



Congaree River Sediment Cleanup

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has confirmed the presence of a tar-like material (TLM) in the sediments and soils of the Congaree River between the Gervais and Blossom Street bridges. The source of the TLM was determined to be from discharges of coal tar from a former manufactured gas plant (MGP) originally located between Huger, Hampton, and Williams Streets and owned by SCE&G (now Dominion Energy). This MGP operated from 1906 until the mid-1950s. DHEC has been overseeing the investigation and assessment of TLM in the river since June 2010.

DHEC has evaluated potential cleanup alternatives and has identified four viable options to address the TLM in the Congaree River. After pursuing both a full-scale removal approach and a sediment capping approach, DHEC, SCE&G, the Congaree Riverkeeper, riverbank property owner representatives, the City of Columbia, and the SC Governor's Office have worked cooperatively to develop a Modified Removal Action. The Modified Removal Action would require the construction of two cofferdams to allow for the removal of TLM-impacted sediment in areas of the river that are most recreated, areas where there is the most potential for exposure, and where the majority of TLM exists in the river.

The Modified Removal Action is proposed to take place in two areas (see map on back). Area 1 is located just downstream of the Gervais Street bridge on the Columbia side of the river and is approximately 2.6 acres. Area 2 is slightly downstream from Area 1 and is approximately 0.5 acres in size. Successful completion of the proposed Modified Removal Action is expected to remove approximately 73% of the total TLM from the Congaree River. At a public meeting held on April 2, 2019, DHEC, SCE&G (now Dominion Energy), and the Congaree Riverkeeper presented a Conceptual Plan for the Modified Removal Action to accept public input on the plan.

The proposed Modified Removal Action will require regulatory permits and approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), DHEC, the SC Department of Natural Resources, the Federal Emergency Management Agency local floodplain coordinators, the City of Columbia, and other related state and local authorities. On September 19, 2020, Dominion Energy submitted an application to USACOE requesting a permit to construct the cofferdams and conduct the removal of the TLM in the Congaree River.

DHEC will hold a virtual community meeting on November 17, 2020 at 6:30pm to discuss the cleanup of tar-like material located downstream of the Gervais Street bridge in the Congaree River. At this meeting, DHEC will provide additional details of the preferred cleanup method and outline next steps for the project. DHEC staff will be available to answer questions. Anyone who plans to join the public meeting should complete the registration form on our webpage. To register and view additional information, please visit the website at:

www.scdhec.gov/CongareeRiver

DHEC will accept comments on the cleanup alternatives through January 18, 2021. For more information, please contact Lucas Berresford at 803-898-0747.

