Hudson River PCBs SUPERFUND SITE

Region 2: NJ, NY, PR, VI • 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Lower River Investigation Update
Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site

Summer 2024

EPA is investigating environmental conditions in the lower Hudson River to inform future work on the 160-mile stretch from the Troy Dam to the southern tip of Manhattan (see map). Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, are the focus of this investigation; however, the EPA is evaluating other contaminants as well.

Under a legal agreement and with EPA oversight, the General Electric Company, or GE, is sampling water, fish, crab and sediment as part of an investigation of the Lower River portion of the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site. The sampling work began in spring 2023 under a workplan approved by the EPA and will continue through at least 2025. After the sampling, the EPA will evaluate the data and determine next steps.

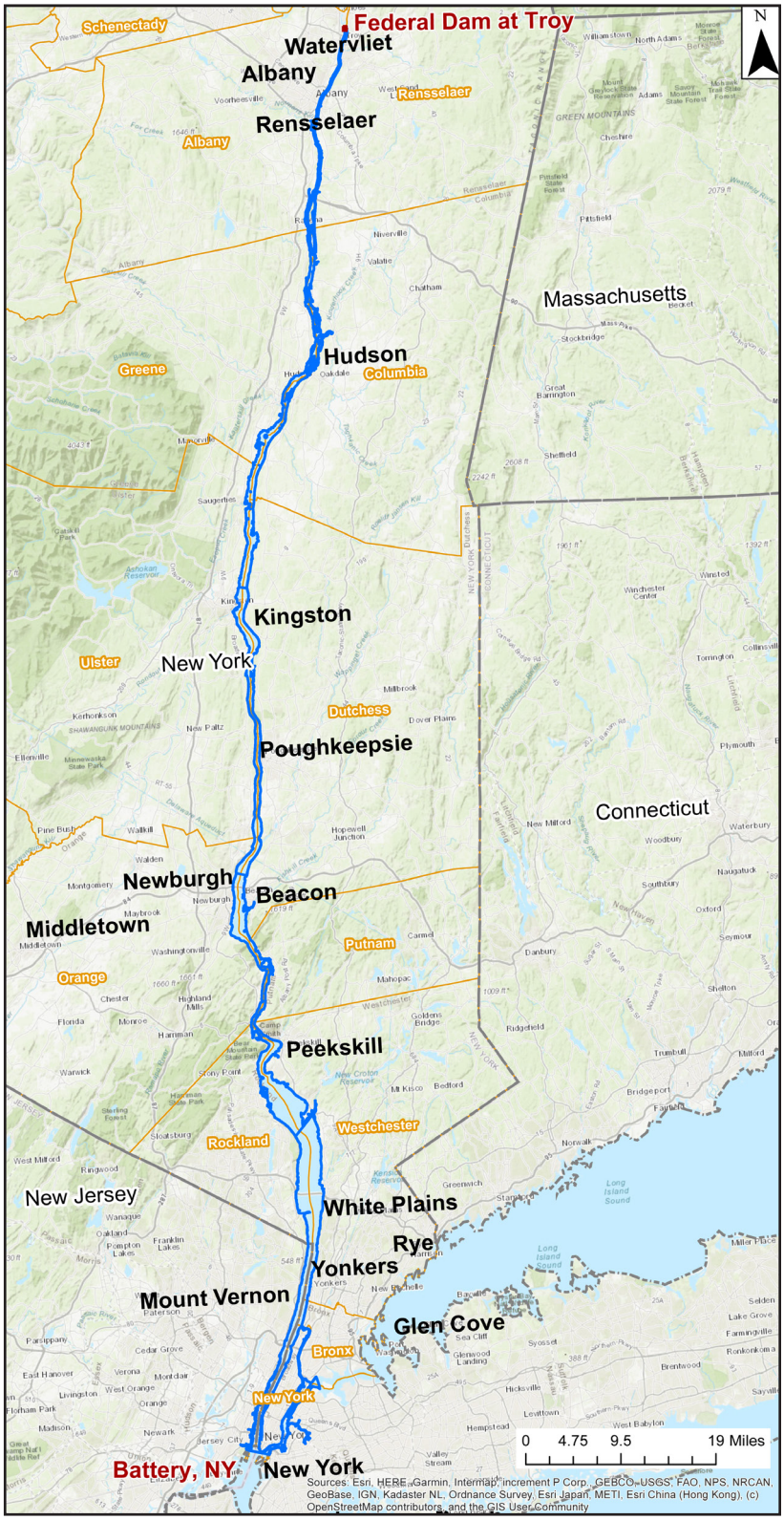
The EPA is using the data to improve the agency's understanding of the lower river and to inform the EPA's investigations moving forward. GE remains legally responsible for its PCBs in the Hudson River, including in the lower portion of the river. The EPA is continuing to evaluate whether other parties may also be responsible for PCBs, as well as other contamination in the lower Hudson.

