

INLAND FISHERIES
Wolf River Basin Sub Committee Report
December 2007

Fox River: There are currently "white caps" on the Fox River PCB clean-up calm waters as "Big Brother" has flexed his muscles.

The EPA supported by the U. S. Department of Justice and the WDNR have ordered Phase 2 paper companies to immediately commence purchasing necessary project equipment – Identify the dredged materials land fill site. Response: Georgia Pacific and Appleton Papers representatives have indicated their dissatisfaction with the order – "This federal order could move the cleanup process from a cooperative approach to a legal proceeding".

Glatfelter Paper Co. of York Pa. (November 2007) filed a lawsuit in federal court asking their company not be included in the financial responsibility Phase 2 cleanup. An estimated 3.7 million cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment from the De Pere Dam to Green Bay has been determined. (Project estimated cost - \$400 million) Issue: The Glatfelter owned plant previously Bergstrom Paper Co. located in Neenah Wisconsin, is separated from the Brown County PCB sediment by 30 miles of river, 12 dams and 17 locks. Glatfelter is currently financing the Phase 1 project. (History – This manufacturing paper plant terminated operations in June 2006.

The Fox River Clean-up Joint Defense Group made up of municipalities and Sewerage Districts along the river remain active in legal consultations regarding potential financial cleanup liability. Although all current cleanup expenses are being paid by the paper companies, municipalities in which the paper companies are actually located have not legally been exempted from liability.

*To date, \$570,000 has been paid in legal fees.

*Defense Group members: Cities of De Pere – Menasha – Neenah – Wrightstown
Green Bay Sewerage District – Neenah/Menasha Sewerage District.

The EPA and WDNR will present an amended Phase 1 "ROD" in a public forum at Lawrence College this month. The revised plan identifies the usage of four distinct types of sediment capping materials and thickness in PCB areas yet not dredged – And, areas already dredged whereby the dredging process failed - left a PCB sediment residue greater than the accepted content level.

*ROD – Record of Decision (Actual cleanup engineering plan)

The 2007 river cleanup activity (Winnebago County) has been terminated for the year. The sediment dewatering and water purification processes are ongoing as is the sediment transfer to land fill sites.

Next update – February 2008

Basin: The Fox River Navigational System Authority is holding five public meetings (Green Bay – Appleton – Oshkosh – Fond du Lac – Winneconne) on the proposed plan to transfer boats overland around the Rapid Croche Lock, Wrightstown Wisconsin allowing boat passage to the lower Fox River. The plan includes a boat inspection and cleansing site designed to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species on any boats or contents to be transferred. *The Rapid Croche Lock was closed and sealed in 1988 to prevent upstream invasion of the sea lamprey. The sealed lock prevents passage to the Bay of Green Bay, Lake Michigan, St. Lawrence Seaway and beyond.

With 180 exotic species now confirmed to be in the Great Lakes. And, the Wolf River Basin possessing the world's largest sturgeon population – one of Wisconsin's premier walleye, bass and perch fisheries creating a multi-million dollar economic growth to the state, these meeting surely will only be round one between all the different "Basin" users.

After the public meetings, the Navigational Authority intends to draft a final plan and submit it to the Department of Natural Resources for approval.

*Currently there is no funding for construction of the Rapid Choche transfer station.

Affiliate clubs within the basin have been notified of the boat transfer project meeting schedule and included in the December issue of Wisconservation.

Respectfully submitted

Daniel A. Gries Chairman