

Bioaccumulation Models and Applications: Setting Sediment Cleanup Goals in the Great Lakes

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Background

he Great Lakes, much of which is within Region 5 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), has significant contamination of hydrophobic organic compounds such as PCBs and dioxins. Because much of this contamination is found in sediments, consideration of bioaccumulation is required when making environmental decisions. Regulatory actions that deal with bioaccumulative hydrophobic organic compounds are generally either waterway management (Clean Water Act section 404) decisions or remedial decisions under statutes such as Superfund, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The focus of this talk will be on the latter category of remedial decision-making.

The presentation will discuss the following:

- The need and precedent for the use of bioaccumulation methods in a regulatory setting. Region 5 evaluation of bioaccumulation methodologies using Great Lakes data (sediments to fish workgroup, or S2F).
- S2F-recommended process of using bioaccumulation methods in combination with risk assessment.
- Case studies and lessons learned.

Summary

Environmental decisions often require that sediment cleanup goals be developed. Issues such as what level is safe to leave behind, which sediments need to be removed for it to be safe, and which remedial option offers the best risk reduction, need to be addressed at the many sites with bioaccumulative hydrophobic organic compounds. In general, there are few sediment regulatory levels that directly address human health. PCBs, a frequent contaminant in the Great Lakes, are regulated under the Toxic Substances Control Act at 50 ppm or greater, which is not, however, considered to be healthbased. In some cases there are mandates to return to background levels, and there are also the ecological guidelines developed by the Province of Ontario and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). While these are all useful and relevant, there was a perceived gap in having actions that use these as cleanup goals to be protective of human health.

A Regional workgroup was formed that sought to address the issue of how to address bioaccumulative compounds such as PCBs and dioxins in order to be protective of human health. To promote consistency and clarity on the topic, the workgroup developed Regional guidance based on their deliberations. Because of the concern about PCB bioaccumulation, the scope of the workgroup's efforts was always on hydrophobic organic compounds. Because in general it is not appropriate to extrapolate methods or recommendations to other contaminants that behave differently in the environment (such as metals), the workgroup and document only addressed methods appropriate to hydrophobic organic compounds. The workgroup, named Sediments to Fish, or S2F, contained technical staff from several disciplines and areas of the agency. The goal of the workgroup was to: (1) review relevant literature on bioaccumulation; (2) evaluate various methodologies using Great Lakes data and include a discussion of data issues; and (3) recommend how best to develop cleanup goals or, more accurately, how to best use bioaccumulation methodologies in regulatory actions.

A draft guidance document was completed in 1994. The basic structure of the document is:

- Overview.
- Review and discussion of methods.
- Evaluation and validation of methods (includes discussion of data issues).
- Recommended process for how to use the biotato-sediment accumulation factor (BSAF) method with risk assessment procedures for specific use in a regulatory setting.

The document was reviewed extensively, including Region 5 states, the State of Washington, USEPA



Headquarters, and NOAA. Overall, the reviews were supportive and recommended refining the document further and adding more information. The document has been revised based on this review, and changes include a new appendix on BSAFs found in the literature (values were checked in the primary reference) and additional case studies. Currently, one of the case studies is being revised to incorporate additional data made available recently. When this revision is made, the document will go through academic peer review.

It is clear that the best way to accurately assess bioaccumulation is to use more complex models utilizing pharmacokinetic parameters. However, for purely practical reasons, they were not considered to be useful at present in a regulatory setting where the data needs of these models would not be met and time would also be insufficient. Three methods, then, were analyzed in detail—BCF, BAF, and BSAF. It is useful to note that in general the BCF and BAF methods relate fish tissue levels to the water column, whereas the BSAF method relates fish contamination to sediment (often the medium where levels need to be set and where contamination more likely lies).

Methods were tested by comparing predicted fish levels (using the various methods) with actual fish data. This was done at four locations—Saginaw, Michigan; Buffalo, New York; Ontario, Canada; and Manistique, Michigan. Data needs were considerable for this process; data were needed to input into all methods (water column, sediment, etc.) and a separate data set was needed to determine site-specific BSAFs. Conclusions from this process were as follows:

- When considering all case studies as a whole, BSAF consistently gave the most reliable estimates of fish tissue concentrations relative to other methods. However, for specific case studies, some of the other methods were slightly more or about as accurate (e.g., BAF—using a measured BAF and dissolved values in the Buffalo case; and BCF—using a measured BCF and total concentration values in the Saginaw case).
- In all of the studies, the modified BAF was the least accurate method.
- How data were used was found to have a significant impact. Accuracy in predicting fish levels depended on whether all data were available, how one decided to handle heterogeneously distributed data, and which bioaccumulation factors were used and how they were developed. From this limited review, it appears that site-specific or field-derived bioaccumulation factors improve the accuracy of the results.
- In general, BCF tended to underestimate fish levels and BAF tended to overestimate fish levels.

