SUPERFUND

Lower Neponset River Site
Boston/Milton, MA

THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM protects human health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up often-abandoned hazardous waste sites and engaging communities throughout the process. Many of these sites are complex and need long-term cleanup actions. Those responsible for contamination are held liable for cleanup costs. EPA strives to return previously contaminated land and groundwater to productive use.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is currently identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the 3.7-mile stretch of the Neponset River from the point where it merges with Mother Brook, a tributary to the Neponset River located upstream of Dana Avenue in Hyde Park, extending downstream to the Walter Baker Chocolate Dam located upstream of Adams Street in Dorchester/Milton. Based on initial studies, this portion of the river contains contaminated sediment with elevated levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The site is bordered by residential, commercial, industrial, and public land, including the Neponset River Greenway. Historically, there were many mills established along the Lower Neponset River in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Milton, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. Dams were used to generate power for grinding wheels and to later operate larger industrial mills. These mills and other industrial facilities in the area may have contributed to the river contamination. On March 16, 2022, the site was listed on the National Priorities List for Superfund sites.

PCB's: Polychlorinated biphenyls are a group of man-made chemicals that are no longer being made, but which stay in the environment for a long time and may present health risks. For more information please visit: https://www.epa.gov/pcbs

UPCOMING ACTIVITY

In the spring of 2023, EPA will begin conducting site investigation and sampling activities along the river and riverbanks. Residents may see a small boat with workers wearing protective clothing along the river. This clothing is required because of the workers' direct contact with sediments likely contaminated with PCBs.

EPA will also be working with property owners along some areas of the river to request access to properties for further investigation. EPA and its contractors will be identifying areas where sampling

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KEY CONTACTS:

ZANETTA PURNELL
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
617-918-1306
purnell.zanetta@epa.gov

ASHLIN BROOKS
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
(617) 913-9140
brooks.ashlin@epa.gov

NATALIE BURGO
EPA Remedial Project Manager
(617) 918-1331
burgo.natalie@epa.gov

GENERAL INFO:

TOLL-FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE
1-888-EPA-7341

LEARN MORE AT:
www.epa.gov/neponsetriver

can take place along the riverbanks and identifying ecology (plants, trees, animals, etc.) in those areas. Sampling of soils and sediments on these properties may take place later in the spring of 2023 and EPA will work directly with private property owners on schedules and sampling details.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

In November of 2022, EPA held Lower Neponset Superfund Site Superfund Workshops in Milton, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. The focus of these workshops was for the community to learn more about the Superfund cleanup process as well as to share concerns and expectations with representatives from the EPA.

In August of 2022 and January of 2023, EPA conducted a series of interviews to further understand community members' concerns. The feedback received will help to create the EPA Community Involvement Plan (CIP), which guides the EPA's community involvement process. EPA will have a draft CIP completed this Spring for public review and comment.

ALONG THE RIVER

The Riverside Square PCB Site

The Riverside Square PCB site is located along the northern bank of the Lower Neponset River within the Riverside Square area in Hyde Park. From the 1930s through the 1970s, several industries using PCBs operated in the Neponset River Basin, one of the most industrialized basins in the United States. In 1962 and 1964, to control flooding, the river was dredged by the Metropolitan District Commission, now a part of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Dredging is the process of cleaning out the bed of the river by scooping out sediment (mud) and debris with a machine called a dredge. The dredged materials, or "spoils," were placed in several locations along the banks of the river, essentially creating new land. The Riverside Square PCB site is one of those riverbank locations. In October 2022, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) formally requested that EPA perform further investigation of the spoils at the Riverside Square PCB site. EPA will perform a Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation (PA/SI) to better understand the site's PCB contamination within the soil in the spring of 2023.

The Lewis Chemical Site

The Lewis Chemical Site is located downstream of the Mother Brook and Neponset River confluence. It is next to the Fairmount Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) train station and the railroad tracks. From 1963 to 1983, the former Lewis Chemical industrial facility collected, transported, stored, and processed hazardous wastes containing PCBs. In October 2022, EPA evaluated sampling data to see if the PCBs and other collocated contamination within the site's soil posed a risk to human health and the environment. After reviewing the data, the soil showed high levels of PCBs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and metals. EPA will begin cleanup activities in the winter/spring of 2023. This process is estimated to take six months. During the whole process, representatives from EPA will be available to area residents and continue to work with the City of Boston, DCR, and MassDEP.

