

**Second Chlor-Alkali Reuse Planning Committee Meeting  
Draft Meeting Summary**

*Berlin Senior High School, Berlin, New Hampshire  
Tuesday, January 22, 2008: 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.*

**Meeting Purpose & Overview**

On January 22, 2008, the Chlor-Alkali Reuse Planning Committee (RPC) gathered at the Berlin High School Library for its second meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting was to resolve outstanding questions that were raised at the first meeting and to discuss committee members' reuse goals for the site.

*A list of future meetings for the RPC is included in the Next Steps section on page 8 of this summary.*

**Attendees**

Chlor-Alkali RPC Members

Ernie Allain, *Berlin Department of Public Works*  
Jack Crisp, *North American Dismantling Corp. / Crisp, Barrett, Herbert & Uchida, PLLC.*  
Rick Cusson, *Public Service of New Hampshire*  
Fran Cusson, *Berlin Planning Board*  
Mike Galuszka, *Androscoggin River Watershed Council*  
Kathleen Kelley, *Androscoggin Valley Economic Recovery Corporation*  
Don Mercier, *Brookfield Power / Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC.*  
George Pozzuto, *Northern Forest Heritage Park*  
Stacia Roberge, *Berlin Main Street Program*  
Lincoln Robertson, *North Woods Rafting*  
Linda Upham-Bornstein, *History Consultant*

Project Resource Members

Pamela Laflamme, *City of Berlin*  
Drew Hoffman, *New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services*  
Richard Pease, *New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services*  
Darryl Luce, *EPA Region 1*  
John Podgurski, *EPA Region 1*  
Sarah White, *EPA Region 1*  
Ronald Gonzales, *EPA Region 1*

Consultant Team Members

Michael Hancox, *E<sup>2</sup> Inc.*  
Matt Robbie, *E<sup>2</sup> Inc.*  
Johnny Zimmerman-Ward, *E<sup>2</sup> Inc.*

## Reuse and Remedy Selection Discussion

EPA representatives John Podgurski and Darryl Luce addressed RPC members' outstanding questions from the first meeting. Key discussion points relevant to each of the questions are summarized below.

*How does EPA consider future land uses in the remedy selection process at Superfund sites?*

- Mr. Podgurski reviewed a diagram of the remedy selection process that was distributed to committee members prior to the meeting, explaining that the Chlor-Alkali site is currently in the Remedial Investigation stage of the process. He clarified that at this stage EPA will collect data to help determine the extent of contamination and use that information to identify potential human health risks and to identify potential cleanup alternatives for the site. Categories of reuse can be determined to focus the Remedial Investigation.
- In the next stage, a remedy will be selected and a Record of Decision will define cleanup goals for the site.
- The Remedial Design stage determines what the remedy will look like. The remedy can be designed to accommodate future uses. Initially there may be broad categories of reuse and through the process they may become more specific as more detailed information becomes available.
- During the Remedial Action stage, remedies are actually implemented. Depending on timing, reuse can be concurrent with cleanup during this stage.
- In considering how a site may be reused in the future, EPA evaluates “reasonably anticipated future land uses.” This group’s discussions and recommendation will help EPA determine the site’s reasonably anticipated future land use.
- As EPA moves through the remedy selection process, it will consider future use in the actual selection of a remedy, as well as in the design of the cleanup plans and the actual construction of the remedy.
- Mr. Luce added that EPA will need to assess potential health risks to the public and environment as part of the process of considering reuse options. An RPC member asked if the site will include the down river contamination or other contamination outside of the five acres. Mr. Luce clarified that EPA will likely look beyond the five acres but that it will depend on the results of the risk assessment. If, after more investigations, the contamination is found to be outside of the five acres, the cleanup area could change. Mr. Luce shared a map of sampling sites along the Androscoggin River. Mercury, dioxins, and lead are likely the site’s main contaminants.
- An RPC member shared an article in the Portland Press Herald about a Maine environmental panel’s plan that would seek to improve water quality in the Androscoggin River as it flows through Rumford.