Another important conclusion from this method validation chapter was how to appropriately use data. Major recommendations are shown in Table 1. Specific results of the data validation using Great Lakes data are shown in Tables 2 through 4.

The document also discusses how to incorporate human health issues, applying the BSAF method, in

conjunction with risk assessment. In this way, one can develop options in a regulatory setting such as setting sediment cleanup goals. The general process for setting cleanup goals is shown in Figure 1. Essentially, using the basic exposure and risk equations from the Risk Assessment Guidance for Superfund (RAGS), a target level in fish is set. It is important to note that the process shown assumes that the contaminant of concern (PCBs, or other hydrophobic organic compound) is appropriate, and no other compound that would not be assessed in this way is important in making a cleanup decision. It also assumes that the only pathway of concern is ingestion of contaminated fish. (No other pathway is discussed here, such as ingestion of sediment or surface water.) Note, in addition, that setting the target level in fish using risk assessment requires decisions be made regarding acceptable levels of risk (e.g., 10⁻⁶). The target fish level can also be a regulatory level such as a threshold for setting a fish advisory (e.g., 0.05 ppm).

The target fish level is put into the BSAF equation and solved for concentration in sediment. Important issues to consider when doing this analysis are: (1) choosing a BSAF, which can be site specific or can be chosen from the literature (variations will arise and can have great impact on results); (2) quality of total organic carbon (TOC) data, which can have a great impact on results as well; (3) using appropriate species of fish and keeping species-specific considerations throughout (lipid values, range, etc.); and (4) applying the risk assessment process carefully and considering many options, such as different exposure scenarios for different fishing behaviors.

This process has been applied in several cases in Region 5. Two that will be discussed are Saginaw and Manistique. Results shown were used in decisionmaking in Saginaw, as part of a Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). USEPA looked at current health risks, developed cleanup goals, and assessed how a possible action could address human health risk. The lower Saginaw River is characterized as having widespread lower level (less than 5 ppm on average) sediment contamination at the surface and somewhat more contamination at depth in sediment. Site-specific BSAFs were calculated for two species, walleye and carp. Although a range of BSAFs could be calculated depending on data considerations (averaging of sediment data, etc.), they can be summarized as being 0.3 for walleye and 0.6 for carp. This information is contrasted to Manistique, which is characterized as having localized sediment "hot spots" of PCB contamination, the majority of which is not at the surface. Site-specific BSAFs were also calculated although sediment and fish data were somewhat more limited. Again a range of site-specific BSAFs were considered due to possible data handling choices, but they can be summarized as 0.4 for carp and .07 for walleye. Sediment cleanup goals for these two sites obviously follow from the BSAF differences. Saginaw cleanup goals are much lower than those calculated from Manistique, Michigan. A summary is provided in Figure 2.

Data Issue	Recommendation
Averaging of fish or sediment data (geometric vs. arithmetic mean)	Geometric Mean
Use of sediment organic carbon data	Point normalize
Handling of non-detect data	Use one-half the detection limit
Uneven clustering of sediment samples	Surface area weighting
Calculating site specific BSAF value using sediment and fish data	Temporarily matched sediment and fish data
Type of fish sample	Filet (human health endpoint) Whole fish (ecological endpoint)
Bioaccumulation method	BSAF

Table 2. Comparison of Predicted Fish Tissue Concentrations (from draft S2F document)

All values shown are ppm PCBs	Saginaw (walleye)	Buffalo (carp)
BCF (meas./total)	1.4	0.35
BAF (meas./diss.)	38	0.42
BAF (meas./total)	38	3.5
BSAF	1.4	-0.871
Actual	1.5	2.8

(Using geometric means of relevant data)

