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Danbury Landfill Culprit in PCBs

Danbury landfill appears to be the likely source of PCB pollution in the Still River according to findings released this week by the Housatonic Valley Association. The sediment samples which were taken in three locations in the Still River showed the following results:

Danbury approx. ¼ miles south —0; (upstream) of the landfill. Danbury near I 84 — 24 ppm; Brookfield near Rt. 133 — 20 ppm.

The tests were conducted as part of the efforts which the Housatonic Valley Association has been making to track down the source of PCB's in the Housatonic River. Sediment samples taken by the U.S. Geological Survey between 1972 and 1974 showed sediment levels in Lake Lillinonah higher than levels near the Massachusetts state line, where General Electric was discharging the chemical into the river in Pittsfield. This information prompted the Association to begin sampling the streams which feed the Housatonic north of Lake Lillinonah. The results showed the high levels downstream of the Danbury landfill and nothing upstream. No PCB was found in the stream which runs through the old McNulty, now SCA, landfill in New Milford.

The danger of PCB is that like DDT it can cause sterility in wildlife and health disorders in humans. Unlike DDT however it is not able to be broken down by natural processes. As far as is known whatever is put into the environment is there forever to accumulate in the food chain.

Although fish samples taken by the Housatonic Valley Association and the Lake Lillinonah Authority showed no PCB contamination of Housatonic River fish in Connecticut; samples of fish caught near Pittsfield, Mass. showed levels up to seven times what is recommended as safe for human consumption.

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