

Former Plainwell Impoundment Time-Critical Removal Action Project Highlights – June 2009

PROJECT SUMMARY

- **Overall Goal:** Stabilize eroding banks along the 1.5-mile stretch of river and stop resupply of PCBs to the river.
- Site preparation activities began in **April 2007** and the first materials were excavated in **June 2007**.
- **Nearly 130,000 cubic yards** of sediments and soils were removed across 27 acres.
- **3,675 loads** of material have been disposed of at three offsite commercial landfills, which involved **520,291 roundtrip miles**.
- Approximately **5,000 pounds of PCBs** were removed from the river system.
- **Removal of the Plainwell Dam:** remains of the powerhouse and a portion of the former Plainwell Dam have been removed. The river has been returned to a free-flowing state, which will allow passage of fish and boats.
- Removal activities were **completed in December 2008**.
- **More than 2,000 trees and shrubs and more than 30 native plant species** were incorporated in the replanting efforts, which were completed in **May 2009**.
- Monitoring and maintenance of restored banks in the project area will continue for **three years**.

THE PROCESS

- The project was divided into several sections, and excavation/work started at the uppermost portions of the project site and moved downstream.
- Work in a removal area was deemed complete when clean-up goals were verified.
- As work in a removal area was complete, the team followed up by stabilizing the river banks as necessary then replanting with native trees, shrubs, and grasses.
- Environmental monitoring and construction quality assurance testing was conducted on a weekly basis.

THE WATER CONTROL STRUCTURE (WCS)

A key aspect of the project was the engineering design and construction of the WCS. This temporary structure was installed across the western channel of the Plainwell Dam to allow water levels to be lowered in a controlled manner, making excavation easier and more efficient. Construction of the WCS took six months – with the structure declared operational on April 16, 2008. The project team used the WCS to control water levels in the removal areas downstream of the US 131 Bridge between May and November 2008, then the structure was removed to restore free-flowing conditions in the historical western channel.

YEARLY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

2007

- Finished the planned work ahead of schedule; two areas targeted for 2008 were also completed in 2007.
- Approximately 37,000 cubic yards were removed from nine areas covering 9.1 acres.
- Cleanup goals were achieved in all removal areas.

2008

- Approximately 91,000 cubic yards were removed from seven areas covering 17.5 acres.
- Cleanup goals were achieved in all removal areas.
- Severe rainstorms produced record flooding in Sept. 2008 – the WCS was maintained during the flood and the project was completed on schedule following a short delay due to the flood.