



Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas

Exposure During Outdoor Activities

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) conducted a public health assessment (PHA) to evaluate possible exposure to chemicals and other hazards at places used for outdoor activities at the Torch Lake Superfund Site and surrounding areas. The PHA found that:

- levels of chemicals (such as arsenic, lead, and copper) varied widely, ranging from very low to higher than levels considered safe; *however*,
- there were not enough samples to determine if average chemical levels that people might be exposed to could harm people's health.

Additional information is needed.

Outdoor activities at the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas

Outdoor activities include, but are not limited to, swimming, wading, fishing, walking along the shoreline, and playing on beaches. Some areas that are commonly used for recreational activities along the western shore of Torch Lake are former mining-related sites, municipal or industrial/mining waste dumpsites, and stampsands disposal sites. People, especially children, using these areas may accidentally swallow small amounts of soil, sediment, or water with chemical levels that may be high enough to harm people's health.

Adults and children can reduce their exposure to chemicals by:

- washing their hands before eating,
- not digging deep holes in the sand or sediment, especially in stampsand areas, and
- avoiding soil, sediment, or water that looks unusual or abnormal.

Bright blue, pink, and yellow/brown soil and sediment were removed at the Lake Linden Village Park in 2007. Because of low water levels, more might be seen in Lake Linden or other areas.

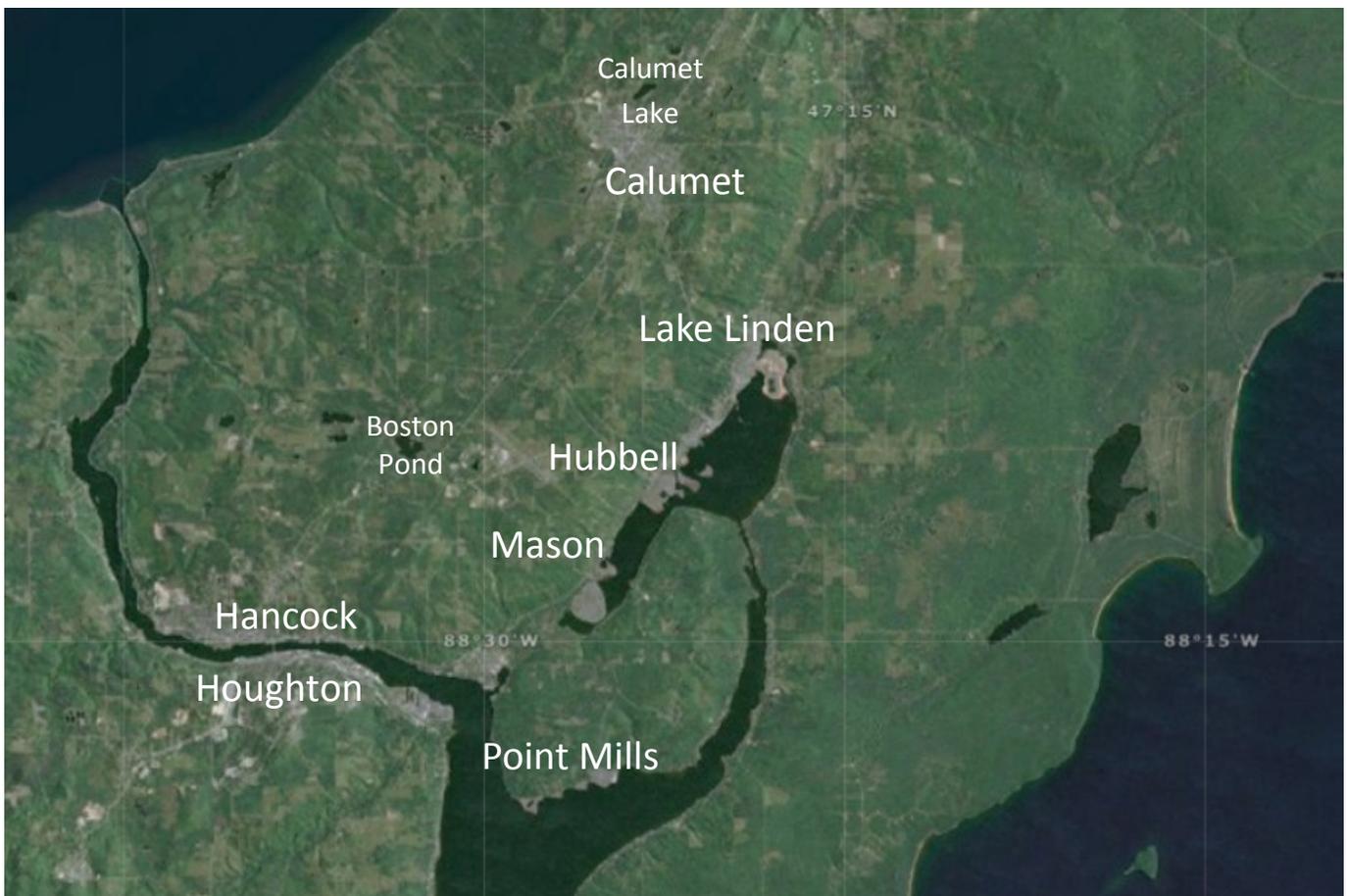
Contact the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department (906-482-7382), Department of Environmental Quality (Bob Delaney, Superfund Project Manager, 517-373-7406 or the Calumet Field Office at 906-337-0389), or the local officials if you see soil, sediment, or water that looks unusual or abnormal.

What is the Torch Lake Superfund Site and its surrounding areas?

The Torch Lake Superfund Site is located in Houghton County in the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The Torch Lake Superfund Site is a large, complex site dealing mostly with stampsands left behind from historical copper mining activities.

The Site and its surrounding areas include, but are not limited to, Lake Linden, Hubbell/Tamarack City, Mason, Point Mills, Isle-Royale sands, Boston Pond, and Calumet Lake. Historical copper mining and reclamation activities occurred throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula. People may run into the remains from these activities in many locations.

Map of the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas



For more information

To learn more about the Torch Lake Superfund Site and the surrounding area, contact MDCH at **1-800-648-6942** or visit www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics and look for the *Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas* link under the *Health Assessments and Related Document* tab.

*Michigan Department
of Community Health*

