

**SEPTEMBER 2026**

**REGION 2**

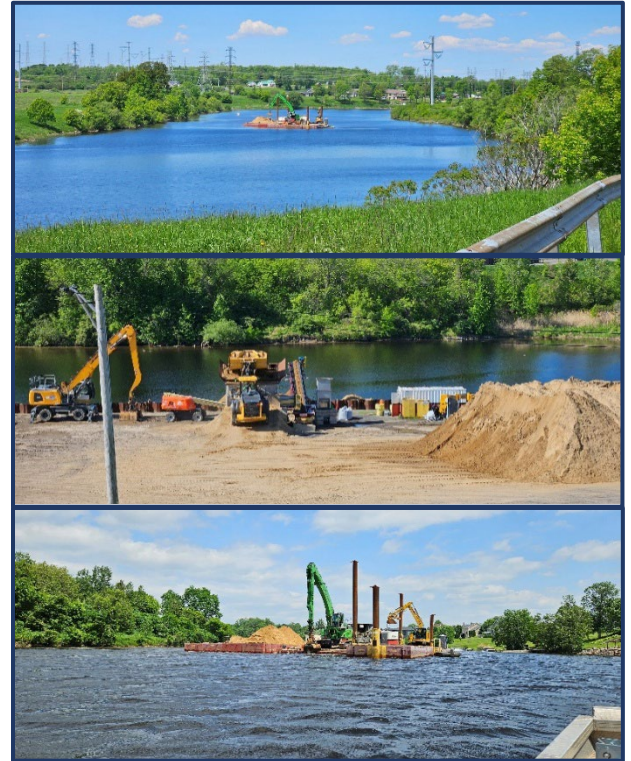
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency updated the 2013 cleanup plan for the Alcoa Aggregate Superfund site, commonly known as the Grasse River site.

The updates to the cleanup plan explain how Arconic Inc., under EPA oversight, has already repaired the cap located on the river bottom and how ongoing monitoring will continue to ensure the cap is protecting people's health and the environment. EPA signed an Explanation of Significant Differences, or ESD, to document these updates in September 2026.

## Why Changes Were Needed

Between 2022 and 2025, three weather events damaged small portions of the sand and gravel cap that Arconic, Inc. placed over sections of the river bottom to isolate contamination from the surrounding environment.

Arconic Inc. made initial cap repairs in 2022 and 2024 and completed the remaining cap repairs in 2025. EPA, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe conducted oversight of the work.



*Images of cap repair work*

*During the repair work, contractors placed sand and activated carbon over sections of the river bottom. In some areas they used more erosion resistant materials – sandy gravel – as the top layer.*

## What is an ESD?

An ESD is required when there are significant changes to a previously selected cleanup plan that does not fundamentally alter the overall cleanup approach. In this case, an ESD was not required but EPA prepared one to document the completed cap repair work as part of EPA's ongoing efforts to ensure that the cleanup plan EPA selected continues to protect people's health and the environment.



**Polychlorinated biphenyls**, or PCBs, are a mixture of individual chemicals which are no longer produced in the United States but are still found in the environment. Health effects include acne-like skin conditions in adults and neurobehavioral and immunological changes in children. For more information, visit: [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf)

## Tracking the River's Recovery

---

The cleanup plan requires long-term monitoring to track the recovery of the river over time and to make sure that the cleanup activities continue to protect people's health and the environment.

The monitoring program includes:

- Water sampling to test river water for PCBs.
- Fish sampling to evaluate PCB concentrations in fish (smallmouth bass, brown bullhead, common carp, and spottail shiner).
- Monitoring the cap by conducting bathymetric surveys to measure any changes in the river bottom.

In addition, the cleanup plan included restoring the river habitats impacted by the cleanup work. Habitat reconstruction activities included planting vegetation along the shoreline and in shallow water areas, and placing habitat features on the river bottom like a mass of tree roots, commonly called root wads. These features are intended to help stabilize the riverbank and enhance fish habitat. The monitoring plan includes periodic inspections to evaluate the condition of these habitat plantings and features.

## Fish Advisories

---

The New York State Department of Health, or NYSDOH, has a fish advisory in place for the lower Grasse River. The New York State advisory is DO NOT EAT fish between the Grasse River mouth and Massena Power Canal. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Environment Division also has a brochure available that provides the risks and benefits to eating locally caught fish.

- NYSDOH information: [St. Lawrence Valley Region: Health Advice on Eating Fish You Catch](#)
- Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe information: [Akwesasne Family Guide to Eating Locally Caught Fish](#)

## About the Grasse River Site

---

Arconic Inc. (formerly named Alcoa Inc.) owned and operated an aluminum product manufacturing facility in the town of Massena, New York, since 1903. In connection with its past operations at the facility, Alcoa released hazardous substances, including PCBs, onto the facility property as well as into the Grasse River through four industrial outfalls. As a result of these discharges, sediment in the river system surrounding the Alcoa manufacturing facility, known as Alcoa West, and approximately seven miles downstream became contaminated.

Arconic Inc. is the potentially responsible party, or PRP, for the site. PRPs are individuals or companies that may have owned or operated the site; generated waste that was disposed of or released on the site; or may, in some way be responsible for causing or contributing to the contamination. Under the Superfund law, EPA has the authority to make the parties responsible for hazardous waste contamination perform (under EPA oversight) or pay for cleanups rather than using public funds.

To address river sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, Arconic, Inc. removed approximately 109,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment from near shore areas along a 7.2-mile stretch of the lower Grasse River and capped over 284 acres of contaminated sediment in the river's main channel.

EPA issued its first ESD for the Superfund site in 2020 which added dredging in the Snug Harbor area to the project. EPA determined that Arconic needed to conduct additional dredging in a small embayment located on the north shore of the river to accommodate a new, larger tugboat that was purchased by the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, which operates its tugboat out of Snug Harbor.

**ALCOA AGGREGATION (AKA GRASSE RIVER)  
SUPERFUND SITE  
MASSENA, NEW YORK**



**SEPTEMBER 2026**

**REGION 2**

## EPA Contact Information

---

**Kelly Gaffney**  
**Remedial Project Manager**  
(212) 637-4277  
[gaffney.kelly@epa.gov](mailto:gaffney.kelly@epa.gov)

**Larisa Romanowski**  
**Public Affairs Specialist**  
(518) 407-0400  
[romanowski.larisa@epa.gov](mailto:romanowski.larisa@epa.gov)

---

[www.epa.gov/superfund/alcoa-aggregate](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/alcoa-aggregate)  
[www.facebook.com/EPANortheastAndCaribbean](https://www.facebook.com/EPANortheastAndCaribbean)  
[www.x.com/eparegion2](https://www.x.com/eparegion2)

---

