

FACT SHEET

HUDSON RIVER

Groundwater Injury Determination



Chemicals From GE's Facilities Contaminated Groundwater

The General Electric Company (GE) released hazardous substances, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), to the soil, surface water, and groundwater at their Fort Edward and Hudson Falls manufacturing facilities. These hazardous substances have caused repeated and prolonged exceedances of New York State groundwater standards in Hudson Falls, Fort Edward, and Stillwater New York.

In Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, PCBs and VOCs reached the groundwater from decades of spills and leaks in the delivery, use, transfer, and storage processes at GE's facilities. Concentrations of these hazardous substances in Ft. Edward and Hudson Falls, as measured in sampling wells, have been thousands of times higher than New York's groundwater standards.

In Stillwater, contamination occurred because well field is less than 500 feet from the Hudson River and they hydraulically connect. Historically, river water contaminated with PCBs flowed through this well field and PCBs bound to the aquifer soils. The PCB-contaminated aquifer soils currently contribute the majority of PCBs to groundwater in the well field.

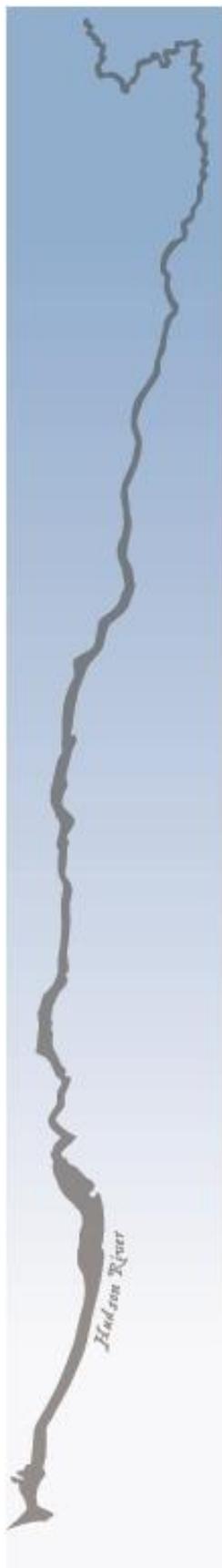
Trustees Issued a Groundwater Injury Determination Report, Confirming this Groundwater Contamination is an Injury to Natural Resources.

The Trustees have determined that an injury to groundwater occurred in the municipalities of Hudson Falls, Fort Edward, and Stillwater, NY. Groundwater is an important natural resource that provides significant economic and ecological services to the public, yet contamination limits the use of this resource.

Groundwater in the vicinity of the Hudson Falls and Fort Edward plant sites has exceeded the groundwater standards (0.09 ppb for PCBs and 5 ppb for most VOCs) for over 20 years. The Village of Stillwater well field has exceeded the groundwater standard for PCBs since at least 2008. With this report, Trustees confirm this groundwater contamination is an injury to natural resources.

Groundwater Injury Determination Report Will Inform the Restoration Process.

The Trustees' Groundwater Injury Determination report is a component of a broader investigation carried out by three governmental agencies: the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



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These agencies, which act on the public's behalf as trustees of the Hudson River's natural resources, are conducting a "natural resource damages assessment" to determine how GE's releases of PCBs and VOCs have injured the Hudson's natural resources. The Trustees will evaluate how to restore resources (such as groundwater) and the services they provide, by, for example, seeking to protect the areas that naturally filter groundwater, or making improvements to drinking water infrastructure.

Fast Facts on Groundwater Contamination

- Groundwater is not being used as a municipal drinking water supply in Hudson Falls, Fort Edward, or Stillwater. Fort Edward and Hudson Falls have not used groundwater as drinking water sources since the late 1980s, and the Stillwater well field has not been in use since 2011. The New York State Department of Health monitors municipal water supplies for chemical contamination and offers water testing for private well owners.
- PCBs are classified as human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and are classified as endocrine disrupting chemicals, causing reproductive toxicity and thyroid toxicity, by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. VOCs are a class of industrial chemicals that evaporate at low temperatures and cause a variety of adverse effects in humans, wildlife, and other natural resources.
- Recent sampling has confirmed the general location, movement, and concentrations of contaminated groundwater at the Fort Edward plant site. Twelve sampling wells that had previously not detected PCBs through the late 1990s exceeded the New York State groundwater standard in 2011.

Learn More about the Hudson River

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To join the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment electronic mailing list:
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