*Can the Chlor-Alkali site be remediated to a level that will support unrestricted future use and unlimited exposures (e.g., highest level cleanup)?*

- Mr. Podgurski explained that the Superfund program is not set up to clean up all sites to the highest level. Challenges like the cost of cleanups and the difficulty of cleaning up contaminated sites to a pristine state require EPA to consider many factors and to select a cleanup that will keep people safe for the long term. For example, a site surrounded by a highly industrial area would probably not be cleaned up to the levels required for residential use because there probably will not be residential use on the site. Reasonably anticipated future uses need to be determined at each site.

*Does EPA already have a predetermined cleanup level or future use in mind for the Chlor-Alkali Site?*

- Several RPC members found it difficult to think about reuse without having some idea of what type of cleanup EPA has in mind.
- EPA staff explained that cleanup alternatives will be developed after site investigations have helped clarify the type of contaminants and the extent of contamination. While all future land uses are theoretically possible, EPA staff explained that very few sites are cleaned up to pristine levels, and very few are cleaned up for residential uses.
- EPA site attorney Ron Gonzales explained that EPA's goal is to provide a remedy that will be protective of human health and the environment in the long term. EPA will not have a clear sense of how to do this until after investigating the extent of contamination.
- There are nine criteria for EPA's remedy selection process, only three of which relate to future use. So there are many factors that EPA considers when selecting a remedy. This group has an opportunity to provide information about community needs and wants to help inform EPA's decision making.
- Mr. Hancox reminded the group that the cleanup process is complex and there are a lot of unknowns. In order to help clarify the purpose of the process he suggested that the reasonably anticipated future land use of the site should be the focus of the RPC, not the cleanup goal.
- RPC members asked if there were any reuses that could be eliminated before considering reuses. EPA cannot determine what uses will or will not work until further site investigation has been completed.

After outstanding questions from the previous meeting were answered, the reuse and remedy selection discussion continued.

#### *Benefits of Reuse Planning at Superfund Sites*

Mike Hancox summarized how EPA has considered future land use in the past and how the approach to this process will differ.

- In the past, EPA cleaned up sites to comply with existing zoning designations, and now it takes other things, such as a community's *future* land use goals, into consideration when selecting an appropriate remedy. In the past, sites were cleaned up, fenced, and left unused.
- He clarified that the Chlor-Alkali site has no viable landowner, which may be an obstacle to reuse. It may be possible that the local government could take ownership; if this occurred, there would be an opportunity for the community to determine the land use.
- The RPC's role is to work with each other to determine potential future uses at the site. With the current surrounding land owner representative participating, hopefully a consensus can be reached so that the group can choose a Chlor-Alkali future land use that compliments the surrounding future land use.
- Once the group comes up with possible reuses for the site based on community needs and wants, E<sup>2</sup> Inc. will produce a report describing the possible reuses. The group will have an opportunity to review and comment on the report before it is presented to EPA and the City of Berlin.

#### *Examples of Reuse Planning at Other Superfund Sites*

Mike Hancox, Matt Robbie, and John Podgurski reviewed examples of reuse planning processes at other Superfund Sites. Brief snapshots of the sites highlighted are included below, as well as a summary of the group's discussion.

##### H.O.D. Landfill in Antioch, Illinois

- 120-acre landfill area
- Site reuses include a methane co-generation plant, soccer fields, softball fields, a field hockey court, and an environmental education area
- Site reuse required extensive coordination among community members and site stakeholders
- Liability concerns addressed through stakeholder agreements and by expanding insurance policy options

##### Eastland Woolen Mill in Corinna, Maine

- 21-acre former textile mill
- Close community coordination and partnership building were two key elements in the site's reuse planning process
- Community committee developed a mixed-use plan for the site and downtown
- New uses at the site and downtown include a senior housing complex, a restaurant, and a general store

##### Camilla Wood Preserving in Camilla, Georgia

- 40-acre former wood preserving facility
- A local fire chief wanted a fire training facility put on the site
- The site was located in a residential area and residents did not want the fire training facility

- The reuse plan was created with the majority of the site being park and a small portion a fire training facility
- The final iteration of the reuse plan only included a park as that is what the community really wanted and needed

