

# Public Health Assessments for the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Area

Michigan Department of Community Health

May 15, 2013

# Housekeeping

- Introductions
  - Agencies
  - Government officials
- Meeting ground rules
  - Presentations
  - Questions and comments – comment cards

# Meeting Outline

- Public Health Assessment process
- MDCH and Torch Lake area
- Released last year – now final
  - Physical hazards
  - Drinking water
- Currently out for public comment:
  - Outdoor (recreational) exposure
  - Breathing airborne stamp sands
- Next steps
- Questions/comments

# Public Health Assessment process

- Superfund and ATSDR – congressional mandate
- Steps of assessment:
  - Evaluate data (soil, water, air, other)
  - Exposure? Health effects likely?
  - Conclusions / recommendations
  - Reports, other products
  - Involve communities

# MDCH and Torch Lake area

- Previous involvement
  - See [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics) under “Health Assessments and Related Documents”
- Current work
  - Suggested in “Torch Lake Area Assessment” report
  - Requested by MDEQ-Superfund and WUPHD
- Future work?
  - Other former copper-mining related sites
  - “MDCH will remain available....”

# Released last year – now final

- Physical hazards
- Drinking water
- Responded to comments & questions in the reports
  - Final documents available:
    - [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics) under “Health Assessments and Related links”
    - By mail (call 1-800-648-6942)
    - Lake Linden/Hubbell Public Library and Portage Lake District Library

# Physical Hazards

- Physical hazards are present and accessible
- Public safety should come first
- Address hazards based on desired use of property (residential, industrial, recreational, or other)



# Drinking Water

- Municipal wells did not have regulated or unregulated chemicals that would harm people's health
- Not enough information on private wells that may be installed or screened in stampsand
  - Contact WUPHD to discuss what testing may be needed



# Currently out for public comment

- Recreational (Outdoor) exposure
- Breathing airborne stamp sands
  
- Comments until June 24, 2013
  - Copies available:
    - [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics) under “Health Assessments and Related Documents”
    - Lake Linden/Hubbell Public Library and Portage Lake District Library
    - By mail (call 1-800-648-6942)

# Outdoor exposure

- Primarily at or near areas used for recreation
  - Superfund site
  - Area of Concern
  - Locations with former mining-related activities
- “Recreation” = swimming, wading, walking along the shore, playing on beaches, fishing, eating sport-caught fish

# Outdoor exposure - conclusions

- Levels of chemicals (such as arsenic, lead, and copper) varied widely
- Not enough information to determine if average chemical levels could harm people's health
  - How widespread are the higher chemical levels?

# Lake Linden Removal in 2007

- Bright blue, pink, and yellow/brown material

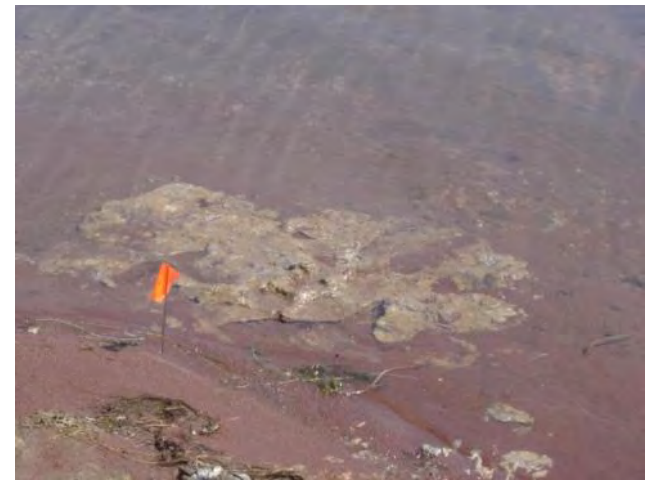


Area with arsenic-containing material

# Lake Linden Removal in 2007



Area with elevated lead



# Discolored material at Lake Linden in 2007



# Hubbell Beach



No water testing signs also posted.



# Mason Sand Removal in 2008

- Material with arsenic and drums





# Reducing potential exposure

- Wash hands before eating
- Do not dig deep holes in the sand or sediment, especially in stumpsand areas
- Avoid soil, sediment, and water that looks unusual or abnormal
  - WUPHD: 906-482-7382
  - MDEQ: Bob Delaney, Superfund Project Manager (517-373-7406) or Calumet Field Office (906-337-0389)

# Fish consumption guidelines

- Torch Lake and Boston Pond fish
- Torch Lake northern pike, smallmouth bass, and walleye have guidelines due to mercury and PCBs

- Latest guidelines:

[www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish)



# Breathing airborne stampsands

- Evaluated:
  - Heavy truck use at Gay
  - ORV use at Gay
  - Street-sweeping in Calumet (Point Mills sands used for winter traction)
- But multiple areas / uses of stampsands
  - report does not cover all possibilities

# Breathing airborne stampsands – conclusions

- Dust at Gay NOT expected to cause harm
- Not enough information for conclusion about dust in Calumet



# Breathing airborne stampsands – estimating air concentrations

- Air dispersion modeling
- Effects of wind
  - Wind speed, size of stampsand grains
  - Amount of vegetation
- Effects of vehicle traffic
  - Weight and speed of vehicles
  - Paved or unpaved road
  - Frequency and length of trip
  - Moisture and silt content of stampsands
- Concentrations of metals in stampsands

# Breathing airborne stamp sands - recommendations

- Air concentration estimation process could be used for other areas
- “Activity-based sampling” might provide stronger data

## Activity-based Sampling



[www.epaossc.org](http://www.epaossc.org) –  
Quincy Smelter

# Next steps

- Public comment until June 24, 2013
  - [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics) under "Health Assessments and Related Documents"
  - Lake Linden/Hubbell Public Library, Portage Lake District Library
  - By mail (call 1-800-648-6942)
- Edit and finalize documents
  - Include comments received, responses
  - Add/correct information as necessary
  - Reviewed by ATSDR
  - Timing? Announced in media



# Questions/comments

- Thank you for your time and input!
- Contact us:
  - Christina Bush [bushc6@michigan.gov](mailto:bushc6@michigan.gov)
  - Jennifer Gray [grayj@michigan.gov](mailto:grayj@michigan.gov)