Township Dam and Trowbridge Dam). The final version of the report, which shows where the contamination in Area 4 is located, will be submitted for EPA review in August 2018.

In October 2017, sampling began to support the investigation of Area 5 of the river (Area 5 is the Kalamazoo River between the Trowbridge Dam and Allegan City Dam). Additional investigation sampling will occur throughout 2018 and 2019.

## 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. The Remedial Design was finalized in April 2018, and Weyerhaeuser has submitted the cleanup work plan. Cleanup work will start once EPA approves the work plan, which is anticipated in 2018.

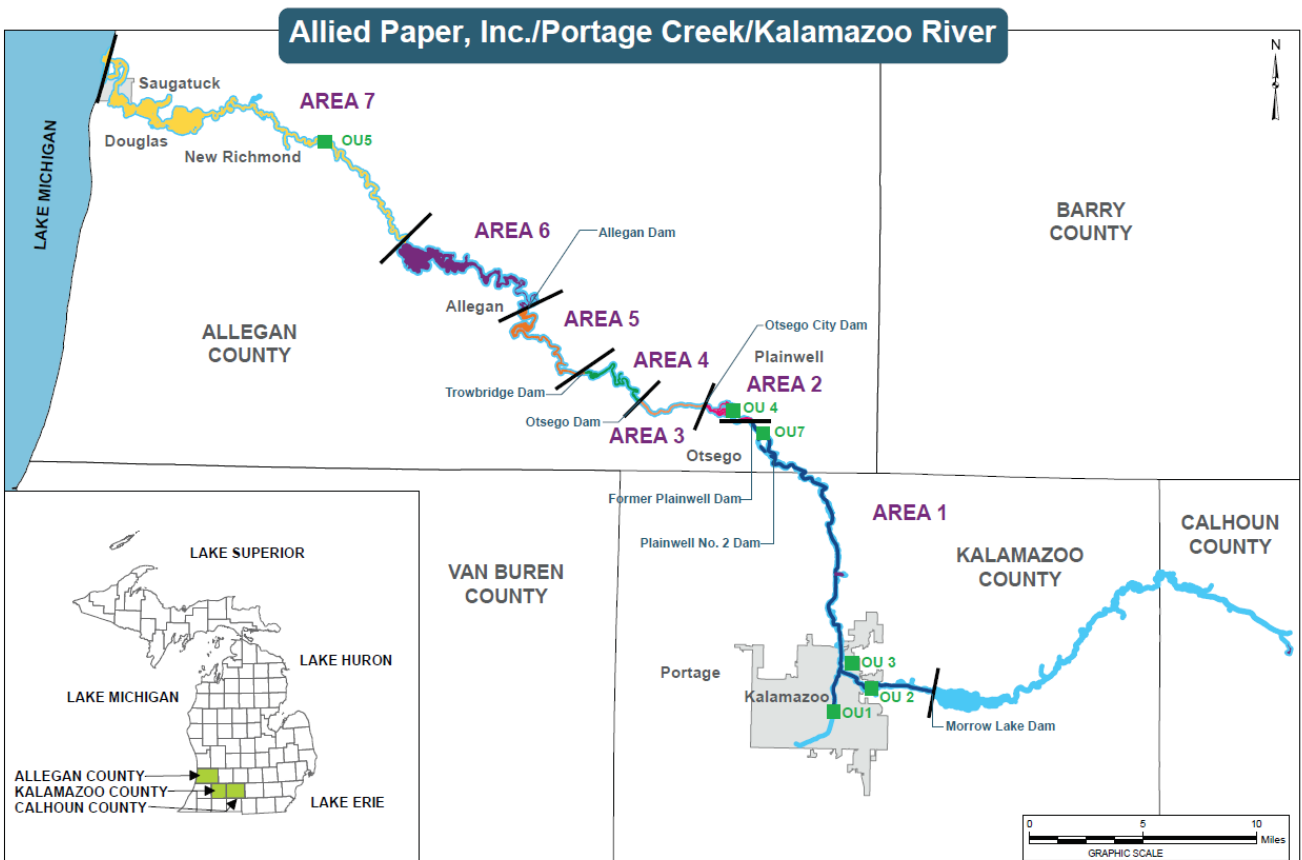
## Allied Paper Landfill update

EPA's selected remedy for Allied Landfill includes consolidation of existing waste materials to a 27-acre area, 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. EPA expects the city of Kalamazoo to facilitate any future redevelopment and act as the long-term steward of the property.

The project is currently in the design phase. EPA expects cleanup work to begin by 2020 and take up to three years to complete. EPA continues to gather input from the city of Kalamazoo on cleanup plans.



Otsego Township Dam Area – Time-Critical Removal Action




# EPA to Provide Update on Otsego Township Dam Area

Public meeting  
Sept. 13  
6 p.m.

Otsego City Hall  
117 E. Orleans  
Otsego

For more information about the site, or to sign up for email updates, visit:  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/allied-paper-kalamazoo).

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ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO  
RIVER SITE: PCB Cleanup Complete at Otsego  
Township Dam

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Community Information Office  
1300 Bluff St., Suite 140  
Flint, MI 48504

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

