

Advice on Use of the Lower Grasse River

Near Remedial Activities

If you see dredging equipment in use:



NO FISHING



NO SWIMMING



NO BOATING

Away from Remedial Activities

If you choose to swim or recreate in the river:

Practice Catch



& Release



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Recreation Advice for the Lower Grasse River during Dredging and Capping

Avoid areas in the Lower Grasse River with dredging and capping operations and project-related vessels and boat traffic.

Dredging in areas of the Lower Grasse River is ongoing as part of the federal Superfund cleanup. The full project area includes a 7.2 mile stretch of the Lower Grasse River that extends from the Massena Power Canal to the St. Lawrence River.

Some limited dredging began in 2017 to construct the Route 131 Staging Area. Once the full remedial design is finalized, the next areas of activity will include dredging in the shallow near shore areas, and capping in the main channel in areas deeper than about 5 feet of water. These areas can be identified by the large vessels and equipment used. Find more information about the project at www.thegrasseriver.com

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) always advises that people swim at a regulated beach because these are monitored and closed for swimming when needed based on health and safety concerns. People who choose to recreate in the Lower Grasse River should follow health and safety advice below:

Don't swim in active dredge areas

Avoid swimming near or immediately downstream of any active dredging, capping and project-related vessels. People shouldn't swim, boat or recreate in these areas because of safety concerns from boat traffic and operating equipment. PCB levels in the river water might also be higher in areas where dredging, capping and debris removal equipment are operating.

Avoid vessel traffic areas

As dredging continues, large vessels will be moving between the dredge areas and the Route 131 Staging Area. Avoid swimming, boating and recreating near project-related traffic because visibility, water turbulence and other issues present significant safety concerns.

Follow advice for fishing and boating

Anglers should practice catch and release fishing and not eat fish they catch between the mouth of the Grasse River and the Massena Power Canal (see www.health.ny.gov/fish/sf). Recreational anglers, boaters and jet skiers should avoid activities near dredge and project-related areas due to equipment and safety concerns.



General Swimming Advice

DOH always advises that people swim at a regulated beach because these are monitored for safety and health and are posted for closures or swimming advisories. However, this general advice is provided for people who choose to go in the water outside of regulated beaches:

Avoid swimming in cloudy or discolored water as it may contain microorganisms such as bacteria, parasites and blue-green algae that can make people sick and affect a person's ability to see underwater hazards.

Don't swallow water and consider keeping your face and head out of the water when swimming.

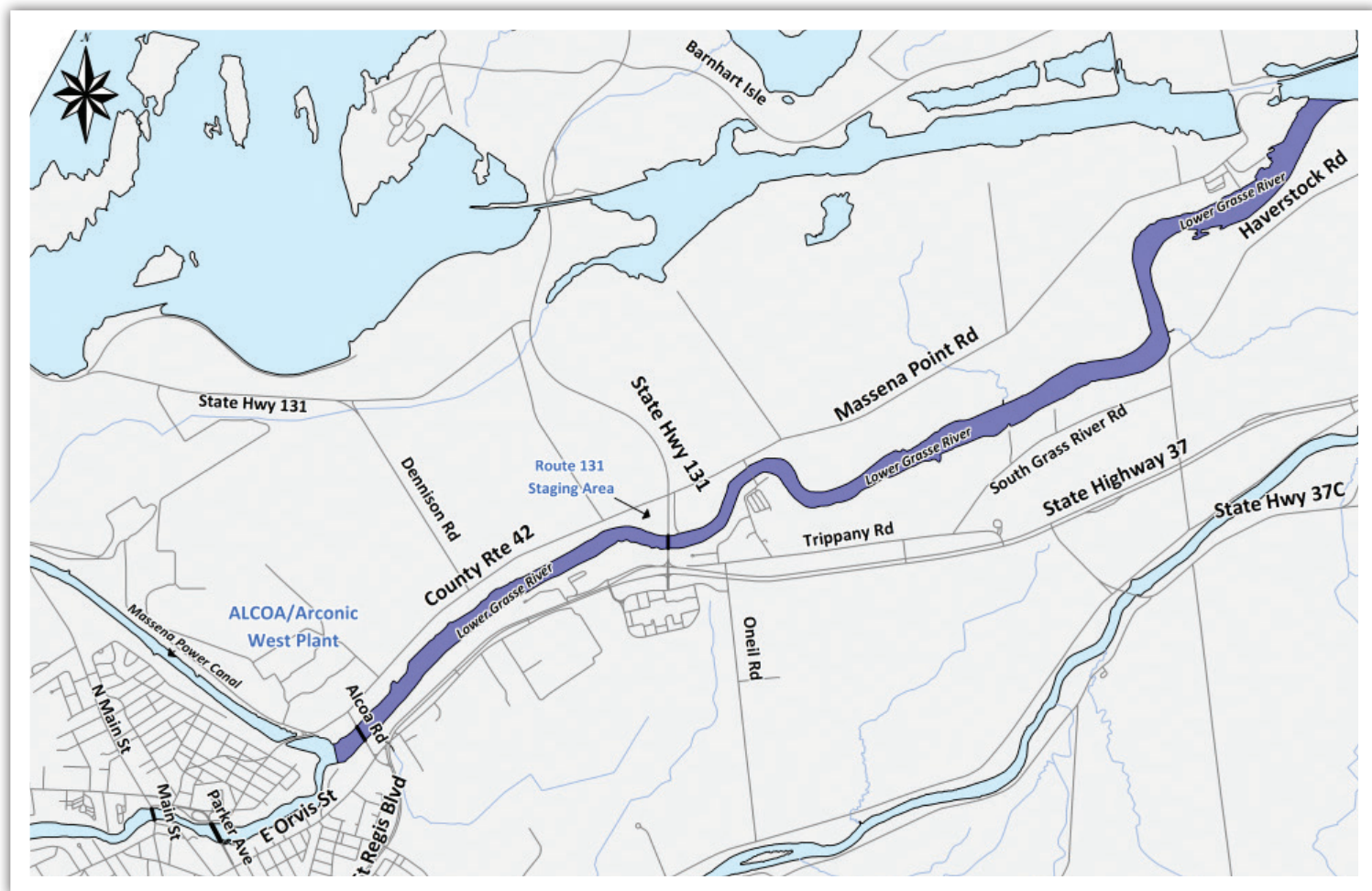
This reduces exposure to any microorganisms and chemicals that might be in the water from entering the body by swallowing, and through eyes, ears and nose.

Wash your hands after swimming, especially before eating, and shower when you are done swimming for the day to wash off river water and dirt.

Take extra precautions near any dams or large watercraft because they can create undertows and dangerous currents. Never cross safety wires and other water hazard markers when recreating near dams.

Following these recommendations can help to reduce your exposure to microorganisms, chemicals and hazards while in the water.

Map of the Lower Grasse River Project Area



About PCBs in the Lower Grasse River

PCBs are present in the Lower Grasse River sediment and water. During dredging and capping, PCB levels are expected to increase in the river near remedial areas.

Arconic, which assumed responsibility for the Lower Grasse River remediation project, is required to monitor the water for PCBs during the project and compare results to a level established by the USEPA to control resuspension of PCBs in river water during dredging. If ongoing monitoring detects that PCB levels are above this control level, operations will be evaluated and may be modified to protect water quality.

The control level for PCBs is designed to protect public water supplies that may be influenced by the Lower Grasse River water. The closest public water intakes are on the St. Lawrence River and are monitored regularly to make sure that they continue to meet drinking water quality standards.

