

Pine River Cleanup Update - September/October, 2003

The EPA-sanctioned Community Advisory Group (CAG) of the Pine River Superfund Citizen Task Force is pleased to announce the beginning of a regular informational newsletter for members of the faith community. We are distributing this newsletter to provide churches with information on the Pine River clean up, and to offer chances for involvement in caring for God's Creation. This issue includes a summary of the CAG meetings which took place on September 17 and October 15, 2003.

Sept. 17 Meeting: Draft Remedial Investigation Findings Presented by MDEQ

- There is much concern over contamination moving out of the former Velsicol/Michigan Chemical plant site into the Pine River and down into lower aquifers.
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has shown that the containment system in place on the plant site (clay cap and walls) is not working. Water is seeping in and contaminated water is moving out.
- The MDEQ has found very high levels of contaminants in the plant site material and in the groundwater inside the plant site. These same contaminants have been found in areas below the plant site and into the river sediment.
- The success in cleaning contaminated river sediment will be jeopardized if nothing is done to help the situation.

Oct. 15 Meeting: Presentation of Possible Solutions to Plant Site Leaking

The MDEQ is proposing many ways to deal with the plant site problem. These include the following which can occur independently or in conjunction with each other:

- Recapping the site and putting another wall around it.
- Lowering the water level inside the plant site so that it is lower than the adjacent river so that pressure tends to be inwards towards the plant site and not towards the river.
- Pumping contamination in groundwater and treating it on-site through a treatment plant and discharging it back into the river.

CAG Perspective:

Simply recapping the site and placing another wall around it will not prevent migration of contaminants. That is what was done in the 1980's, and it did not work. Also, capping will cause the site to remain a hazardous waste landfill, which dramatically limits the options for development of the site. The only solution is to completely remove the contamination, by digging up the plant site and treating the waste. We urge the community to contact their state and federal representatives, and ask them to support a solution that will remove this hazardous material and help us to restore our environment and local economy.

Contact information for government representatives and for the CAG is provided on the back of this flyer. Those interested are also encouraged to attend our monthly meetings, which are held every third Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm in St. Louis City Hall.