FACT SHEET
HUDSON RIVER
RESTORATION PLANNING

Upper Hudson Freshwater Mussel Restoration Planning Pilot Study

Past and continuing discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have contaminated Hudson River natural resources. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is continuing with cleanup activities, federal and state trustee agencies – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and New York State (the Trustees) – are assessing how releases of PCBs from the General Electric Company (GE) plants at Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York may have harmed the Hudson River’s natural resources.

The Trustees are studying the effects of the PCB contamination through a process known as Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). In a NRDA, the Trustees use scientific studies to measure the ways hazardous substances can injure natural resources. Restoration is the goal of NRDA.

This fact sheet provides information on a freshwater mussel restoration planning pilot study being conducted as part of the Hudson River NRDA. Mussels are important components of the Hudson River ecosystem; mussels filter the water, cycle nutrients, stabilize sediments, enhance habitat complexity, and are food for wildlife.

Dredging activities in the Upper Hudson River are destroying mussel beds and mussel habitat, which are not being replaced as part of the remedy for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site. The proposed pilot study would collect information about mussels in areas where dredging has not yet occurred (for example: Fort Miller Pool, Stillwater Pool) starting as soon as possible, likely in late summer 2013. Other areas may be surveyed, in consultation with the Trustees, depending on dredging schedules and timing of mussel surveys. This information will serve to inform restoration planning relating to mussels adversely impacted by remedial work. Results should inform the determination of impacts of the remedy upon natural resources, spatial/temporal recovery of impacted mussel beds, and establishment of (replacement) mussel beds.

Depending on the results of this pilot study, the Trustees may conduct additional investigations focused on mussels.

Eastern Elliptio (Elliptio complanata); photo credit: Phillip Westcott; http://digitalmedia.fws.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/natdiglib/id/9733
More Information

The following Trustee websites contain a variety of additional reports and documents relating to the overall Hudson River NRDA:

http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index.html
http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html
http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson/

To add yourself to the Hudson-NRDA listserv:
1. Send a message to: requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov
2. Write in subject: Subscribe hudsonnrda

If you have questions about natural resource damages, or want to submit a restoration project proposal, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

Tom Brosnan
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1305 East West Highway SSMC4, Room 10219
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-713-3038 x186
Tom.Brosnan@noaa.gov

Kathryn Jahn
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045
607-753-9334
Kathryn_Jahn@fws.gov

Sean Madden
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12233
518-402-8977
ssmadden@gw.dec.state.ny.us