

Removal Recommendation for the Restrictions on Navigational Dredging Activities Beneficial Use Impairment in the Ashtabula Area of Concern

Ohio EPA and Ohio Lake Erie Commission is recommending the removal of the Restrictions on Navigational Dredging Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) in the Ashtabula Area of Concern.

State of Ohio Restoration Target and Impairment Removal Criteria

State of Ohio Listing Guideline

This beneficial use shall be listed as impaired if:

Contaminants in sediment exceed sediment quality guidelines used by the State such that there are restrictions on navigational dredging or disposal activities.

State of Ohio Restoration Target

There are no restrictions on navigational dredging or disposal activities due to contaminants in sediment, such that there are suitable options available for reuse or disposal of the material.

Background and Evaluation of Beneficial Use Impairment

The lower two miles of the Ashtabula River are designated as an Area of Concern under Annex 1 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. This is a result of historical conditions and activities that caused sediment contamination. In response, through extensive partnerships over the years with federal, state and local entities, including the Ashtabula River Partnership, substantial remediation activities have occurred in the lower Ashtabula River since 2003. Six beneficial use impairments (BUI) were initially identified for the Ashtabula River AOC by the RAP Advisory Council. Now only one BUI remains impaired, Restrictions on Navigational Dredging Activities. Beneficial use suitability options were evaluated for dredged material through remedial effectiveness sampling and reporting, sediment risk-based screening, background concentrations, PCB Sediment results analysis and sediment evaluation associated with the 401 certification process.

Conclusion

All dredge material from the Ashtabula Harbor Federal Navigation Channel have the potential to be beneficially used upland based on the results of the evaluation of the material against the residential and/or industrial soil U.S. EPA Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) and information regarding ambient background conditions for the upland beneficial use of dredged sediment. The majority of dredge material may be able to be used for aquatic beneficial uses in accordance with the 401 water quality certification process.

Removal Statement

Based upon the completion of the contaminated sediment remediation projects and review of the 2015-2018 data, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Ohio Lake Erie Commission recommend the removal of the Restrictions on Dredging Activities BUI for the Ashtabula River Area of Concern. This is the last BUI to be removed before the AOC begins the delisting process.

To view the draft removal document, go to epa.ohio.gov/Portals/35/lakeerie/Ashtabula-DredgingBUI-DRAFT.pdf. Comments will be accepted through August 24, 2020. Comments can be emailed to Ohio EPA – DSW Northeast District Office, Attn: Melanie Barbis, at melanie.barbis@epa.ohio.gov