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The Doctoral Program in Environmental Management and MSU Sustainability Seminar Series Present:

Gowanus Canal -- A Superfund Case Study

WHEN: March 19, 4:00 pm WHERE: CELS 120 lecture hall

Walter Mugdan

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Walter Mugdan is currently serving as Deputy Regional Administrator for the USEPA Region 2. He has a JD from University of Michigan and was the Region 2 Superfund from 2008 to 2018.

The Gowanus Canal is a 1.8-mile long industrial waterway in the borough of Brooklyn, New York. The Canal is bounded by several communities, including Park Slope, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Red Hook. The Canal empties into New York Harbor. The Gowanus Canal was built in the mid-1800s and was used as a major industrial transportation route. Manufactured gas plants (MGP), paper mills, tanneries and chemical plants operated along the Canal and discharged wastes into it. In addition, contamination flows into the Canal from overflows from sewer systems that carry sanitary waste from homes and rainwater from storm drains and industrial pollutants. As a result, the Gowanus Canal has become one of the nation's most seriously contaminated water bodies.

On December 27, 2012, the EPA released a Proposed Plan describing its proposed remedy for the site. The Proposed Plan recommended removing all of the contaminated sediment that has accumulated as a result of industrial and sewer discharges from the bottom of the canal by dredging. The dredged areas would then be capped. EPA also recommended controls to prevent CSOs and other land-based sources of contamination from compromising the cleanup.

This program provides an overview of the work on the canal and its implications for the future of the surrounding communities.

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