Commencement Bay

NEWSLETTER

June 2004

Photo: Daniel W. Rome

EPA to Begin the Second Five-Year Review of Commencement Bay

Commencement Bay Newsletter *summarizing the latest events and providing an update on planned cleanup work*

Conversation with Bob Clark, NOAA

Bob Clark, long-time manager at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, who recently retired, had the opportunity to observe first-hand virtually all cleanup work in Commencement Bay for about 30 years!

During a meeting between public and private entities involved in the cleanup, Mr. Clark discussed the success of the overall cleanup with EPA's Project Manager, Wallace Reid.

(continued on page 2)

Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterway

- ***Head of Thea Foss***—Utility Companies complete cleanup.
- ***City of Tacoma moving forward***—Four marinas will relocate—Sediment dredging is planned from August 2004 to February 2005. *(see pages 2-3)*

Middle Waterway

- ***Mouth and Middle portions***—First phase of the Middle Waterway cleanup has been completed by the Middle Waterway Action Committee.
- ***Head of Middle waterway***—Department of Natural Resources plans to start dredging in mid July. *(see page 3)*

Hylebos Waterway *(see page 4)*

- ***Head of Hylebos***—General Metals & Atofina Chemicals working closely with Hylebos Marina to relocate boats for sediment dredging this summer.
- ***Mouth of Hylebos***—More work needed at Area 5106 of the Former Occidental site.
- Upstream from the 11th Street bridge—Dredging and capping to begin this fall.
- Downstream of the 11th Street bridge—95% of contaminated sediments removed. *(see pages 4-5)*

EPA to Begin Five-Year Review

EPA checks Superfund sites every five years to make sure that completed cleanups continue to protect people and the environment. During the check-up, EPA reviews information about the site, including the cleanup plan and the laws that apply, and inspects the site to make sure it continues to be protective.

This is a chance for you to tell EPA about site conditions and any concerns you have. If you have comments or questions please contact Lilibeth Serrano, Community Involvement Coordinator, at 206-553-1388. EPA plans to complete the review, announce findings and publish a report by December 2004. **For more information about the review process, visit:**

http://www.epa.gov/superfund/tools/today/sf_5year.pdf

Conversation with Bob Clark, NOAA *(continued)*

Mr. Clark said the early years were frustrating, because the Superfund program didn't exist until 1980, so the federal and state agencies had to accommodate a variety of overlapping legal and technical requirements. The responsible parties resisted large capital expenditures until a comprehensive cleanup plan could be devised for all of Commencement Bay. Despite this slow start, Mr. Clark said the last five years or so have been very satisfying. Much of the cleanup work first conceptualized has been completed. In addition, Mr. Clark listed the modification projects that are part of the Commencement Bay cleanup, and said that these new mudflats, salmon spawning areas and other projects have actually reversed the habitat decline that started more than 100 years ago in Commencement Bay.

Thank you Bob for your years of service and for sharing your observations with all of us!

Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterway

Utility Companies Complete Work at Head of Thea Foss

A group of private companies finished cleaning up the portion of Thea Foss Waterway extending from just north of the SR 509 Bridge to the south end of the waterway. The following actions were completed at a cost of $8.5 million (*see map page 5*):

- 7,500 cubic yards of sediment were dredged and disposed of at the LRI landfill in Pierce County.

- A 75' x 60' cap of thick plastic was placed over an area that leaked oily residues at low tides. This area is on the eastern side of the waterway under the SR-509 bridge.

- A sheet-pile wall was installed across the waterway to keep sediments on the south side from eroding onto the north side.

- The entire waterway, south of the bridge was capped with sand. The channel was raised three feet or more to cap the area and improve fish habitat. A layer of large stones and broken rock was placed on the banks to prevent erosion in front of the two 96-inch outfalls discharging at the head of theWaterway. A habitat layer was placed on top of this.

The City of Tacoma Moves Ahead with Cleanup

The City of Tacoma plans to dredge the north side of Thea Foss Waterway starting, from the Utilities' sheet-pile wall northward.