Manistique, MI	PRE	EDICTED FISH C	ONCENTRATION	IS IN CARP (in mg	y/kg)
WATER-TO- FISH OR SEDIMENT- TO-FISH PREDICTIVE MODEL	SAW SEDIMENT; ARITHMETIC MEANS	SAW SEDIMENT; GEOMETRIC MEANS	ARITHMETIC POINT- NORMALIZED SEDIMENT; ARITHMETIC MEANS	ARITHMETIC MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS	GEOMETRIC MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS
BAF-modified	390 - 550	380 - 550	520 - 740	230 - 330	79 - 110
TBP (pf=4)	88	86	120	52	18
BSAF (value in parentheses is site-specific BSAF used)	9.0 (0.41)	8.6 (0.40)	13 (0.45)	4.6 (0.35)	2.9 (0.64)
Actual Fish Tissue Concentration	6.5	6.2	6.5	6.5	6.2

Table 3. (from draft S2F document)

¹SAW = surface area weighted

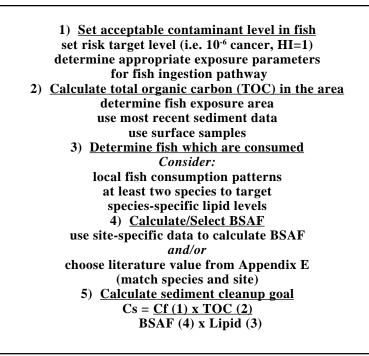
²Values in this column are the same regardless if sediment data are normalized before or after calculating geometric means.

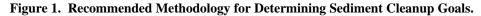
Table 4. (from draft S2F document)

Manistique, MI	PREDI	ICTED FISH CON	CENTRATIONS I	N WALLEYE (in	mg/kg)
WATER-TO- FISH OR SEDIMENT- TO-FISH PREDICTIVE MODEL	SAW SEDIMENT; ARITHMETIC MEANS	SAW SEDIMENT; GEOMETRIC MEANS	ARITHMETIC POINT- NORMALIZED SEDIMENT; ARITHMETIC MEANS	ARITHMETIC MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS	GEOMETRIC MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS
BAF-modified	200 - 340	180 - 310	270 - 460	120 - 204	37 - 64
TBP (pf=4)	24	22	33	15	4.6
BSAF (value in parentheses is site-specific BSAF used)	0.99 (0.16)	0.87 (0.16)	1.5 (0.18)	0.51 (0.14)	0.29 (0.25)
Actual Fish Tissue Concentration	0.34	0.25	0.34	0.34	0.25

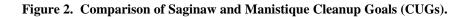
¹SAW = surface area weighted

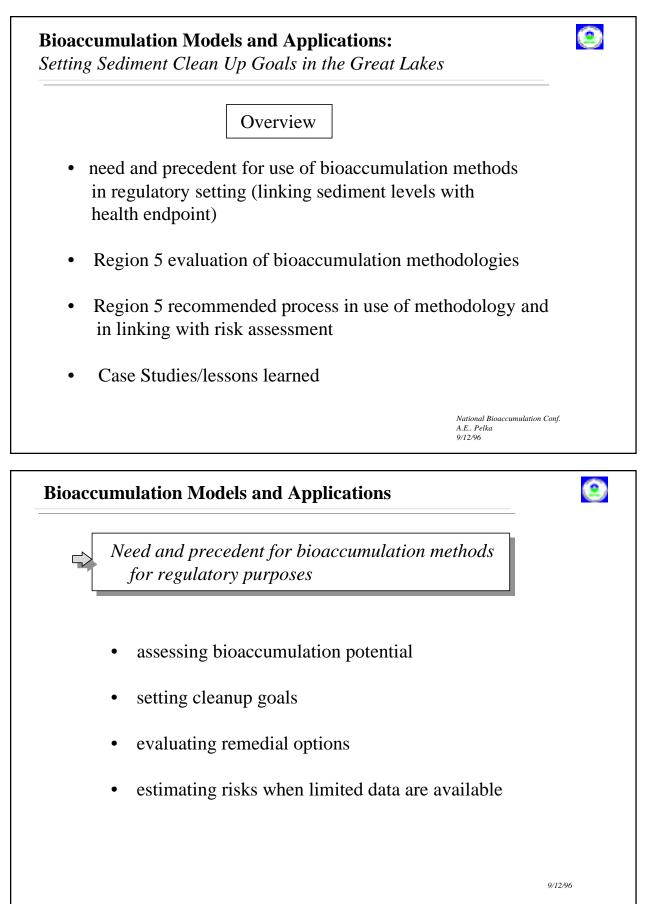
²Values in this column are the same regardless if sediment data are normalized before or after calculating geometric means.



