

Background

In June 2010, tar-like material (TLM) in the Congaree River was reported to DHEC. It was later found to have originated from a former Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) that was operated by predecessor companies of SCE&G from around 1906 until the 1950s. The MGP's coal tar waste was discharged into a former stream that led into the Congaree River downstream of the Gervais Street Bridge. Sediment samples were collected to determine the depth and extent of the TLM. Multiple cleanup methods have been evaluated by DHEC. A final cleanup method has not yet been selected.

February 2017 – DHEC held a public meeting to discuss the cleanup project and “capping” alternative.

December 2017 – DHEC met with SCE&G and primary stakeholders to discuss overcoming the challenges of removing TLM from the river. This collaborative approach targeted removing TLM from the most accessed areas of the river and where it is thickest.

May 2018 - The USACE indicated a permit may be achievable for a modified removal approach.

July & November 2018 - DHEC met with SCE&G, the Congaree Riverkeeper, property owners, City of Columbia, and SC Governor's Office to define the boundaries of a modified removal.

December 2018 - SCE&G submitted a Conceptual Plan for the modified removal. This plan was approved by DHEC and primary stakeholders as the preferred path forward in February 2019 (See Attached Figure 3). This plan addresses health and environmental concerns voiced by stakeholders, the local community, and other interested parties.

Modified Removal Action

The new cleanup approach includes removal of TLM-impacted sediment in the following areas of the river:

- Most accessed;
- Most potential for human exposure; and
- Where highest volume of TLM is located.

Two separate areas will be targeted, ultimately removing 70-75% of TLM. The work will occur in multiple phases and take several years to complete.

Congaree River Assessment

In response to concerns heard during DHEC's last public meeting, four surface water sampling events of the river have occurred since 2017. To date, no TLM-related contaminants have been detected. In June 2017, DHEC conducted an Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Bioassessment of the river. This study found a diverse and balanced community of invertebrates in the area. No adverse impacts from the TLM to the indigenous invertebrate fauna were found.

Stakeholder Roles

- **SCE&G** is responsible for the TLM and has been working with DHEC to develop a plan for cleanup.
- **DHEC** oversees SCE&G's cleanup activities.
- The **Congaree Riverkeeper** is a non-profit, grassroots organization that works to protect the Broad, Lower Saluda, and Congaree Rivers; and has been a primary stakeholder and advocate for removal of the TLM.
- The **US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** is responsible for reviewing the proposed activity to determine if a permit can be issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (placement of fill) and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (alteration in a navigable water).

Next Steps

SCE&G will apply for a USACE permit for the modified removal in the fall. **Once a permit decision is made by the USACE, DHEC will hold a public meeting to discuss the status of the project.**

For more information and updates visit our webpage at www.scdhec.gov/CongareeRiver. For questions, contact Greg Cassidy at (803) 898-0910 or cassidga@dhec.sc.gov.