Cleanup needs to be done where four marinas are currently located. The City has been working closely with the marinas to coordinate relocation of boats and marina structures. In July, the City will begin constructing a temporary marina in front of the glass museum—an area recently covered with sand and a grout mat to contain contaminated sediments. Marinas will continue to work with City officials (and possibly the Army Corps of Engineers) to get necessary permits and approvals to permanently reconfigure the marinas when the dredging is complete. After cleanup, the new marina by the glass museum will be permanently operated by the Foss Waterway Development Authority.

At the St. Paul Waterway, an in-water disposal facility will begin receiving dredged sediment in mid August. The City installed a berm on Simpson's property to provide stability to the in-water disposal facility. A second berm will be constructed as the disposal facility is filled to make sure the sediments stay in place. This berm will also be used for habitat improvement, including planting new vegetation and installing fish-friendly, bench-like areas and elevations. Capping and closure of the disposal facility is planned for February 2005.

The City of Tacoma Moving Forward *(continued)*

Mitigation

To minimize negative impact to existing habitat that occurs during cleanup, the City will create fish-friendly habitat, including:

- a four-acre mud flat behind an existing Corps of Engineers levee; also, the existing levee to the Puyallup River will be opened,
- underwater bench areas and vegetation in Middle Waterway corridor,
- shallow areas on the berm recently built at the St. Paul Waterway to allow juvenile salmon to adjust to salt water,
- nine acres of brackish marsh at the head of the Middle Waterway. This will include a 10- to 15-foot vegetation buffer that will have fresh water infused to decrease the salinity in the sediments for brackish intertidal plants.

A log haul-out and fuel pier was recently built on the Simpson Company property for use during construction of the disposal facility and during mitigation activities. For more information contact **Piper Peterson Lee** at 206-553-4951 or *peterson-lee.piper@epa.gov*

Where Did Sediment Dredged from St. Paul Go?

The City dredged 381,810 cubic yards* of sediment from St. Paul to create a disposal site for Thea Foss Waterway sediments. The top 35% was sent to the Dredge Material Management Site in Commencement Bay. The remaining 65% of clean sediment was sent to the Puyallup River to add to the new delta, which is good habitat for migrating salmonids.

Because using sediments to add to the new river delta and habitat was not a consideration in earlier decisions, EPA is preparing an Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) to document the process. Once completed, the ESD will be available to the public (*See page 6 for information repository locations*).

*One truck load = 10 cubic yards of sediment.

Middle Waterway

As of February 21, 2004, the Middle Waterway Action Committee had completed all the required dredging, capping, and other activities required for the mouth and middle portions of Middle Waterway. The Middle Waterway Action Committee is made up of Foss Maritime, Pioneer Industries and Marine Industries Northwest.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) plans to clean up the head of the waterway starting this summer. In early March, DNR submitted the final design report for EPA approval. DNR's plan calls for contaminated sediment to be removed during low tides or "in the dry," so the "fish window" restrictions will not apply. The cleanup work is slated to begin in mid July and should be completed by early fall. For more information contact **Nancy Harney** at (206) 553-6635 or *harney.nancy@epa.gov* .

Actions Completed at Middle Waterway in 2003-04

865 creosote pilings removed.
1.6 acres of over-water structures removed. Several structures, such as piers and boat sheds, were removed, allowing natural light to enter the water, which protects young salmon from predators.
107,658 cubic yards of contaminated sediment dredged and disposed of in Blair Slip 1.
2.2 acres dredged and covered with a thick sand cap.
2.2 acres dredged and a thin layer of clean sand was placed over the area. Most of the contamination was excavated. A small amount of contamination was left in place and is expected to mix with the clean sand so that safe cleanup standards will be reached over time.
3.1 acres dredged. The majority of the contamination was removed. Contamination levels are expected to reduce over time without the need for additional cleanup. EPA will monitor the areas to ensure that natural processes are working to improve sediment quality.

