

AK Steel's Cleanup of Monroe Ditch and Dicks Creek, Middletown, Ohio

Site Description: Dicks Creek and its Monroe Ditch tributary, which ultimately flow into the Great Miami River, are located along the southern border of Middletown, Ohio.

Background: The creek was once a popular spot where adults and children fished and swam. AK Steel produces flat-rolled carbon, stainless and electrical steel products, and carbon and stainless tubular steel products for the automotive, appliance, construction, and manufacturing markets.



Figure 1: Posted sign, Dicks Creek

In 1997, EPA inspectors found PCBs leaking into Dicks Creek from a holding pond at AK Steel's Middletown Works, and Ohio inspectors detected PCBs at a concentration of 2.702 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (ppb) in surface water; Ohio's water quality standard for PCBs in surface water is 0.00079 $\mu\text{g/L}$.

In 2000, the U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, and two citizens' groups sued the steelmaker for violation of the federal Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and RCRA, along with Ohio environmental regulations. The lawsuit charged that AK Steel had for years illegally discharged PCBs into Dicks Creek, which is part of the Mississippi River watershed. The lawsuit was settled in 2006 when AK Steel entered into a Consent Decree with EPA.

Cleanup: The cleanup of PCBs from Dicks Creek was coordinated between the RCRA Corrective Action and TSCA PCB programs. AK Steel agreed to meet the cleanup requirements in three phases. In the first phase of remediation, AK Steel collected and analyzed soil samples according to an EPA-approved TSCA PCB cleanup plan; in the second phase it disposed of soil with high levels of PCBs and restored the area with clean soil, gravel, and native vegetation along the creek. It is estimated that AK Steel spent more than \$17 million in remediation work.