



## Housatonic Rest of River Remediation Project

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **General Project FAQs:**

##### **What is the Housatonic Rest of River Remediation Project?**

The Rest of River Remediation project involves the dredging of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminated sediments from the Housatonic River (the River) and its floodplains from south of Pittsfield to the Rising Pond Dam, as required by EPA. Dredged sediments will be dewatered and landfilled in an Upland Disposal Facility (UDF) to be constructed in Lee, Massachusetts. The EPA has determined that, following restoration, the River should be safe for recreational activities, fishing, and for general use. The Project is currently in the planning and design phase.

##### **Who is involved in this project?**

GE and Arcadis are responsible for design and implementation of the PCB clean up, including dredging, transportation, disposal and restoration. The EPA is the Regulatory Authority overseeing the cleanup and has the responsibility for approving remedial actions. The Town of Lenox, as one of the five communities where dredging will occur, is a member the Rest of River Municipal Committee. Weston & Sampson is providing technical support to the Town of Lenox for reviewing plans and offering comments to the EPA on behalf of the Town.

##### **How did we get to this point in the project?**

In 2013, the Town of Lenox Select Board, as Executive Authority, made the decision to participate with the Rest of River Committee in a mediation process for the Rest of River Cleanup involving EPA and GE. On February 5, 2020, following lengthy negotiations, a Settlement Agreement was signed between the mediation parties.

For a full synopsis of the mediation process and the negotiated terms of the Settlement Agreement, please refer to the document, titled "Background, the Municipal Committee, Mediation and Settlement," which is available on the Town of Lenox webpage here:

[https://www.townoflenox.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf3341/f/uploads/statement\\_of\\_ror\\_municipalities\\_0.pdf](https://www.townoflenox.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf3341/f/uploads/statement_of_ror_municipalities_0.pdf).

The Settlement Agreement is available on this webpage: [https://berkshireplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/program\\_documents/brpc\\_initiative/housatonic-rest-of-river-municipal-committee/default/Fully\\_Executed\\_Settlement\\_Agreement\\_Feb\\_2020.pdf](https://berkshireplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/program_documents/brpc_initiative/housatonic-rest-of-river-municipal-committee/default/Fully_Executed_Settlement_Agreement_Feb_2020.pdf)

##### **Why will sediments be disposed of in the Upland Disposal Facility?**

Per the Settlement Agreement, the Parties (including Town of Lenox) agreed to the siting of a landfill (the Upland Disposal Facility) at the Lane Construction sand and gravel pit located in Lee, for disposal of certain PCB-impacted soils and sediments. The UDF will accept soils only if their average PCB concentration is below 50 parts per million (PPM) and sediments only if their average PCB concentration is 25 ppm or less. The UDF will be constructed with leachate containment and leak detection measures that are typically reserved for disposal of more highly contaminated soils/sediments. Per the Settlement Agreement, the UDF can only accept material removed during the Rest of River Cleanup. No material from any other project or site will

be placed in the landfill. For additional requirements pertaining to the UDF, please refer to the document, titled “Background, the Municipal Committee, Mediation and Settlement,” which is available on the Town of Lenox webpage for the Housatonic Rest of River Municipal Committee:

[Housatonic Rest of River Municipal Committee | Lenox, MA \(townoflenox.com\)](https://www.townoflenox.com/housatonic-rest-of-river-municipal-committee),

100,000 cubic yards of materials will be transported to a landfill permitted to accept such wastes outside of Massachusetts.

### **What are the next steps?**

The Housatonic River Remediation Project is currently in the planning and design phase. Permitting and Litigation were completed in 2022 and planning work over the next year is anticipated to include:

- GE & Arcadis to prepare and submit to EPA plans and designs for each element of the project.
- EPA to review plans and designs and provide comment to GE and Arcadis.
- The EPA-review process will include solicitation of public comment.
- Weston & Sampson, on behalf of the Town of Lenox, will complete a technical review of plan and design documents and provide the Town with written comments for submission to the EPA for consideration during the EPA-review process.
- GE & Arcadis will revise plans and designs based on EPA comments and reissue reports.

### **How can Lenox residents learn more about the project?**

Visit this webpage to see related project documents: <https://lenoxlib.org/local-history-resources/rest-of-river-cleanup/>. Stay tuned to the Town’s website for other updates. Community members can share their questions through this comment form. <http://tinyurl.com/LenoxRivQ>

### **FAQs about Transport and Disposal:**

#### **What is the risk or likelihood of trucks spreading or spilling PCBs during transport? What happens if there is a spill?**

Prior to transport on public roads, water is drained from the dredged sediments. The sediment is then treated, if necessary, to remove any remaining free water. To further reduce the chance of releases of PCBs during transport, the truck beds are lined with a membrane that is sealed over the PCB-impacted materials before the truck goes onto the road.

If there is a spill, the spill must be reported to EPA within 24 hours and response actions are prescribed by EPA regulations concerning PCBs. Following the cleanup of the spill, EPA regulations require a post-cleanup sampling program be completed to determine if the release of PCBs has been properly addressed. A Spill Report is prepared and submitted to EPA following the completion of work that describes the spill, response actions, and the analytical results from post-cleanup sampling. The EPA reviews the report and either accepts that the cleanup has been completed or directs the responsible party to perform additional cleanup and/or sampling.

#### **Is it possible for GE to use rail rather than trucks for transport of dredge material?**

The EPA has directed GE and Arcadis to do a more thorough review on the feasibility of using rail to transport dredged materials. There are also alternative dredging methods that could be employed to limit the number of trucks required. This is discussed in the comments on the Transport and Disposal Report that will be submitted by the Town of Lenox.

In response to EPA comments, we anticipate that GE and Arcadis will prepare and submit a Revised Transport and Disposal Report. This report should include a more detailed evaluation of transportation options, including rail.

**Has a feasibility or cost-benefit analysis been performed to determine the use of trucks over rail systems?**

To date, GE has not provided a feasibility study on the use of rail to EPA. EPA has requested that GE complete a feasibility study to determine if rail can be used for this project. This report will be provided to the public for review and comment.

**Who has the final authority to determine what methods will be used for dredging, transportation and disposal? Has GE presented a feasibility and alternatives analysis, with consideration of costs?**

The EPA has authority to determine the remedial actions required for the Rest of River Remediation Project. GE has the right to appeal EPA decisions in court. The requirement to remediate river sediments was finalized during the permitting and litigation process. This process also included the use of the UDF as part of the remedial action, for the disposal of certain wastes.

Determination of methods for sediment removal and transportation of wastes is being done now as part of the planning and design phase of the project. GE and Arcadis are evaluating the project and generating a series of reports that describe their proposed methods for dredging and transport of wastes. These reports will be made available to the public for comment and EPA will compile comments as described above and resolve them with GE.

No single party has the final authority to determine what will be done. The process for final selection of the remedies for dredging, transportation and disposal includes negotiations between the regulatory authority (EPA), the responsible party (GE), and the affected communities.

**Will there be a noise/traffic/air pollution/tourism study completed for the proposed transportation method (trucking)?**

The Town of Lenox has requested that GE perform studies that would evaluate trucking routes, their safety, and other impacts such as noise, pollution, and traffic congestion.

**Can the project begin sooner if rail systems were prioritized over trucking?**

The use of rail could potentially reduce the overall project completion schedule but prioritization of rail transportation will likely not expedite initiation of the remedial action.