

**October 10, 2012**  
**Newtown Creek Superfund CAG**  
**International Studio & Curatorial Program**  
**1040 Metropolitan Avenue**  
**Brooklyn, NY 11211**

**EPA presentation of fieldwork for summer of 2012**

- Sub Sediment Core Sampling, May – Aug
- Surface Sediment Grab Sample
- Water Sampling, one calendar year
- Air sampling
- Fish Community Survey, April and June
- Benthic Community Survey
- Habitat Survey

See EPA's presentation file.

**Q&A Session**

Q. Were the fish tissues analyzed?

A. Physical characteristics were analyzed for visible deformity or mutation, in Phase 2 they will look at tissues.

Q. Do you think the plants and animals you did find have adapted to the pollution?

A. Fish and birds in particular are migratory so its hard to say if they are just visiting or not, but they benthic organisms maybe.

Q. How far upland did you go for habitat survey?

A. Whatever shoreline is visible from boats. We used binoculars for birds but didn't go up on land.

Q. So Phase 1 doesn't include active discharges?

A. Correct. Phase 1 is just getting a snapshot of the properties of the waterbody. In Phase 2 we will look at CSOs, stormwater and all other discharges. CSO sampling will happen in Phase 2 late next year.

Q. How many sampling sites were there and where?

A. They sampled throughout the main channel including all five tributaries

- 113 location for sediment samples
- 15 surface water sites
- 30 benthic environment sites
- 5 zones for fish
- All mapped out in the workplan on CAG website

Q. Did you do any habitat survey by foot from the landside?

A. Habitat survey did walk to accessible locations (limited of course)

Q. Phase 1 info will be ready when?

A. EPA will pass through “trends” info ASAP, detailed reports will come in to them January and March, and interpretation will follow and culminate into full report. Next meeting we can present surface water trends. Sediment data will take longer.

Q. What was at the bottom of the 20ft depth for core samples?

A. It's a dark grey native soil. Looks like clay. We always got to it within twenty feet.

Q. Also, are you tracking the levels of depth to native soil across the creek?

A. Yes, eventually there will be a 3d map!

Q. What are you testing for in the sediment? Can we go back to that?

A. We tested for everything we could possibly test for, to see trends all through the creek of everything.

Q. At the turning basin in Dutch Kills there are abandoned barges. Will they be removed and when?

A. EPA has inquired with many agencies, can't figure out who is responsible for these barges. They have sampled around the area, and will assess if the barges are contributing contamination. That's really the only issue that they are responsible for. If they need to be removed because they are contaminating, then EPA is more involved.

Q. What about the liveaboard boat population? They are very close to the water and are you considering their proximity in the testing that's going on?

A. Air and water sampling will help determine if there are hazards related to short term exposure, and these residents will be alerted if they find anything that poses an immediate risk.

Q. What about the aeration? Did you analyze the effect of the aeration?

A. They did monitor air while the bubblers were going. They will be looking for VOCs and dioxin only. There wasn't a comparison of air quality before and after the bubblers were on.

Q. How are the precautions regarding contact with the creek being enforced? There is “swimming”, we've seen jet skis and feet in the water off the boats.

A. City and state health department have posted signs, are concerned. They have published guidance material. If the air quality data shows we need to do similar outreach about air.

Q. Would there be medical monitoring if there are people contacting the creek, eating fish?

A. EPA does not have jurisdiction. Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry can come back and work with the community.

Q. Does EPA test air for pathogens?

A. Not our jurisdiction.

Q. In Sediments, are you looking for phalates or flame retardants?

A. Yes, in part. We are looking generally for PAHs and PCBs. If there is a basis to expand the sampling list or reduce the sampling list for Phase 2 then we will do so.

Q. Are you using Atlantic Basin as the “control” for sediments?

A. No, that is Gowanus. For Newtown, 14 sites are being tested for background levels that we will compare with our sediment samples. For air samples, we are using local background samples.

Q. Are you considering the transportation surfaces that drain to the creek? Koz Bridge lead and particulates...also LIC drains right to Dutch Kills.

A. If we see lead and material from Koz Bridge, we will look at it deeper. If we see runoff impacts in the sediments we will look at LIE too!

Q. Can we clarify something...what is native soil?

A. "Non-impacted" sediment, but it could also be dredged material.

Q. Where is bedrock?

A. It varies throughout; Paul says Metro is 50-60 ft to bedrock.

Q. Why is air not tested for all of the things that the water is tested for?

A. We don't have easy tests for the same criteria in the air as we do for water, plus our mandate is to look at the water and sediments.

Q. Tell us more about the habitat survey, and can we get a species list?

A. It lasted two weeks, we did visual observation with binocs, of shoreline, intertidal zone, some parts of upland that could be accessed. We recorded species and abundance, as well as location using GPS. **Yes we can share the species list.**

Q. What happened to the sonar mapping?

A. **We will send you the map we made.** That was basically to know where pipelines and snags might be before we did sediment samples. No we did not see any pirate ships down there.

Q. Anything else unexpected that you found?

A. Hmmm.

1. Lots of metro cards in the sediment for some reason.
2. Surprising diversity of fish population.

Q. How can we get the right info out to the right people – working population, people accessing boats via random spots on shoreline and contacting sediments...people are still crabbing at Manhattan Ave...

A. **OK, health agencies will put together an improved outreach program.**

Q. How can we address fishing in the creek that ends up in shops and restaurants. (audible gasp)

A. **Wanda will follow up with Laura on an enforcement strategy.**

Q. How much does Phase 1 cost?

A. 25 M *for whole* RFS.