

Work begins on Fox River dredging project

\$600 million cleanup of 13.3-mile stretch will be largest in U.S. history

By Harry Maier

hmaier@thebusinessnewsonline.com

Work is beginning on the infrastructure that will lead to the largest environmental dredging project ever undertaken in the United State.

The project will center on a 13.3-mile stretch of the Fox River beginning in the area of the Little Rapids dam north to the mouth of the river at Green Bay.

Serving as the consulting engineers for the project is Tetra Tech EC Inc., one of the operating units for the parent company of Tetra Tech Inc. based in Pasadena, Calif. The publicly-held company has reported annual revenues of \$1.4 billion with 9,000 employees located throughout the world. Outside of the United States, its

principal operations are in the Middle East and Europe.

Tetra Tech was awarded the engineering/construction contract in March. Construction on the 242,000 square foot processing plant began last May.

The project is expected to cost in the area of \$600 million and would be financed by three paper mills along the Fox River. Appleton paper, NCR and Georgia-Pacific and insurance companies.

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Project/More than 500 acres of river bottom to be dredged

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Prior to the start of dredging, scheduled to begin next May, Tetra Tech is constructing a processing plant along the Fox River at 1611 State St., just north of the Georgia-Pacific mill. The site consists of 23 acres and will be increased to 26 acres. More than 500 acres of river bottom will be dredged and pumped via eight-inch and twelve inch pipelines to the processing plant.

The plant itself will have four operating units including one that will separate the river water from the sediment, another to treat the waste water, a third to load the pressed sediment into trucks and a support facility for office and engineering services.

Directing the Green Bay operations are Ray Mangrum, vice president of remediation and Stephen McGee, vice president, both with Tetra Tech EC.

Mangrum said the dewatering process to separate the sediment and water from the PCBs is not new, "but the size of the project is the largest ever undertaken in the country."

The processing plan will include eight presses being manufactured by Andritz Manufacturing, Cologne, Germany, which is headquartered in Graz, Austria. The first press arrived in Green Bay in October. These will be some of the largest filter presses in the world.

Each press will weigh 586,000 pounds and will be 58 feet tall. Each will have the capacity to handle 600 cubic feet of capacity. Each press will contain 188 plates that will squeeze the water from the sediments. They will be operating five days a week, 24 hours a day. Saturday will be reserved for equipment maintenance.

The waste water treatment plant, covering 30,000 square feet, will process approximately 6,000 gallons of water per minute.

The truck staging area will have two 80-foot long scales that will weigh each truck leaving the plant. Each truck also will be washed before exiting the building. About 85 trucks a day will leave the plant, delivering processed sediment to

a landfill near Chilton.

An estimated additional 170,000 cubic yards of dried sediment will be hauled to a landfill out of state for disposal.

Construction of the processing plant is scheduled for completion May 1 2009.

"We are on schedule," Mangrum" said.

The operations will employ approximately 100 people during peak operations.

Three dredges are scheduled to begin pumping sediments next spring under the direction of the J.F. Brennan Co., La Crosse.

The pipeline will be totally enclosed and will have 600 horsepower booster pumps every mile moving 150-180 cubic yards of sediment every hour.

"This is the cleanest way to do this," Mangrum said.

He said the dredging program will take seven years to complete with another two years to cap selected areas of the river. About 500 acres will be dredged and another 566 acres will be capped. The capping will range in depth from six to 33 inches and will consist of stone and sand.

"The overall goal of the project is to remove by dredging or isolate by capping sediments with PCB concentrations greater than 1 part per million.

Mangrum noted that with the construction on schedule, a 126-member work crew has completed more than 70,000 manhours without any lost time due to an accident.

"We have done work throughout the country and the work ethic of the crew during site development is among the best in the United States," Mangrum said. Miron Construction is the general contractor and Somerville Inc., Green Bay is the architect.

Wisconsin firms already have received \$17 million in construction contracts with another \$200 million about to be awarded.

The project will be monitored for 30 years after completion by the state Department of Natural Resources and the federal Environmental Protection Agency.