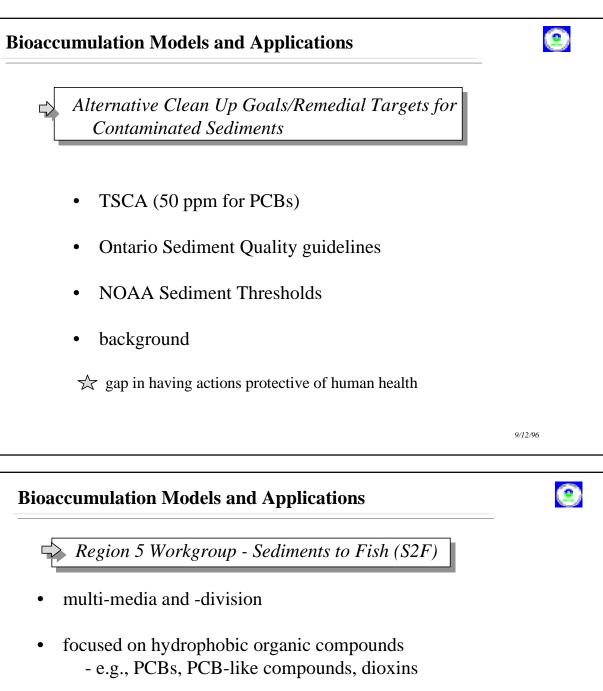


Cancer Risk Level	Exposure Assumptions	Site	CUGs for PCBs (ppm)
	sport fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.06
10 E-6	20 g walleye/day, 25% from site	Manistique	1
	sport fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.8
10 E-5	□ 15 g walleve/day	Manistique	13
	subsistence fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.8
10 E-4	75 g walleye /day, 50% from site	Manistique	13





US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



- Guidance document
 -reviewed literature and several methodologies
 -tested methods using Great Lakes data
 -recommended process using BSAF
- draft completed in 1994, reviewed by States and Federal agencies; significant revisions; interim final by end 1996; academic peer review.

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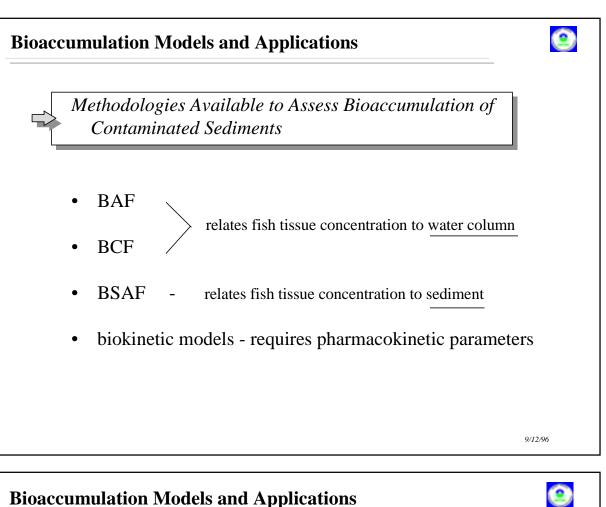
Bioaccumulation Models and Applications



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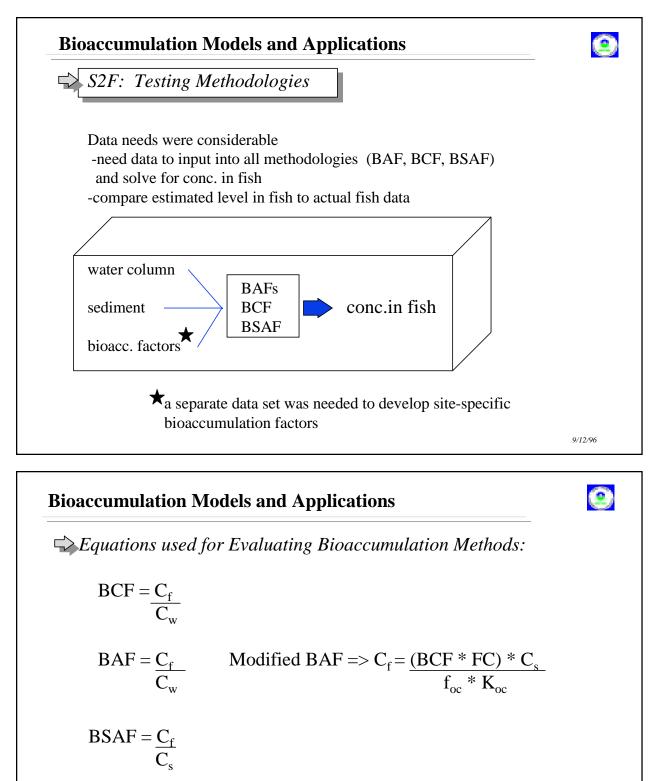
Bioaccumulation Models and Applications *Key Questions/Issues that Emerged from S2F*Which methodology is most accurate in predicting fish tissue concentrations?
Appropriately handling data
Science Policy Issues