Hylebos Waterway

Head of Hylebos Update

Sediment

Sediment excavation was completed in 2003 at the General Metals graving slip, the former J&G property, Dunlap log haul out, and portions of the Atofina upland and bank area. Excavations were done at low tides, then clean "fish mix" (rocks and sand no larger than two inches in diameter) was placed to improve habitat.

Other 2003 work included demolition of piers and pilings near the Atofina property, and construction of habitat improvements at the General Metals peninsula and along the Atofina shoreline. Habitat improvements consisted of lowering the land elevation and/or flattening existing slopes, placing fish mix, woody debris and boulders.

Marina

Work continues by Hylebos Marina to coordinate the marina relocation with the Superfund dredging. Hylebos Marina is working with all affected tenants to begin moving marina structures and boats in May. Additional pilings removal and dredging in the lower turning basin is scheduled to start in July. The Marina is working with city officials and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to obtain necessary permits and approvals for the permanent reconfiguration of the marina after the Superfund cleanup actions are done. The Marina has already received a permit from the Corps of Engineers and has completed installation of a new travel lift, to replace a current one that will be removed during the Superfund cleanup. Dredging at the Head of Hylebos is still on schedule to begin in July. [*Correction*: EPA's November 2003 newsletter incorrectly identified Occidental as working with Hylebos Marina to coordinate Superfund cleanup with marina relocation. General Metals and Atofina are working with Hylebos Marina on these activities.]

Currently, EPA is working with General Metals and Atofina to revise the final details of the remedial design documents. In particular, EPA is working closely with the companies to approve proposed revisions to the cleanup of the southeast shoreline area of the Atofina property. As part of the 2003 cleanup, some residual groundwater contamination was found at Atofina's southeast shoreline, which may require a combination of dredging and capping to complete the cleanup, instead of just dredging**.** For more information please contact **Peter Contreras** at 206-553-6708 or *contresas.peter@epa.gov*.

Mouth of Hylebos

Former Occidental Chemical Site Near Dock 1 — More Work Needed

EPA and Ecology are working together to ensure that Occidental Chemical, the principal responsible party, stays on track to both fully remediate Hylebos Waterway sediments and prevent the future discharge of contaminated groundwater into the waterway. Occidental is currently conducting supplemental investigations to determine the extent of sediment and groundwater contamination.

Between October 2002 and March 2003 sediments were dredged, treated on site and sent to Blair Slip 1 for disposal. Post-dredge samples collected at the embankment found that sediment with high levels of chlorinated solvents had not been completely removed. Occidental has been developing possible solutions. Over the next year, a Feasibility Study will be prepared which will evaluate the cleanup options and describe them in detail. EPA will publish the Feasibility Study late this year.

Dredging and Capping to Begin this Fall — from 11th Street Bridge to the Turning Basin

Dredging of contaminated sediments above the 11th Street bridge, up to the former Murray Pacific property, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2004. The Port of Tacoma and Occidental Chemical Corporation, the two performing parties, have submitted a 90% remedial design document to EPA which calls for dredging about 130,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and disposing of it in the Blair Slip 1 confined disposal facility. The 90% design report also calls for capping Murray Pacific and Taylor Way embankments with several feet of sand and rip-rap to physically and chemically isolate contaminated sediments during the upcoming in-water construction season (July 16, 2004 to February 15, 2005). In concert with these actions,

Sound Refining will repair a failing bulkhead and create a more natural habitat along their shoreline. For more information contact **Jonathan Williams** at 206-553-1369 or *williams.jonathan@epa.gov*

Downstream of 11th Street Bridge: 95% of Bad Sediment Removed. Remaining Excavation to Begin in Summer 2005.

