



Newtown Creek Superfund Site

Community Consultation

FACT SHEET 1

JANUARY 30, 2012

BACKGROUND

Newtown Creek is a 3.8-mile long tidal water body located in the City of New York, having five main tributaries (Dutch Creek, Whale Creek, Maspeth Creek, East Branch and English Kills) and is itself a tributary of the East River. The creek is a part of the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary that forms the north-south border between the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.

The Newtown Creek area has a history of widespread industrial development dating back to the 1800s. In the mid-1800s, the area adjacent to Newtown Creek was one of the busiest hubs of industrial activity in New York City. More than 50 refineries were located along its banks, including oil refineries, petrochemical plants, fertilizer and glue factories, sawmills, and lumber and coal yards. Newtown Creek was brimming with commercial vessels. During World War II, the creek was one of the busiest ports in the nation. This historic development has resulted in changes in the nature of the Creek from a natural drainage condition to one that is largely governed by engineered and institutional systems.

SUPERFUND DESIGNATION

EPA listed Newtown Creek and its tributaries as a Superfund site on September 29, 2010. Five companies (Phelps Dodge, Texaco, BP, National Grid and ExxonMobil) and New York City were named as potentially responsible parties (PRPs) with the responsibility to conduct and fund the Remedial Investigation (RI) and Feasibility Study (FS).

REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION/FEASIBILITY STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

On July, 11, 2011, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) entered into an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent with the City of New York, and five companies (Phelps Dodge, Texaco, BP, National Grid and ExxonMobil) known as the Newtown

Creek Group (NCG) to conduct a comprehensive study of Newtown Creek and its tributaries that will provide the framework for potential remedies. The agreement provides for a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, more commonly known as Superfund).

The first step is the Remedial Investigation, an in-depth study designed to gather data needed to determine the nature and extent of contamination at a Superfund site. The sampling that is scheduled to begin in early February will be conducted in accordance with a Work Plan approved by EPA. The Feasibility Study is the process of evaluating remedial alternatives for a Superfund site from a technical, environmental and cost perspective, among other factors. It identifies the most cost-effective remedy that adequately protects human health and the environment. Data collected in the RI will be used in the development of remedial alternatives in the FS.

UPCOMING SAMPLING EVENTS

The Phase 1 Superfund field work is scheduled to start February 6th, 2012 and will continue through the fall. Several sampling vessels and field crews will be on the creek performing the planned water, sediment and air sampling. The schedule is subject to weather conditions. This includes collecting samples along the entire Creek and its tributaries, and sending them to laboratories for chemical analyses. The data from these samples will be available toward the end of 2012, and preliminary analyses of that information will follow.

INTRODUCTION OF NYCDEP COMMUNITY LIAISON FOR SUPERFUND

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) has appointed Christine Holowacz as its community liaison for Superfund. This is an expansion of her current responsibilities in support of the Newtown Creek Monitoring Group. Contact information for Christine is listed here.

Christine Holowacz, DEP Community Liaison

(718) 349-0150, (917) 670-9044

nc.mc@verizon.net

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

NYCDEP Superfund web page:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/harborwater/superfund_listings.shtml