The ability of the various models to accurately predict fish tissue concentrations were tested using actual fish tissue, water column, and sediment data from the following sites:

- · Saginaw
- · Buffalo
- · Ontario
- · Manistique



where: $C_f = \text{concentration in fish}$; $C_w = \text{concentration in the water column}$;

 C_s =concentration in the sediment; FC=food chain multiplier; f_{oc} =fraction organic carbon;

 K_{oc} = partitioning coefficient (between water and organic carbon)

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Comparison of Predicted Fish Tissue Concentrations

from draft S2F document

all values shown are ppm PCBs	Saginaw (walleye)	Buffalo (carp)
BCF (meas./total)	1.4	.35
BAF (meas./diss.)	38	.42
BAF(meas./total)	38	3.5
BSAF	1.4	.87-1.7
Actual	1.5	2.8.

(Using geometric means of relevant data)

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Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Predicted PCB <u>carp</u> tissue concentrations for the Manistique River

(from draft S2F document)

WATER-TO-FISH OR SEDIMENT-TO-FISH PREDICTIVE MODEL	PREDICTED FISH CONCENTRATIONS (in mg/kg)					
	ARITHMETIC MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS	GEOMETRIC ² MEANS FOR ALL PARAMETERS				
BAF-modified	390 - 550	380 - 550	520 - 740	230 - 330	79 - 110	
TBP (pf= 4)	88	86	120	52	18	
BSAF (value in parentheses is site- specific BSAF used)	9.0 (0.41)	8.6 (0.40)	13 (0.45)	4.6 (0.35)	2.9 (0.64)	
Actual Fish Tissue Concentration	6.5	6.2	6.5	6.5	6.2	

¹ SAW = surface area weighted

² Values in this column are the same regardless if sediment data are normalized before or after calculating geometric means.

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Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Predicted PCB <u>walleye</u> tissue concentrations for the Manistique River

(from draft S2F document)

WATER-TO-FISH OR SEDIMENT-TO-FISH PREDICTIVE MODEL	PREDICTED FISH CONCENTRATIONS (in mg/kg)						
	SAW ¹ SEDIMENT; SAW SEDIMENT; ARITHMETIC POINT- ARITHMETIC GEOMETRIC NORMALIZED MEANS FOR ALL MEANS MEANS SEDIMENT; PARAMETERS ARITHMETIC MEANS						
BAF-modified	200 - 340	180 - 310	270 - 460	120 - 204	37 - 64		
TBP (pf= 4)	24	22	33	15	4.6		
BSAF (value in parentheses is site- specific BSAF used)	0.99 (0.16)	0.87 (0.16)	1.5 (0.18)	0.51 (0.14)	0.29 (0.25)		
Actual Fish Tissue Concentration	0.34	0.25	0.34	0.34	0.25		

¹ SAW = surface area weighted

² Values in this column are the same regardless if sediment data are normalized before or after calculating geometric means.

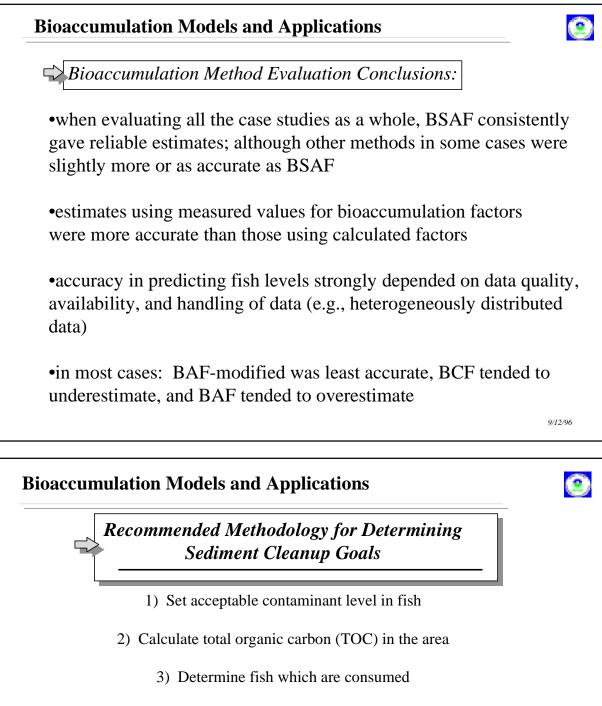
Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Data Issues & Recommendations

