

GE Surpasses Hudson PCB Dredging Target

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Michael Hill, Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Crews dredging PCBs from the upper Hudson River surpassed the year-end production goal set by federal regulators despite delays due to heavy rains and high water.

General Electric Co. reports that it removed more than 363,000 cubic yards of sediment from the river this year before wrapping up dredging for the season on Nov. 8. The Environmental Protection Agency, which is overseeing the Superfund project, had set a goal of removing 350,000 cubic yards in the second year of dredging.

EPA administrators said they also were pleased that this year's changes in the dredging operation designed to reduce the amount of PCBs kicked up in the water — so-called resuspension — appear to be working.

"It was a very good year, and the early fears about resuspension turned out to be largely unfounded," said EPA regional administrator Judith Enck.

GE released poly-chlorinated biphenyls into the river decades ago and is in the second year of a Superfund cleanup that could cost more than \$1 billion. It is expected to take four or more years to remove the remaining 2 million cubic yards of sediment near Ford Edward, about 40 miles north of Albany.

Dredging this year started June 6, about a month late as crews waited for unusually high waters to recede following heavy spring rains. Tropical Storm Irene halted work for another day in late August and crews had to deal with high water afterward.

The Fairfield, Conn.-based company oversaw the cleanup of about 10 percent of the contaminated sediment in 2009, then paused for a year to give independent scientists time to assess the work. Based on the review, workers this year cut deeper to remove more contamination with fewer passes as a way to increase efficiency and kick up fewer PCBs.

PCBs, once used as coolants in electrical equipment, are a suspected carcinogen, and the upper river is considered so polluted that health officials warn people not to eat the fish.

Though dredging has ended for the season, crews will spend a few weeks on the river to backfill dredged areas and put away equipment for the winter.

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