



Proposed Community Involvement Activities

Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay Contamination Site
Midland/Saginaw/Bay City Region, Michigan June 2009

For more information

You can view documents related to the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay Contamination Site in information repositories set up by EPA and MDEQ. The repositories are located in the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews St., Midland; the Hoyt Main Library, 505 Janes Ave., Saginaw; and the Alice and Jack Wirt Public Library, 500 Center Ave., Bay City.

Information office

On June 23, EPA will open a community information office in the Saginaw County Courthouse, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Saginaw. Initial hours will be Tuesday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed from noon to 1 p.m.). Check the Web site for more information.

Go on the Web

EPA dioxin investigation:
<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/dowchemical>

MDEQ dioxin information:
<http://www.michigan.gov/deqdioxin>

Sign up for the listserv

If you'd like to be emailed site updates, send a blank message to: dow_dioxin-subscribe@lists.epa.gov

Contacts

These EPA community involvement coordinators can answer questions:

Patricia Krause
312-886-9506
krause.patricia@epa.gov

Don de Blasio
312-886-4360
deblasio.don@epa.gov

Region 5 toll free:
800-621-8431, 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., weekdays

At MDEQ contact:

Cheryl Howe
517-373-9881
howec@michigan.gov

“Community involvement” is the name EPA uses to identify its process for engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities affected by Superfund sites. Community involvement plans are an important part of this process. EPA interviews community members to learn more about how people get their news and to gauge how they want to be involved in the Superfund process.

The information gleaned from these interviews is used to create a detailed strategy that guides EPA's efforts to keep the community informed and involved during the cleanup. We have not completed interviews for the Dow site, but we have done enough to have proposed some specific activities to start on immediately.

The following “interim community involvement plan” is based on limited interviews that were done in January 2009. As we conduct more interviews and do more work with the community, we will likely identify other techniques to help share information and involve the public.

Initial Community Involvement Plan

The goals that EPA wants to achieve through its community involvement activities at this site include:

- Seeking input from the affected community throughout the process.
- Utilize local knowledge to ensure better decision-making at the site.
- Provide the community with the facts and tools to participate in a meaningful way throughout the process.
- Incorporate new ideas from the community on how best to engage them in the process.
- Build upon the network of community interests to enhance opportunities for public involvement.

To achieve these goals, EPA will conduct many community involvement activities in the area. This document highlights the activities proposed for the Dow site. Some of these activities — especially forming a community advisory group and establishing a community information office — could take several months to fully implement while others are already under way or could be implemented sooner.

EPA's senior management at Region 5 and Headquarters will stay engaged with and oversee the implementation of the community involvement activities at the site to ensure the goals noted above are achieved. EPA will continue to collaborate with MDEQ and will build upon their program to involve the community.

Proposed Community Involvement Enhancements

Because of the size, complexity and the heightened interest of area residents, EPA is proposing to include the following enhancements in the community involvement activities.

- 1) EPA Community Information Office: EPA will provide a local staffed office where residents can get information, ask questions and share concerns. EPA would ensure the office is convenient to the public. It

will take several months to fully implement an information office of this nature, but EPA has made arrangements to open a temporary office immediately (see box on page 1 for details).

- 2) **Community Advisory Group:** EPA will help facilitate the establishment of a group of individuals from the community to advise the agency during different stages of the cleanup. The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will represent the balanced and diverse interests within the community. Although the CAG's role would be more specifically defined as the group forms, EPA would expect the CAG to assist with exchanging information, seeking input and providing for timely and equitable access of information to all stakeholders. It may take several months to form the CAG.
- 3) **Workshops:** In order to enhance the knowledge base of the community with respect to Superfund, EPA will sponsor a series of workshops for the community advisory group members and the general public. The workshops would cover topics such as site history, Superfund process, risk, and cleanup technologies. EPA would also solicit suggestions for workshop topics from the public working through the CAG. Instructors would be a combination of EPA, MDEQ and other experts. EPA would anticipate more frequent workshops during the first year (e.g., one every three to four months) and then as needed or requested by the community. The first workshops will be held in fall 2009.
- 4) **Internet:** EPA and MDEQ already have well-populated Web sites for sharing information about the cleanup and will expand its use of the Web and other Internet technologies. EPA has established a listserv that will allow site updates to be sent to the public rapidly via e-mail (see box on page 1 for details). EPA will also post site documents including, but not limited to, technical reports, cleanup proposals and cleanup decisions along with routine updates, including photos as appropriate. EPA will establish a section on the Web site to post answers to questions asked by community members to ensure that everyone has equal access to information. Through the web site, EPA will also work toward providing access to responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the site.

Many of these activities are routinely implemented at sites and are already under way.

- 1) **Technical Assistance Plan/Technical Assistance Services for Communities:** These mechanisms provide communities with the ability to obtain information and technical assistance.
- 2) **Community interviews:** Interviews help EPA understand how much community members know about the site, how they get their information and how they would like to be involved. EPA has already completed one round of interviews and is currently planning another round.
- 3) **Fact sheets:** Brief, plain language fact sheets will be issued as appropriate to inform the public about important developments. The fact sheets will be sent to the site mailing list and also posted to the Web. One fact sheet has already been sent out. We will also develop topic-specific fact sheets to explain some of the more complex issues (e.g., dioxin). Fact sheets will be translated to other languages as necessary.
- 4) **Information repositories:** EPA has already established site information repositories at public libraries in Midland, Saginaw and Bay City. EPA will ensure site documents including, but not limited to, technical reports, cleanup proposals and cleanup decisions along with routine updates are maintained in the information repositories.
- 5) **Public meetings:** As appropriate, EPA will hold public meetings to inform community members about site developments. EPA will not rely solely on large group meetings but instead will offer additional formats including multiple, smaller gatherings.
- 6) **Editorial boards/reporter briefings:** As appropriate, EPA will engage in face-to-face, sit-down briefings with reporters and editorial boards as a way to help them understand the technical and regulatory complexities of the cleanup.
- 7) **Site tours:** As appropriate, EPA will conduct tours and demonstrations at various places along the site to help residents get a better understanding of what is proposed for the site.
- 8) **Kiosks/displays:** A number of businesses and local organizations have offered to let EPA set up small information displays in their buildings. This will be a simple and effective way to raise EPA's profile in the community and to distribute fact sheets and other information.

Additional Proposed Community Involvement Activities

The following list highlights the additional community involvement activities that are being proposed at the site.