Data Issue	Recommendation
Averaging data	Geometric Mean
(geometric vs. arithmetic mean)	
Use of sediment	Point normalize
organic carbon data	
Non-detect data	Use one-half the detection limit
Uneven clustering of sediment samples	Surface area weighting
Calculating site specific BSAF	Temporally matched sediment and fish data
Type of fish sample	Fillet (human health endpoint) Whole fish (ecological endpoint)
Bioaccumulation method	BSAF

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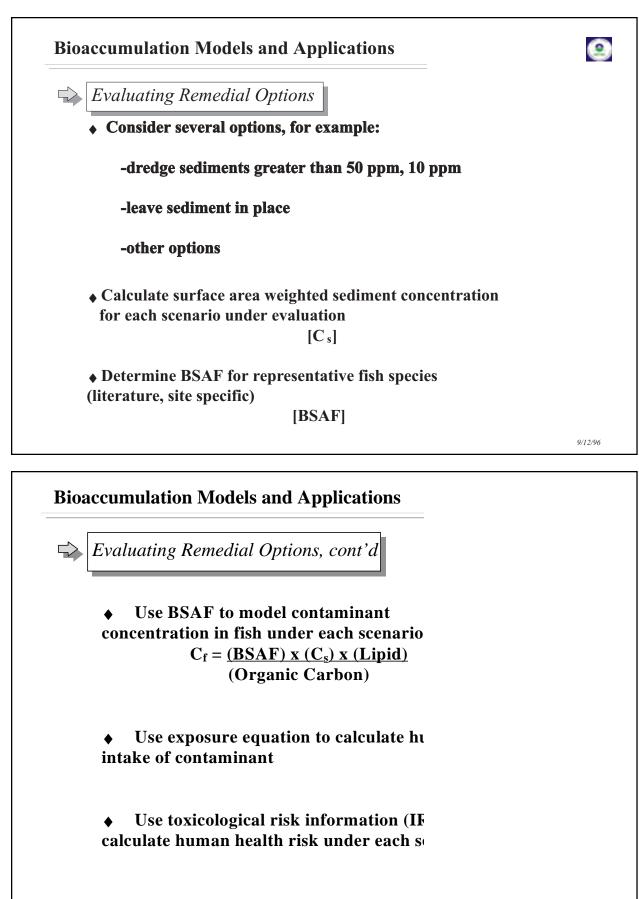


4) Calculate/Select BSAF

5) Calculate sediment cleanup goal

 $Cs = \frac{Cf(1) \times TOC(2)}{BSAF(4) \times Lipid(3)}$

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Determining an Appropriate BSAF Value Species Specific Issues

Issue	Consideration
Foraging Range	Consult with fish biologist to help confirm that the average contaminant concentration in the sediment is representative of the fish's range.
Pisciverous vs. Bottom Feeding	Bottom feeding fish will likely have a higher BSAF and thus should be included to represent a more conservative scenario.
Lipid Content	Fatty fish tend to accumulate more contaminants and thus inclusion will add a more conservative scenario.
Presence of Species at Site	Choose a species endpoint that is actually found at the site.
Consumption of Species	Choose a species which is being consumed by the local population.

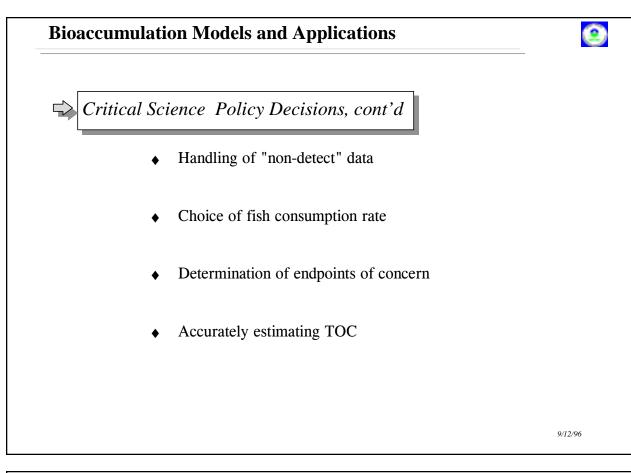
Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Critical Science Policy Decisions