The EPA has been collecting information about the Lower River for many years. The new data will supplement information collected during the EPA's investigation of the Lower Hudson River in the 1990s and the periodic monitoring of Lower Hudson River fish and water since 2004.

LEARN MORE: Join us for the Public Information Meeting

The EPA will hold an online meeting on August 28 at 6 p.m. to provide an update on the ongoing investigation work in the Lower Hudson River.

For more information and to register, visit the EPA Hudson River PCBs Superfund site webpage.



Lower Hudson River Overview Map

The Lower River includes salt and fresh water and is a tidal estuary, which means it is under the influence of ocean tides. Water from the New York Harbor flows into the Hudson with the tides and mixes with fresh water. Because the Lower River is tidal, it has different characteristics, water flows and wildlife habitats. The Upper Hudson River is the portion of the Hudson that is freshwater only. It runs from the Troy Dam north and includes the Champlain Canal.

Sampling Workplan

Under the terms of the legal agreement with the EPA, GE is collecting extensive water, fish, crab and sediment samples in the Lower Hudson River. The EPA is overseeing all of the work.

Water Sampling

As part of these efforts, GE began taking samples of the water in the lower Hudson in 2023. Starting in June 2023 and continuing through this year, contractors have been collecting water samples every month from five monitoring stations spread throughout the river. The program includes areas with fresh water and areas that have a mix of salt and fresh water. The EPA may adjust the frequency and locations of this water sampling in 2025. The water samples help EPA understand the relationship between contamination in water, fish, and sediment in the Lower Hudson.

Fish Tissue Sampling

Contractors have been collecting samples of 13 species of fish and crab since spring 2023. The fish are collected from five locations in the lower river that are approximately 30 miles apart. Contractors are also collecting saltwater crab from locations closer to New York City.

The EPA is evaluating the data from the fish and crab sampling to determine if the agency needs to add additional sampling locations in 2025.

Sediment Sampling Programs

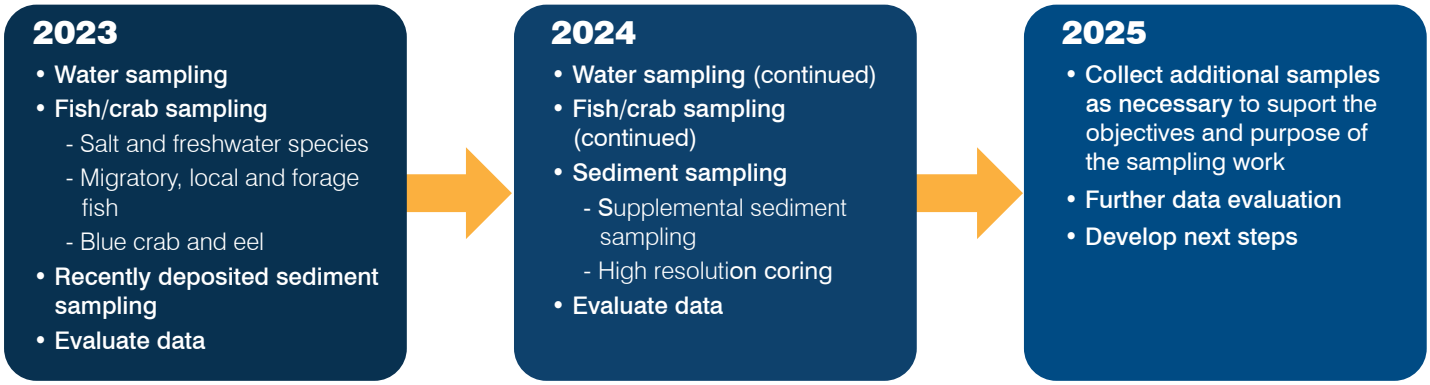
In the spring of 2023, the contractor collected the first round of sediment samples from different locations and ranges of depths of the river bottom. Collecting sediment at various depths and locations gives the EPA a better understanding of where the contamination is and how it has deposited over time. GE contractors will begin two more rounds of sampling, which include collecting sediment in the areas where fish were collected in the summer of 2024.

