

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Proposed NPL Site

March 2022

LOWER HACKENSACK RIVER | New Jersey *Bergen and Hudson Counties*

Site Location:

The Lower Hackensack River site consists of contaminated sediments in the Hackensack River located within Bergen and Hudson Counties in New Jersey. The contaminated sediments extend from Oradell Dam to near the mouth of the river at Newark Bay.

Site History:

The Lower Hackensack River, associated wetlands and surrounding area have been a center of industrial activity for more than 200 years. Decades of sewerage and industrial discharges into the river and its tributaries have contaminated river sediments.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Surface and subsurface sediments in the river are contaminated with inorganic constituents; including, arsenic, chromium, lead, and mercury in exceedance of sediment screening levels for fish consumption or New Jersey's state marine sediment screening benchmarks. In addition, surface and subsurface sediments are contaminated with organic compounds; including, polycyclic aromatic compounds (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyl compounds (PCBs) above New Jersey's state sediment screening benchmarks.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

Contaminants found in sediments threaten areas used for recreational fishing and ecological sensitive environments including wetlands. A fishing ban is in place for multiple fish species and restrictions on fish consumption are in place for other species. There is a "do not eat or harvest" ban for Blue Crabs and "do not eat" advisories for American Eel and White Perch. There are advisories recommending limited meals per year for White Catfish and Striped Bass. In addition, the Hackensack River is part of the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary, a designated Estuary of National Significance. The Hackensack River is habitat to over 30 state and or federally designated endangered or threatened species and home to over 8,400 acres of wetlands.

Response Activities (to date):

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has issued fish consumption advisories, for the tidal section of the Hackensack River, banning or limiting fishing for consumption for several fish species.

Need for NPL Listing:

The state of New Jersey referred the site to the EPA because it is the best alternative to investigate the extent of contamination and determine how to address the site. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated; but are not viable at this time because of the complexity of the site. The 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. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

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](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) can be found on the Internet at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp> or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.