- Choice of bioaccumulation model
- Choice of fish species (e.g. pelagic, bottom-feeding)
- Choice of BSAF value
- Determining appropriate sediment concentration term
- Defining fish exposure area/site boundary

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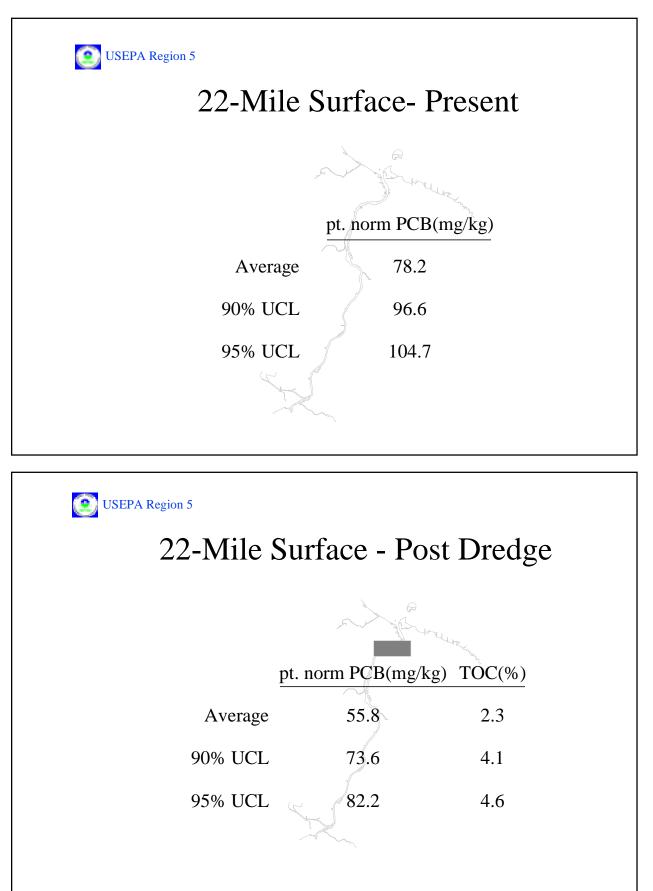
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Current Potential Health Risks (MDEQ 1986-1993)

Species	Concentrat	ion	Cancer Ris	sk Range	HQ Rang	ge
walleye	0.43		3.04E-05	2.64E-03	0.20	17.11
carp	3.1		2.19E-04	1.90E-02	1.42	123.37
bass	0.21		1.46E-05	1.27E-03	0.10	8.24
whitefish	0.04		2.94E-06	2.55E-04	0.02	1.65
perch	0.13		9.16E-06	7.94E-04	0.06	5.16
pike	0.15		1.07E-05	9.25E-04	0.07	6.01
trout	0.08		5.64E-06	4.89E-04	0.04	3.18



USEPA Region 5

Calculating Risk-Based Cleanup Goals

- Set Target Fish Tissue Level

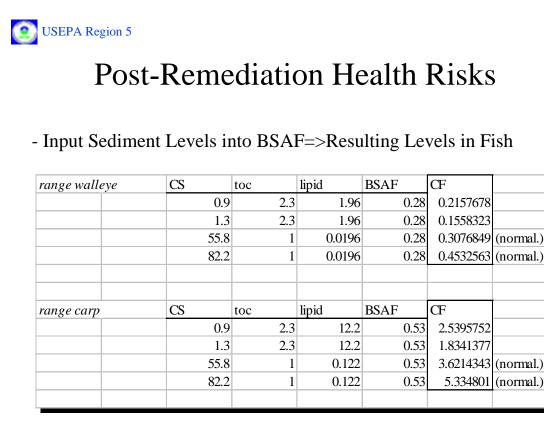
Acceptable Ris	k Level 1.00E-06	1.00E-06	Haz. Index	1	1
cancer slope fac	ctor 7.7	7.7	Ref. Dose	2.00E-05	2.00E-05
Body weight (kg)	70	70		70	70
Averaging time (days)	25550	25550		10950	10950
Ingestion rate (kg/day)	0.02	0.13		0.02	0.13
Fraction ingestion (%)	0.25	1		0.25	1
Absorption (%)	1	1		1	1
Exp. frequency (days/year)	365	365		365	365
Exposure duration (years)	9	30		30	30
Concentration in Fish	0.0141	0.0002		0.28	0.0108