Recently Deposited Sediment

In certain areas of the river bottom, sediment builds up slowly over time, with newer sediment burying what is already there. Sampling for recently deposited sediment focuses on the top layer of the river bottom. GE is evaluating PCB concentrations in samples taken in spring of 2023 of sediment that has been recently deposited in the Lower Hudson, as well as 12 major tributaries. The concentration of PCBs in recently deposited sediment can be used to evaluate the recovery of the lower river over time. GE collected these samples to a depth of about two centimeters. In the main part of the river, GE collected 150 samples. In the 12 major tributaries of the Lower Hudson River, GE collected 60 samples.

(Top and Bottom) Sediment Sampling

Lower River Sampling and Investigations Schedule



Supplemental Sediment Coring

GE will evaluate the PCB concentrations in sediment from samples they will take this summer using a tube to get a "core" of sediment to a depth of three feet in the lower Hudson River bottom (see photo). Field staff will collect a total of 200 sediment samples from 10 core locations, taken from the same areas where fish sampling is being conducted.

High Resolution Sediment Coring

High resolution sediment coring means taking sediment from four to eight feet below the river bottom to evaluate contamination levels in this sediment, deposited many years ago/decades ago. Contractors will collect these deep sediment cores from six locations spread throughout the Lower Hudson this summer.

The EPA will compare the data to similar cores taken in some of these same areas several decades ago. The laboratory will analyze the samples for PCBs and other contaminants and will scan the cores for certain properties to determine the age of the sediment. After the EPA evaluates the data from the initial six locations, the agency will decide whether more cores are needed.

Site Background

Between the 1940s and 1970s, GE released PCBs into the Hudson River from its two former capacitor manufacturing plants in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. These PCBs impacted the river and its sediment from the GE Hudson Falls plant to the New York Harbor, and certain areas of the floodplain along the banks of the river during high water and flood events.

The Hudson River PCBs Superfund site includes the 200-mile stretch from Hudson Falls to the southern tip of Manhattan in New York City. The EPA's 2002 cleanup plan addressed the sediment in the 40-mile stretch of the Upper Hudson River between Fort Edward and Troy, New York. Under the EPA oversight, GE conducted dredging and some limited capping in a 40-mile stretch of the Upper Hudson River between 2009 and 2015.

The EPA continues to monitor the post-dredging recovery of the Upper Hudson River and is evaluating PCB contamination in the Upper Hudson River floodplain. The investigation of the floodplain is being done under a separate legal agreement with GE under EPA oversight. The EPA is also overseeing the deconstruction of the National Grid Powerhouse and Allen Mill buildings that are adjacent to GE's plant in Hudson Falls to make sure that the deconstruction activities don't impact the Upper Hudson River cleanup.

For more information:

The New York State Department of Health's fish consumption advisories remain in place throughout the Lower Hudson River. More information about the advisories is available on the NYSDOH Hudson River Fish Advisory Outreach Project webpage.

Additional information about the Superfund site is available on the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site webpage.

For more information, call toll-free or email the EPA Region 2 Hudson River Office. More information about the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site is also available online: www.epa.gov/hudsonriverpcbs.

EPA Contacts:

Larisa Romanowski, Public Affairs Specialist
Gary Klawinski, Project Director

EPA Region 2 Hudson River Office
187 Wolf Road, Suite 303, Albany, NY 12205
(518) 407-0400 or (866) 615-6490 Toll-Free

romanowski.larisa@epa.gov

klawinski.gary@epa.gov