### *Reuse Planning Discussion*

- Mr. Podgurski explained that the Eastland Woolen Mill reuse planning process is similar to that of Chlor-Alkali's, because Corinna is a small town that was dominated by the mill. The mill's closing was devastating to the community, and the revitalization of the community that has occurred after the site's cleanup has really transformed the town. Conclusions about exactly what is possible at the Chlor-Alkali site cannot be drawn from this example, however the Eastland Woolen Mills site had EPA funding for reuse planning and there was very good coordination among the community and state and local governments. The outcomes seem to have been positive for all parties involved.
- One RPC member asked if the Eastland Woolen Mill site was a paper mill. EPA staff, consultant team staff, and RPC members responded that it was a textile mill. EPA staff clarified that the contaminants were likely different from those at the Chlor-Alkali site, but that they were not major determinants in the successful remediation and reuse of the Eastland Woolen Mill site.
- Some RPC members would have liked examples of other mercury contaminated sites to be encouraged by their reuses. EPA staff pointed out that every site is different and many factors are involved in determining the site remedy. The type of contaminant does not necessarily dictate the type of future land uses that are possible. One RPC member asked if any mercury contaminated sites had been cleaned up by EPA. An EPA staff member responded that he knew of at least one mercury cleanup at a Superfund site in Maine.
- The group discussed the challenges of considering reuse without having some idea of the potential remedy. Several members were reluctant to generate ideas without having all of the information available. Consultant team members urged the group to use the opportunity to brainstorm uses that seem realistic based on community information and community needs. Several committee members suggested that the group should take a step back and brainstorm without considering all of the possible constraints.

### **Discussion: General Reuse Goals for the Chlor-Alkali Site**

The committee discussed reuse opportunities for the Chlor-Alkali site that built upon the City's heritage, the Androscoggin River's role as a vital resource, and commercial opportunities that would take advantage of energy generated near the site.

A number of general points were made regarding reuse goals and considerations:

- The ideas that come out of this group will be used in EPA's remedy decision process. The RPC may develop several reuse scenarios to deliver to EPA.

- The ideal reuse will take into account what is best for the community and add value to the surrounding land.

There were several specific reuse ideas which are described in detail below.

### *Heritage and Cultural Opportunities*

#### Heritage Trails

- One idea was to connect the Chlor-Alkali site to the Northern Forest Heritage Park. A heritage trail has been mapped out from Northern Forest Heritage Park to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and from Horne Field to the Chlor-Alkali site. The path would include heritage education opportunities as well as a sustainable forestry demonstration project. Right of way and easements would need to be negotiated on private property in order for this path to be constructed.
- The site could be part of a tourism plan that features sleigh rides and horseback riding on trails along the river.

#### Industrial Heritage Exhibit

- Part of the site's reuse could include an exhibit about historic industrial activities in Berlin. An exhibit could help tell the story of the paper mill industry and the process that led to the site's contamination.

#### Festival Venue

- The Northern Forest Heritage Park hosts small events such as lumber jack competitions, but it does not have enough space to host larger festivals. Because the Chlor-Alkali site is in close proximity, it could provide additional space for larger events.

An additional point when considering heritage and cultural reuse options is that in 1994 the City of Berlin evaluated the heritage assets of the area. The heritage plans that resulted from this effort could not be implemented due to inadequate funding, but many good ideas came out of the evaluation. The report summarizing the major findings could be a good resource for the committee. Northern Forest Heritage Park owns the findings of the reports, and the board's permission would be needed before the document can be made available to the group.

### *Recreation Opportunities*

#### Wildlife and Environmental Education

- A wildlife viewing platform along the Androscoggin River could be part of a network of recreation trails.
- A sustainable forestry demonstration project on or near the site could be part of a network of trails.

#### Trails

- Recreation trails along the river could provide opportunities for biking, snowmobiling, hiking, ATV use, and cross-country skiing.

