

Ecological Risk Assessment for Newtown Creek and Gowanus Canal Superfund Sites. New York City

Project Characteristics:

- *Superfund Site Strategic Technical Support for New York City*
- *Ecological Risk Assessment Services*
- *Sediment Sampling, Testing and Data Analysis*
- *Agency and PRP Group Communications*

Woods Hole Group, Inc. is currently working as a member of the Louis Berger team to provide consulting services, field sampling, and critical review of work conducted at two CERCLA sites in New York City (NYC), the Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek. Woods Hole Group personnel provide senior level consulting services to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) in the area of ecological risk assessment.

On behalf of NYCDEP, our team performed the following activities:

- Reviewed the EPA ecological risk assessment
- Critiqued EPA's development of Preliminary Remediation Goals (PRG) for Gowanus Canal based on the risk assessment results
- Described the uncertainties in the underlying data
- Developed a sediment toxicity testing sampling plan to address these uncertainties
- Contributed to the field sampling program, and
- Used the resultant, more certain data set, to calculate an alternative PRG for the Gowanus Canal site.

For the Newtown Creek CERCLA site, Woods Hole Group has regularly attended meetings with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 2, the Newtown Creek Potentially Responsible Parties (PRP) Group, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). At these meetings, personnel presented the NYCDEP technical position and critiques of technical work. Woods Hole Group's critique included analysis of reference areas use and selection for the Newtown Creek toxicity testing program. We prepared a separate analysis of reference area selection, and developed a work plan incorporating a reference area that more closely meets the EPA definitions of toxicity testing reference areas.



Our team arranged for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Laboratory to contract with Louis Berger to conduct the laboratory toxicity testing, and coordinated a review of the plan with NOAA scientists. Woods Hole Group is currently executing a robust field sampling program with Louis Berger scientists to address the potential toxicity of sediments in Newtown Creek, regional conditions stations, and the reference area. Our personnel also reviewed and commented on the various work plans, field sampling plans, Screening Level Ecological Risk Assessment, Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment Problem Formulation, and quality assurance plans submitted to EPA by the Newtown Creek Group regarding Remedial Investigation activities.

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