Calculating Risk-Based Cleanup Goals

Input Target Fish Levels into BSAF=>CUGs

	Sediment C	leanup Goa	<u>l</u> ->	CS=(toc x (CF)/(BSAF	x lipid)						
Cancer (E-6)						Noncancer	(HI=1)				
sport	CF	toc	BSAF	lipid	CS		sport	CF	toc	BSAF	lipid	CS
walleye	0.0141414	2.3	0.2813299	1.98	0.0583901		walleye	0.28	2.3	0.2813299	1.96	1.1679221
carp	0.0141414	2.3	0.5319693	12.2	0.0050116		carp	0.28	2.3	0.5319693	1.98	0.6114122
subsis.	CF	toc	BSAF	lipid	CS		subsis.	CF	toc	BSAF	lipid	CS
walleye	0.0001632	2.3	0.2813299	1.98	0.0006737		walleye	0.0107692	2.3	0.2813299	1.98	0.0444663
carp	0.0001632	2.3	0.5319693	12.2	5.783E-05		carp	0.0107692	2.3	0.5319693	1.98	0.0235159





Post-Remediation Health Risks

walleye	Cancer	low	high	N/C	low	high
	CF	0.307685	0.453256	CF	0.307685	0.453256
	BW	70	70	BW	70	70
	AT	25550	25550	AT	25550	25550
	IR	0.02	0.13	IR	0.02	0.13
	FI	0.25	1	FI	0.25	1
	AB	1	1	AB	1	1
	EF	365	365	EF	365	365
	ED	9	30	ED	9	30
	slope	7.7	7.7	RfD	2.00E-05	2.00E-05
	RISK	2.18E-05	2.78E-03	HQ	0.141284	18.03775
carp	Cancer	low	high	N/C	low	high
uip	CF	3.621434	5.334801	CF	3.621434	5.334801
	BW	70	70	BW	70	70
	AT	25550	25550	AT	25550	25550
	IR	0.02	0.13	IR	0.02	0.13
	FI	0.25	1	FI	0.25	1
	AB	1	1	AB	1	1
	EF	365	365	EF	365	365
	ED	9	30	ED	9	30
	slope	7.7	7.7	RfD	0.00002	0.00002
	RISK	0.000256	0.032695	HQ	1.662903	212.3033

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Bioaccumulation Models and Applications

Exposure Assumptions used at Manistique

Variable	Value		
ingestion rate	.015054	-recreation "average" - "high	n end"
(kg/day)	.075130	-subsistence "average" - "hig	h end"
fraction ingested	25 %	-recreation "average"	
from area	50%	-recr. "high end" & subsis. "a	avg."
	100%	-subsistence "high end"	
exposure frequency (days/year)	365	(IR's are daily rates)	
exposure duration	9	"average" scenarios	
(years)	30	"high end" scenarios	
body weight	70		
(kg)			
averaging time	3285	"average" noncancer	
(days)	10950	"high-end" noncancer	
	25550	cancer	9/

Bioaccumulation Models and Applications



Manistique Sediment Cleanup Levels Summary (PCBs)

	"A	verage" Scenario	"Hi	gh End" Scenario
Cancer	<u>risk</u>	<u>target sediment</u> level (ppm)	<u>risk</u>	<u>target sediment</u> level (ppm)
Recreational	10 ⁻⁶	1.3	10 ⁻⁶	0.0096
fishing	10 ⁻⁴	130	10^{-4}	0.96
Subsistence	10 ⁻⁶	0.13	10 ⁻⁶	0.002
fishing	10 ⁻⁴	13	10^{-4}	0.2

Noncancer (Immuno- toxicity and Reproductive Effects) Haz. Index = 1	"Average" Scenario target sediment level (ppm)	"High End" Scenario <u>target sediment level</u> <u>(ppm)</u>
Recreational fishing	25	0.63
Subsistence fishing	2.5	0.13

(2) USEPA Region 5

Comparison of Saginaw and Manistique Cleanup Goals (CUGs)

Cancer Risk Level	Exposure Assumptions	Site	CUGs for PCBs (ppm)
10 E-6	sport fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.06
10 E-6	20 g walleye/day, 25% from site	Manistique	1
10 E-5	sport fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.8
	15 g walleye /day, 25% from site	Manistique	13
	subsistence fisher eating average of	Saginaw	0.8
10 E-4	75 g walleye /day, 50% from site	Manistique	13

