

NTP to conduct testing on chemicals from West Virginia spill

By Robin Mackar

John Bucher, Ph.D., associate director of the National Toxicology Program (NTP), met July 23 with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a member of Congress, and West Virginia state and local health officials, to discuss plans for conducting additional studies related to a chemical spill earlier this year into West Virginia's Elk River.

Bucher outlined a series of short-term toxicity studies that NTP would conduct on 4-methylcyclohexanemethanol (MCHM) and other chemicals known to be involved in the spill.

In January, approximately 10,000 gallons of chemicals used to process coal spilled from a storage tank into the Elk River. The river is a municipal water source that serves about 300,000 people in the Charleston area.

Based on the limited toxicology information available at the time, scientists judged an MCHM level of 1 part per million unlikely to be associated with any long-term adverse health effects, and recommended that as the screening level. More details are available on the [CDC website](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical/MCHM/westvirginia2014/).

(<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical/MCHM/westvirginia2014/>)

Federal agencies have continued working to learn more about the chemicals. Since the early days of the incident, NTP has conducted computer modeling to predict potential adverse effects from the chemicals. This summer, NTP received a request from the CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to conduct additional toxicity studies.

NTP has published a [fact sheet](#)

(http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/assets/docs_p_z/tox21_transforming_environmental_health_508.pdf) discussing the proposed efforts. Results from the NTP studies should be available within a year.

(Robin Mackar is the news director in the NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison and a regular contributor to the Environmental Factor.)



Bucher announced that NTP will conduct additional research to more clearly understand the potential for long-term health effects of the Elk River spill. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

The Environmental Factor is produced monthly by the [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences \(NIEHS\)](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>)

, Office of Communications and Public Liaison. The content is not copyrighted, and it can be reprinted without permission. If you use parts of Environmental Factor in your publication, we ask that you provide us with a copy for our records. We welcome your [comments and suggestions](#).

(bruskec@niehs.nih.gov)

This page URL: NIEHS website: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/>

Email the Web Manager at webmanager@niehs.nih.gov