

John P. Cahill
Acting Commissioner

April 7, 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: Staff Involved With Contaminated Sediment Remediation

FROM: Gerald A. Barnhart, Acting Director Division of Fish, Wildlife and
Marine Resources

SUBJECT: Supplemental Guidance for Using Sediment Criteria at Inactive
Hazardous Waste Sites


In November 1993, the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Marine Resources jointly prepared the *Technical Guidance for Screening Contaminated Sediments*. The purpose of this document is to establish criteria for identifying sediments with concentrations of contaminants that could potentially be harmful to aquatic organisms as well as wildlife and people that consume aquatic organisms.

Some PRP's (Potentially Responsible Parties) involved with inactive hazardous waste sites in New York have expressed the concern that the sediment criteria are being perceived as cleanup standards. The sediment criteria are not cleanup standards. The sediment criteria represent the Division's best reasonable estimate of contaminant levels below which significant adverse impacts are not expected. To avoid any misunderstanding, I am issuing this supplemental guidance regarding how the sediment criteria should be used when evaluating the need for remediating inactive hazardous waste sites.

The sediment criteria document identifies four areas of potential risk from contaminated sediment: to human health *through bioaccumulation*; to wildlife through bioaccumulation; to benthic life from chronic toxicity; and to benthic life from acute toxicity. If sediment criteria are exceeded, additional site-specific information may need to be gathered to determine the extent to which adverse impacts, if any, are occurring. The nature

If it is determined that unacceptable adverse impacts exist, remedial alternatives which mitigate those impacts should be developed and evaluated during the feasibility study. Such alternatives include, but are not limited to, treatment, removal, capping, and natural attenuation.

While the sediment criteria are not cleanup standards, there are instances when they can be recommended as cleanup levels (which are site-specific, enforceable numbers arrived at after an analysis of the alternatives in the feasibility study). Such instances may include situations where an analysis of site-specific conditions and/or data indicates that removal to sediment criteria is the best practicable remedy to mitigate unacceptable adverse impacts.



Acting Director
Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

cc: F. Dunstan
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