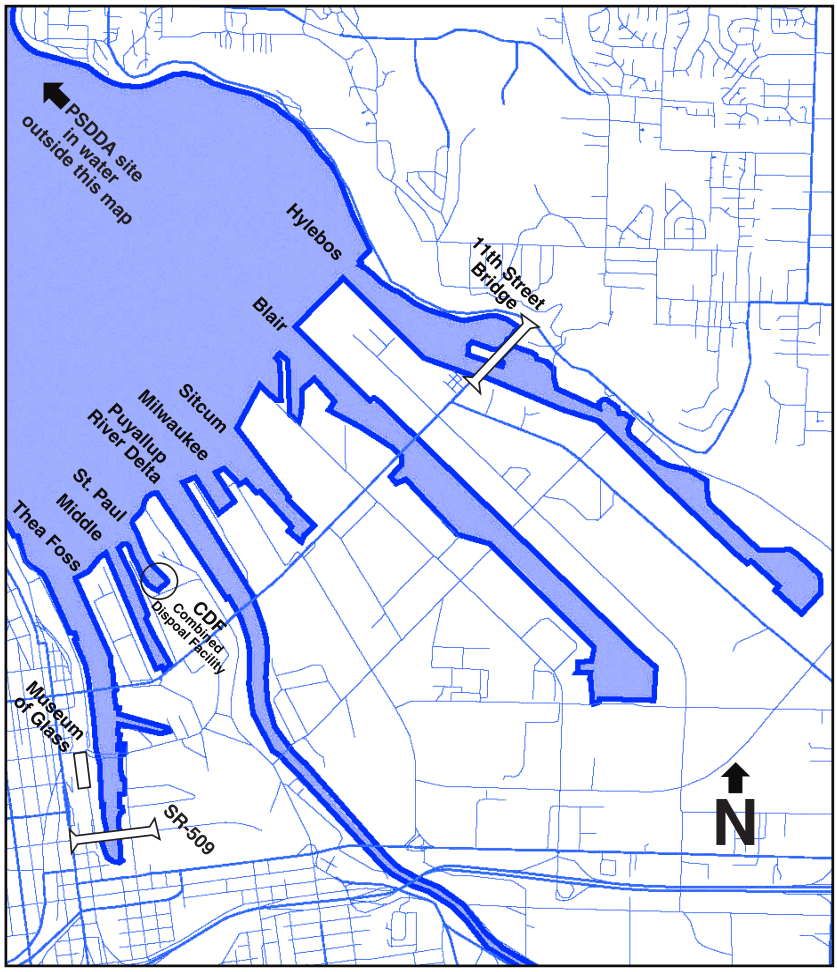
During the 2004 field season, the Port of Tacoma and Occidental dredged close to 300,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, all of which was disposed of in Blair Slip 1. A smaller amount of relatively clean sediment was also dredged and disposed of in Puget Sound, in accordance with a Washington Department of Natural Resources permit.

The work was conducted on schedule and achieved most of the goals EPA had established for this area. Confirmation sampling demonstrates that the cleanup has been generally successful. Some small areas, about 5 % of the total area, still need cleanup next year.

For more information please contact **Wallace Reid** at 206-553-1728 or *reid.wallace@epa.gov* .

Visit the EPA Website:

http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cbnt or call 1-800-424-4372 to request additional newsletters.



Commencement Bay

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Seattle, WA 98101-1128

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Commencement Bay Newsletter

Update on Superfund Sediment Cleanup
JUNE 2004

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Commencement Bay Cleanup records are available for review at:

Tacoma Public Library—Main Branch
1102 Tacoma Ave. South
Northwest Room
Tacoma, Washington
(253) 591-5666

Citizens for a Healthy Bay
917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 100
Tacoma, Washington
(253) 383-2429

Environmental Protection Agency
Superfund Records Center
1200 Sixth Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, Washington (206) 553-4494

Call toll-free: 1-800-424–4372. Ask for **Lilibeth Serrano**, Community Involvement Coordinator. Direct line: (206) 553-1388.

Alternative formats available upon request. Please call Lilibeth to request reasonable accommodation. TTY users please call 1-800-877-8339.

EPA developed an e-mail list to conserve resources and disseminate information more efficiently. If you would like to receive future fact sheets for the CB/NT Site via e-mail, please send an e-mail to *serrano-velez.lilibeth@epa.gov*. If we don't hear from you, we will continue to send paper copies.