

## GE's responsibility for PCBs isn't over

By Kathryn Jahn and Thomas Brosnan, Commentary  
Updated 11:49 am, Monday, April 21, 2014

General Electric's [recent op-ed](#) in response to the [Times Union's](#) "Dredging up the Truth" article claims "the long debate over what to do about PCBs in the Hudson River ended 12 years ago." To the contrary, this issue is far from over.

Under federal Superfund law, GE is not only responsible for the remediation — cleanup — of the PCB contamination, the company is also responsible for the restoration of the natural resources harmed by PCBs. GE must deal with both these responsibilities.

Even after the current dredging and habitat reconstruction work, [PCBs will remain](#) in the Hudson River and continue to harm natural resources. An ongoing Environmental Protection Agency investigation of PCB-contaminated floodplains will determine a cleanup plan for the floodplains, but a decision is likely years off.

Further, the dredging and habitat reconstruction work under way by GE does not resolve GE's responsibility to restore natural resources harmed by PCBs. PCBs present a serious and long-term [threat to the health of the entire Hudson River ecosystem](#). Through the natural resource damage assessment ([NRDA](#)) process, the federal and state natural resource trustees [the United States Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the New York state Department of Environmental Conservation] are measuring the harm caused by GE's PCB contamination.

The trustees have documented injuries to [waterfowl](#), [fish](#), and [surface water](#) and continue to measure injury to other natural resources of the Hudson River. [Fish consumption advisories](#) are one example where PCB contamination has taken away the opportunity for people to fully appreciate and experience the natural resources and associated economic benefits of this great river.

The Superfund law makes responsible parties liable for the restoration of injured natural resources. The public is owed compensation so that the Hudson River can be restored, fish and wildlife can thrive, and current and future generations can more fully enjoy the river.

The trustees continue to invite GE to join with us to restore the river and echo the sentiments of the [Times Union Editorial Board](#): "GE says this is all in the past. To the contrary, it is about the here and now, and about the future."

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