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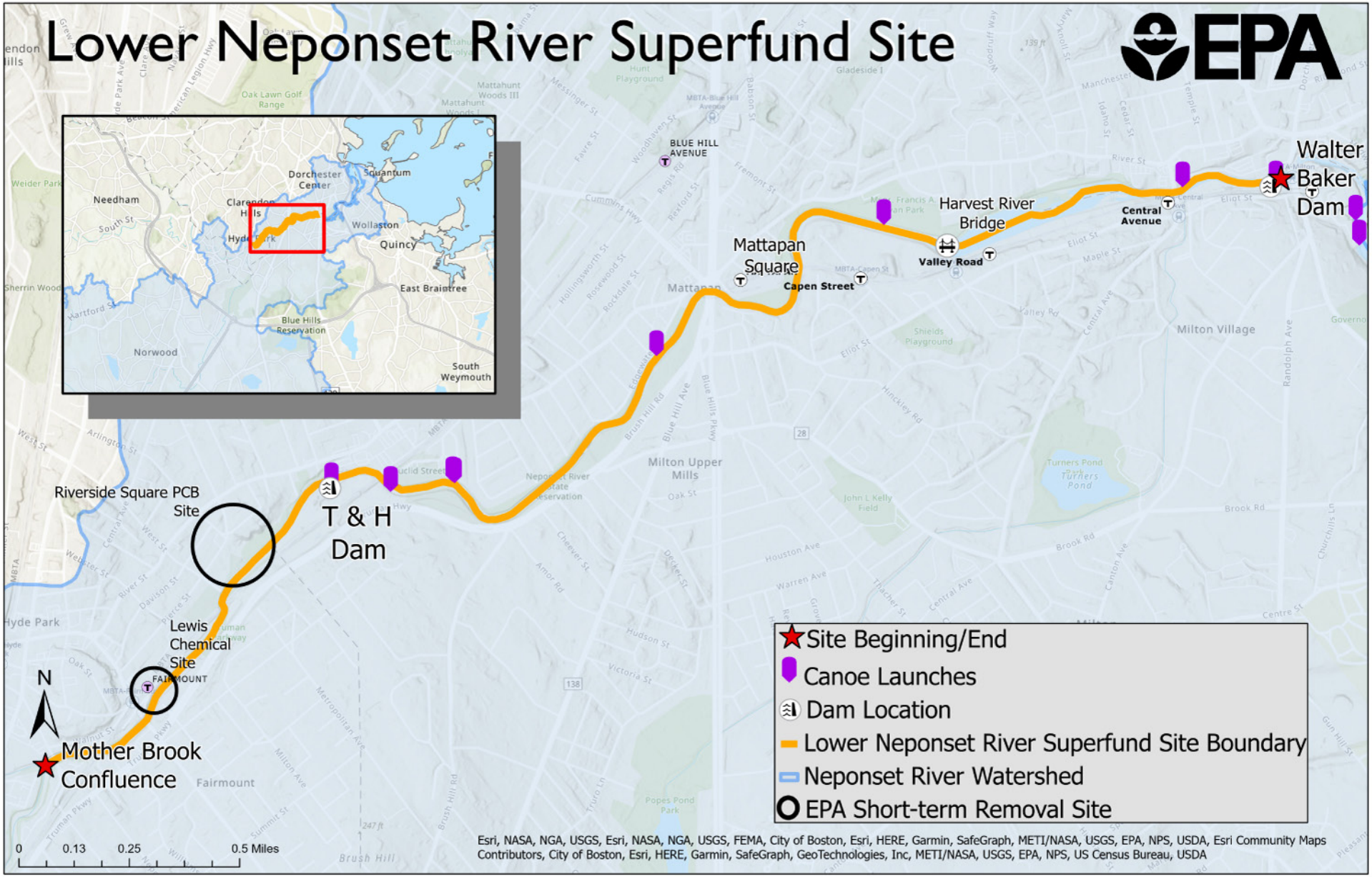
Lower Neponset River Superfund Site
EPA
Walter Baker Dam
Harvest River Bridge
Central Avenue
Valley Road
Mattapan Square
Capen Street
BLUE HILL AVENUE
Milton Village
Milton Upper Mills
T & H Dam
Riverside Square PCB Site
Lewis Chemical Site
Mother Brook Confluence
Fairmount
Hyde Park
Needham
Dorchester Center
Squantum
Wollaston
Quincy
East Braintree
Blue Hills Reservation
Norwood
South Weymouth
N
0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles
Site Beginning/End
Canoe Launches
Dam Location
Lower Neponset River Superfund Site Boundary
Neponset River Watershed
EPA Short-term Removal Site
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, City of Boston, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Boston, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA