

Toxic Chemicals

Toxic chemicals from the Cortese Landfill in New York are leaching into the waters of the **Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River**. A comprehensive effort is underway to assess the effects of the contaminants on aquatic life and to see if the local fish have accumulated the contaminants and pose a threat to people who eat them. Because the rate of leaching from this landfill is not known, the NPS perceives a need for the development and application of a long-term monitoring tool.

Fort Darcy, at **Richmond National Battlefield Park**, contains an old landfill which is leaching several known toxic organic chemicals into a small creek that flows into the James River below Richmond. There is a planned chemical monitoring effort to establish the magnitude of the problem.

Marshall Brook in **Acadia National Park** is being affected by toxic leachate from Worcester Landfill in the southern part of Mount Desert Island. The Park Service is cooperating with the EPA in evaluating the extent of chemical contamination and biological effects. Data from both agencies are being used to force the dump's closure and are specifying mitigation measures to render the leachate non-toxic.

Valley Creek in **Valley Forge National Historical Park**, is impacted by a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) spill upstream of the park. Fishing has been banned in Valley Creek by the State of Pennsylvania because of high concentrations of PCB's in fish. The NPS is planning work with the State of Pennsylvania and U.S. Geological Survey to fully assess the problem and develop mitigation procedures.

A potential problem exists in **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**, where high levels of selenium are occurring in the flesh of some game fish. Lake Powell is believed to be a regional depositional sink concentrating naturally occurring heavy metals.

DDT and its metabolites are still being found in significant amounts in areas of southwest Texas in the vicinity of **Big Bend, Carlsbad Caverns, and Guadalupe Mountains national parks**. Several piecemeal investigations have yet to determine the source and whether new, illegal use is occurring.

A new Department of Interior-wide effort is underway to determine the extent of water quality degradation and toxic substances in irrigation return water. Several Park Service areas in the West may be peripherally involved.

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