



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Little Menomonee River Reroute Progresses

Moss-American Superfund Site

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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Site-related documents may be reviewed at:

Mill Road Library
6431 N. 76th St.
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<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/mossamerican>



A bulldozer hauls soil from the new access road south of Bradley Road.

The rerouting of two segments of the Little Menomonee River has resumed and is scheduled to run through June. This is part of the overall cleanup plan by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the Moss-American Superfund site on Milwaukee's northwest side. After the rerouting, river mud (also called sediment) contaminated with cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons will be removed from the current channel.

The entire site includes about six miles of river divided into five segments (see map on page 2) and its associated floodplain downstream of the former Moss-American wood-treating plant on Granville Road.

Cleanup details

Preparation of new channel sections in segments 2 and 3 will be the focus this year. A short break will be taken over the summer so heavy plant growth can be sprayed with herbicides. Reed canary grass and box elder are the most invasive types of vegetation. Destroying them will help desirable plants like New England aster, silky dogwood and rice cut-grass grow to create better aquatic habitat (homes) along the new channel.

The reroute will resume in late summer and continue through March 2005. This will be the heaviest and most noticeable work to people living in the area from Bradley Road south to Mill Road.

It will include:

- draining some current sections of the river
- diverting flow into the newly excavated channels
- removing the most contaminated sediment
- filling and grading the old segments

During this time, the new channel will be stabilized, or balanced, to prevent erosion while water flow from some of the existing sections will be diverted into the new sections.

Cleanup goals

EPA will continue to monitor the cleanup. Kerr-McGee Corp., a former owner of the Moss-American property, is responsible for its design as well as the river reroute. Together, they will ensure that important parts of the environment, such as trees and shrubs, are preserved as much as possible.

They will also strive to:

- save high-quality wetlands
- avoid the habitat of the Butler's garter snake (which has been placed on the state's threatened species list)

Background

The Little Menomonee River reroute project is part of the Moss-American Superfund site. The Moss-American property is the source of the river contamination, so a cleanup first had to be done at Moss-American. About 137,200 tons of contaminated soil was cleaned using a process called low-temperature thermal desorption. This process indirectly applied heat to vaporize the contaminants. The contaminants EPA was most concerned about were used when Moss-American operated as a wood-preserving business from 1921 to 1976. Railroad ties were treated there with a creosote and fuel-oil mixture. This eventually led to soil and ground-water contamination, in addition to the contamination in the river sediment.



This map shows segments 2 and 3 of the Little Menomonee River. The straighter line represents the present channel. The wavy line represents the new sections.



Contaminated sediment in segment 2 is scheduled to be dredged this fall. The plan also calls for anchoring and binding the roots of more trees such as the one bent over on the right to give the appearance of a more natural look.

- preserve as many trees as possible
- plant new tree “clusters” for more shade
- plant native grasses and shrubs that will fit in the area
- control growth of invasive plants (mustard grass and buckthorn)

The loss of wetlands and trees in the first segment was a concern to the community. To address that concern, new wetlands will be created in segment 2 where two acres of lower-quality trees and shrubs will be removed.

Trees that are cut down and selected for reuse within the new river channel to help create a desirable habitat for fish will be anchored down. This is necessary so they will not interfere with the river flow or be washed downstream forming dams along the way.

Smaller roads will be built whenever possible as new channel sections are dug for sediment and soil to be hauled away. This should help make the construction less noticeable after it is completed.

Safety precautions

As work progresses, the footbridge over segment 3 will be temporarily closed for safety reasons. This is due to the construction equipment that will be in use. In addition, EPA and Kerr-McGee will make arrangements with the Milwaukee police department to have occasional patrols in this area.

Next steps

As segments 2 and 3 are being rerouted, the cleanup plan for segments 4 and 5 is being developed. Cleanup of segment 4, from Mill to Silver Spring roads, and segment 5, from Silver Spring to Hampton roads, could start in late 2005. Although this portion of the river is scheduled to be rerouted, Kerr-McGee

has asked EPA to reconsider that plan. The company says its review of past sediment studies shows that the concentration of PAHs in streambed sediment along this lower stretch is within EPA’s recommended standards.



This newly built access road is being used to bring in heavy equipment for the creation of the new channel and wetlands south of Bradley Road.



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