### Whitewater Park

- One of the RPC members operates a rafting company. He suggested that the stretch of the Androscoggin running through Berlin could be a great white water park. The group discussed how white water parks had been used in other communities. Boat rental and festivals could help generate income and revenue for the community.
- Several concerns were raised about whitewater use and the operation of dams. The precise location for a white water park would likely require close coordination among power companies and potential white water users.
- Regardless of the river's potential for use as a whitewater park, many of the RPC members talked about the scenic value of the Berlin Falls. The stretch of river from the Sawmill Dam to the Cascade Dam is a hidden scenic asset.

### River Access for Upstream Flat Water Boating

- The stretch of flat water upstream from the Sawmill Dam at the northern edge of the site could easily become a rafting and boating attraction. The site could potentially help support flat water boating on this stretch of river.

### Other Recreational Activities

- Athletic Fields: Several parks are already located along the river, but the site is flat and potentially suitable for ball fields or other athletic fields.
- Skateboard Park/BMX Park: Kids need a variety of places to skateboard in the community, and a skateboard or BMX park could potentially provide another recreational attraction capable of bringing in revenue from competitions.
- Recreation Center and Swimming Pool: Berlin used to have a YMCA, but it no longer exists. A swimming pool and indoor recreation center might work well at the site.
- Hockey Rink: Notre Dame Arena is the only local venue, and it is difficult to get ice time.

### *Residential Opportunities*

- Scenic views could make the site desirable for condominiums or senior housing.

### *Commercial Opportunities*

- A multi-story office building would take advantage of views.
- Many communities are using breweries to generate income, attract tourists, and serve thirsty people. There are thirsty people in Berlin, and the river would make a nice place for a brew pub. Another selling point for a restaurant or pub could be electricity generated from dams or other nearby power sources.

### *Energy Opportunities*

### Transmission Substation

- Several participants mentioned that the proposed biomass plant is likely something the group will need to consider.
- One member suggested that perhaps additional surrounding property would be needed to allow for the transmission of electricity generated at the plant.
- Perhaps the site could support a substation.

- Some RPC members would like to see the river celebrated and think that a substation could or should be located elsewhere.
- There is a possibility that if the biomass facility is installed on the surrounding property that power lines would pass over the Chlor-Alkali site.

### Biomass Cogeneration

- The group discussed that with cogeneration capacity, a biomass plant could generate heat and electricity that could stay in the community. Reducing transmission lines and using electricity and heat locally would be desirable.
- One RPC member suggested that a biosphere at the site could be heated with waste heat from the biomass plant.
- The site could also be desirable for other facilities that would use waste heat from the plant.

### *Other Considerations:*

- Coos County is conducting an economic study to identify new directions after the closing of mills in Berlin and Groveton. Roger Brooks, from Destination Development, Inc., will be working with Berlin and Coos County to help develop a marketing strategy and brand for the North Country. Both of these economic revitalization efforts could provide valuable information for the RPC.

### **Next Steps**

There will be three additional meetings for the Reuse Planning Committee as follows:

#### 1) **March 5, 2008**

##### **Master Planning Process: Downtown Berlin Visioning Session**

- Committee members are encouraged to attend the downtown visioning session which will help to clarify a larger vision for the area surrounding the site.
- Committee members can add value to this process by listening to other ideas and bringing them back to future reuse planning discussions.
- Consultant team and EPA staff will attend the meeting.
- E<sup>2</sup> Inc. staff will facilitate a conference call with the RPC after the March 5, 2008 visioning session to discuss what committee members heard from the broader community and to identify potential implications for the Chlor-Alkali site.

#### 2) **April 29, 2008**

##### **Third RPC Meeting**

- At the third RPC meeting, the consultant team will present a series of maps illustrating the potential reuse alternatives for the site.
- The reuse alternatives will combine ideas generated by this group, as well as the results of the March 5, 2008 visioning session.
- The maps will serve as points of discussion for the group.

#### 3) **May or June, 2008**

##### **Fourth RPC Meeting**



- The fourth and final meeting of the RPC will focus on refining a reuse plan for the site and developing an implementation strategy or road map for steering the site toward reuse.

If RPC members have any project-related questions, please contact project consultant team member Matt Robbie at (802) 540-0243 or [mrobbie@e2inc.com](mailto:mrobbie@e2inc.com).