



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

PCB cleanup set to begin second phase

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PLAINWELL -- After removing contaminants from about 6,900 feet of banks of the Kalamazoo River here in 2007, cleanup crews hope to begin more challenging operations in February.

"It was a good year," said Mike Ribordy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's on-scene coordinator for the project to remove soils and sediment laden with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the river. "We're set up well for a good second year."

Work next year will begin sometime in February, Ribordy said, with crews building roads and felling trees to access the river. If weather permits, excavation could begin as early as March, he said.

Challenges in 2008 will include working in deeper water as well as excavating sediment from the middle of the river -- more difficult than removing it from the river banks and shallow areas.

"There's definitely a lot more work to do," Ribordy said.

Crews trucked out the last loads of contaminated material for this year on Dec. 21.

Dredging began in early June on a two-year, \$25 million project to remove 132,000 cubic-yards of sediment containing 4,400 pounds of PCBs from a 1.5-mile stretch of the river near Plainwell.

Georgia-Pacific LLC and Millennium Holdings LLC are the two companies paying for the cleanup project.

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