

Ciba-Geigy National Priorities List Site, McIntosh, Alabama

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program



Background

The Ciba-Geigy Chemical Corporation began production of the pesticide DDT in the early 1950s at a facility in McIntosh, Alabama, adjacent to the Tombigbee River. Ciba-Geigy subsequently produced many other chemicals at this facility over its operational history. Hazardous substances, including DDT and DDT-isomers, generated by Ciba-Geigy were disposed of on-site and discharged into the Tombigbee River. Production wastes were released in floodplain habitats on the Ciba-Geigy site, as well as into floodplain habitats on neighboring properties, as a result of periodic flooding of a ditch that transmitted untreated plant wastes into several unlined pits. Hazardous substances released into Tombigbee River floodplain habitats were distributed downstream into the Tombigbee River. The Upper Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, immediately downstream of the Ciba-Geigy site, is of particular ecological importance. The 260,000-acre estuarine system is one of the largest intact wetlands remaining in the continental United States. Ciba-Geigy was acquired by the BASF Corporation (BASF) in 2009.



Brown pelicans on the Tombigbee River, the white building in the background is a Ciba-Geigy building. Photo: Andy Ford, FWS

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When hazardous substances enter the environment, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources can be injured. The Department of the Interior, along with

State, Tribal and other Federal partners, acts as “trustee” for these resources. Trustees seek to identify the natural resources injured and determine the extent of the injuries. Trustees work with the responsible parties to carry out restoration activities, or recover funds from responsible parties to carry out the restoration activities. These efforts are possible under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (NRDAR), the goal of which is to restore natural resources injured by oil spills or the release of hazardous substances.

Restoring the Resources

In July 2013, the Natural Resource Trustees (Trustees), which include the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Geological Survey of Alabama, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reached a settlement with BASF for \$3.2 million to be used for the planning and implementation of one or more restoration projects within the Upper Mobile-Tensaw River Delta to restore, replace or acquire the equivalent of natural resources or services lost or injured by releases from the Ciba-Geigy site. Natural resources believed to have been injured include fish, shellfish, migratory birds, and their associated habitats.

The Trustees have initially identified two types of projects that would be expected to provide ecological benefits to the Upper Mobile-Tensaw River Delta in an effort to offset the natural resource and service losses:

- ◆ [Riparian habitat acquisition, enhancement, and restoration](#)

Riparian habitat, consisting of floodplain and bottomland hardwood swamp, in the Upper Mobile-Tensaw River Delta would be acquired and deeded to the State of Alabama, the hydrology on the site would be restored to more natural conditions, and invasive plant species would be

removed and replaced with native vegetation.

- ◆ [Riparian habitat enhancement and restoration on State-owned lands](#)

Property currently under the ownership of the State of Alabama in the Upper Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, which does not need to be purchased, would be enhanced and/or restored as described for the project type above (restored hydrology and invasive species management).



Bottomland hardwood, representative of the type of site Trustees are looking to restore. Photo: Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)

For additional information, project suggestions, or questions contact:

Anthony Sowers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4980 Wildlife Drive NE
Townsend, GA 31331
912-832-8739 extension 3
anthony_sowers@fws.gov

