

Terminology Services - Vocabulary Catalog List Detail Report

Term
Administrative Order on Consent Definition: A legal agreement under the authority of the Superfund law between the EPA or a natural resource trustee and potentially responsible parties (PRPs) whereby PRPs agree to perform or pay the cost of an action or group of actions to be taken at the site. In the Lower Fox River matter, EPA and the State of Wisconsin attempted to negotiate an Administrative Order on Consent with the PRPs that would allow for the PRPs to perform a site investigation and feasibility study, but were unable to reach an agreement. The State would also have entered the AOC as a signatory based on independent State law, separate from Superfund. Acronym: AOC
Administrative Record Definition: A file that is maintained, and contains all information used, by an agency to make a decision pursuant to its authority under the Superfund law. The agency makes the administrative record available for public review. For the Lower Fox River project, the EPA Administrative Record will be available for review in the near future at EPA Region 5 in Chicago and at local Green Bay and Appleton area information repositories. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) administrative record is available in a public reading room established at the FWS Green Bay office.
Capping Definition: A technology to address contaminated sediment which places clean sand or gravel over the contaminated sediment to isolate the contaminants from the surrounding environment.
Clean-up Goals Definition: A set of clean-up target levels to be attained for specific contaminants when cleaning up the site.

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Cleanup Definition: Actions taken to deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health or the environment. The term is often used broadly to describe various response actions or phases of responses, such as the remedial investigation/feasibility study.
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act Definition: A Federal law passed in 1980 and modified in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act. The Acts, which can be found starting at Section 9601 of Title 42 of the U.S. Code, created a special tax that goes into a Trust Fund, commonly known as Superfund, which may be used to investigate and cleanup abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. Under the program, EPA can: 1) make agreements with potentially responsible parties to undertake investigation and cleanup of Superfund designated sites under EPA supervision, or 2) use the funds from the Superfund to pay for investigation and cleanup of Superfund sites. If EPA uses Superfund money to pay for site investigation and cleanup when parties responsible for the contamination cannot be located or are unwilling or unable to perform the work, then EPA may take legal action against the potentially responsible parties to reimburse the Superfund for those "response costs." In addition, EPA has authority under the Superfund law to administratively order potentially responsible parties to undertake certain investigatory or clean-up actions. The Superfund law also allows natural resource trustees to recover damages for injuries to natural resources resulting from the contamination. Acronym: CERCLA
Enforcement Definition: EPA or natural resource trustee efforts, through legal action, if necessary, to compel potentially responsible parties to perform or pay for a Superfund site investigation, cleanup, and/or natural resource damage assessment or restoration activity.

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Global Settlement Definition: In the Lower Fox River situation this term refers to the discussions among the governmental/trustee parties and the potentially responsible parties to reach an agreement for a complete resolution of all Federal, State and Tribal issues, including clean-up and natural resource damage issues. This settlement effort should be distinguished from the separate "parallel" discussions relating to the negotiations for an Administrative Order on Consent among the EPA, the State of Wisconsin and the potentially responsible parties for the PRPs to undertake a remedial investigation/feasibility study of the Lower Fox River.
Hazard Ranking System Definition: A scoring system used to evaluate potential relative risks to public health and the environment from releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. EPA and/or a state response agency uses the HRS to calculate a site score (0 to 100) based on the actual or potential release of hazardous substances from a site through air, surface water, or ground water. This score is the primary factor used to decide if a hazardous waste site should be placed on the National Priorities List (NPL). Acronym: HRS
Memorandum of Understanding Definition: In the Lower Fox River project, six governments -- EPA, Wisconsin DNR, FWS, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Oneida and Memonimee Tribes signed a Memorandum of Understanding on July 11, 1997 agreeing to work together toward achieving cleanup and restoration of the Lower Fox River and Green Bay environment.
National Priorities List Definition: A Federal roster of uncontrolled contamination sites that actually, or potentially, threaten human health or the environment

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and are eligible for extensive, long-term investigation and cleanup under the Federal Superfund program. Acronym: NPL
Natural Attenuation or Natural Recovery
Definition: The break down of contaminants due to physical, chemical and biological processes which occur in the environment, and the ability of the environment to rebound from the injuries caused by the contamination.
Natural Resource Damage Assessment
Definition: An assessment or measurement of the losses suffered by the public when public air, water, lands, plants, or animals have been injured by the release of hazardous substances. Authorized by the Federal Clean Water Act, Superfund law, and Oil Pollution Act, the assessment is carried out by certain Federal, State, and Tribal agencies who have been designated as natural resource trustees. The value of the losses suffered by the public is calculated by determining the extent of the injuries, and conducting economic studies to determine the value that the public places on the injured resources and services. In the Lower Fox River project, the FWS, the NOAA, and the Oneida and Menominee Tribes are conducting a joint natural resource damage assessment. In addition, the State of Wisconsin and potentially responsible parties are jointly conducting a separate collaborative natural resource damage assessment pursuant to an agreement they signed in January of 1997. Acronym: NRDA
Polychlorinated Biphenyls
Definition: A family of compounds commonly used in electric transformers as insulators and coolants, in lubricants, adhesives, and caulking compounds. From 1957 until 1971, they were also used in some processes for manufacturing recycled paper. PCBs are extremely persistent in the environment because they do not readily break down into less harmful chemicals. Acronym: PCBs

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Acronym: PCBs
Potentially Responsible Party
Definition: Parties that have been found to be potentially legally responsible for contamination and/or cleanup at a site. Under Superfund, PRPs can include persons (including companies) that are owners or operators of Superfund designated sites, persons who arranged for disposal of hazardous substances at a Superfund site, or certain persons who transported hazardous substances to a Superfund site.
Acronym: PRP
Proposed Plan
Definition: A document that describes the clean-up alternatives evaluated for a Superfund site and identifies the preferred alternative and the rationale for the preference. A public comment period and opportunity for a public hearing takes place after release of the Proposed Plan and before the Record of Decision.
Record of Decision
Definition: A document signed by EPA outlining the selected remedy for a Superfund site. The ROD includes a responsiveness summary, which responds to comments raised during the public comment period for the Proposed Plan.
Acronym: ROD
Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study
Definition: A two-part study that is completed before any Superfund-related remedial cleanup can begin. The first part is the Remedial Investigation, which is a study to determine the nature and extent of the contamination at the site. The second part is the Feasibility

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Study, which is an identification and evaluation of various clean-up alternatives. When completed, the RI/FS forms the basis for the EPA's decision as to what clean-up alternative should be selected for a particular Superfund site. Acronym: RI/FS
Risk Assessment Definition: A study conducted as part of the Remedial Investigation to determine the threats posed to human health and the environment if the site's contamination is left unaddressed. The study takes into account such factors as the contaminant's toxicity and the paths and likelihoods of exposure.
Sediments Definition: Unconsolidated materials on the bottoms of rivers and lakes. Sediments (mud) consist primarily of clay, silt, sand, and gravel along with some organic material from decomposing plants and animals.
Superfund Definition: The common name for the clean-up fund created by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). It is often also used to refer to the clean-up process under CERCLA.
Trustee Definition: A Federal, State or Tribal agency designated by the President to act on behalf of the public in assessing the damages to natural resources which they oversee, and achieving restoration of those natural resources. The natural resource trustees that are involved in the Lower Fox River matter are: FWS, NOAA, Wisconsin DNR, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.