Commencement Bay

NEWSLETTER

An update on Superfund Sediment Cleanup

May 2003
Vol. 1 No. 1

Photographer: Daniel W. Rome

This is the first release of the Commencement Bay Newsletter. This publication will bring you bay-wide information and progress reports on three remaining waterway cleanups: Hylebos Waterway, Thea Foss and Wheeler/Osgood Waterways, and Middle Waterway.

This edition also includes an update on the St. Paul Waterway. The newsletter will be published four times a year for the next two to three years.

We will continue to issue separate fact sheets for time critical announcements about comment periods and public meetings.

Ecology Completes Final Source Control Action for Commencement Bay

Source control at the Head of Thea Foss Waterway is at last complete!

(see page 2)

Hylebos Waterway: Dredging Scheduled in 2003 and 2004

Future work at Hylebos Waterway will focus on:

1. Two phases of dredging at the mouth
2. One dredging project at the head and
3. Two actions at the former Occidental site *(see map)*.

(see page 3)

Middle Waterway: Negotiations for Cleanup Completed

Under a recently signed agreement, the Middle Waterway Action Committee (MWAC) made up of Foss Maritime, Pioneer Industries, and Marine Industries Northwest, will start work in both the mouth and middle portions of the waterway in July 2003.

(see page 2)

Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways: In-Water Work to Begin in August – City Contractor Selected

In August, the City of Tacoma will start cleaning up Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways.

(see page 4)

St. Paul Waterway: Sandy Gravel will be added to Prevent Erosion

This summer, Simpson Tacoma Kraft Company will place about 3,000 cubic yards of sandy gravel at the St. Paul Waterway sediment cap in transect 4 *(see map)*.

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Ecology Completes Final Source Control Action for Commencement Bay

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Now that sources of contamination in the Bay are identified and controlled, EPA can clean up sediments. The Head of Thea Foss receives storm water from approximately 5,400 acres of Tacoma, including I-5, the Nalley-Valley and downtown Tacoma. Sources of contamination include discharges from industrial discharges, marinas, and storm water as well as historical activities.

Completing source control for the Head of Thea Foss Waterway is the culmination of Ecology's source control efforts across the entire Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats area. It is the last of the eight sediment problem areas identified in EPA's 1989 Record of Decision for Commencement Bay. Ecology's bay-wide accomplishments include:

- ✔ Conducting at least 500 inspections, including return visits and follow-up to ensure continued compliance
- ✔ Evaluating 292 sources to determine source control measures
- ✔ Identifying 77 confirmed, ongoing sources of problem chemicals to sediments
- ✔ Taking actions that ranged from highly engineered cleanups to technical assistance for waste and storm water at smaller sites
- ✔ Using permits and orders to regulate discharges and upland groundwater sources to the waterways
- ✔ Participating in cleaning up properties for redevelopment
- ✔ Investigating and controlling sources of pollution to storm water discharges to the waterways.

Source control for the Mouth of Thea Foss was completed
in May 1997 and for Wheeler-Osgood Waterway in June of 2000. EPA and Ecology issued the final Source Control Milestone Reports on March 31, 2003. To receive a copy of the Source Control Milestone 5 Report for the Head of Thea Foss Waterway, or to obtain more information about source control in general, contact Kris Flint at (206) 553-8155 or flint.kris@epa.gov.

Middle Waterway: Negotiations for Cleanup Completed

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The Department of Natural Resources, with help from other responsible parties, will start cleanup in the head of the waterway in August 2004.

EPA signed two separate agreements (Consent Decrees) with the companies to do the work. The agreements still must go through the Department of Justice (DOJ) for review and approval.

When DOJ is ready to recommend the approval of the Consent Decrees, the public will be able to comment on these agreements. EPA will announce the start of a comment period in a future public notice.

Washington Department of Natural Resources will Fund Additional Cleanup

At the head of Middle Waterway there is an area referred to as Sediment Management Unit 51a. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will remove up to 4,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from this area. This "enhanced remedy" will be funded by the State, and does not conflict with the original remedy selected by EPA. EPA had decided last year to leave the contaminated sediments in place, monitor over time, and rely on enhanced natural recovery to address low level surface contamination. The project will cost an estimated $1.6 million. An Explanation of Significant Differences describing DNR's sediment cleanup will be available for review during the public comment period for the Consent Decrees. For more information, contact Nancy Harney at (206) 553-6635 or harney.nancy@epa.gov.

Hylebos Waterway: Dredging Scheduled in 2003 and 2004.

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The Port of Tacoma and Occidental Chemical Company will clean up the Mouth of the waterway. General Metals of Tacoma, Inc., and ATOFINA Chemicals, Inc. are working at the head. Occidental Chemical is also conducting a separate project in Area 5106, located at the Mouth of Hylebos, between the bank and shipping channel boundary.

Occidental Site: Area 5106 Dredging Almost Complete; Embankment Capping Planned

Area 5106: Most Contamination Removed

36,000 cubic yards of the most contaminated sediments in the Hylebos Waterway were dredged, treated and disposed between October 2002 and March 2003. Using hydraulic dredging, a mixture of sediment and water was suctioned off the bottom of the waterway and piped to a treatment plant. The treatment plant heated the mix and trapped gases using carbon filters. The treated sediment was hauled by truck to a confined disposal facility at Blair Slip 1. Most water used in treatment was recycled, treated and then discharged to the Hylebos Waterway. All the work was done under rigorous air and water quality monitoring, and no regulatory thresholds were exceeded.

Some heavily contaminated sediment remains in parts of the area. Contamination extends several feet beneath the waterway's bottom. EPA asked Occidental to study the remaining contamination and suggest next steps.

Embankment: Cap Planned

Occidental plans to install a test cap along 200 feet of shoreline and monitor it for one year. Construction is expected sometime between August, 2003 and February, 2004. If all goes well the cap will be extended along 1,700 feet of embankment. The cap is needed because steep slopes, docks, and utility lines make removing and replacing sediments impractical. For more information, contact Jonathan Williams at (206) 553-1369 or williams.jonathan@epa.gov.

Mouth of Hylebos: Ready for Dredging Over the Next Two Years

Dredging north of the 11st Street Bridge begins July 15, 2003. This is the first of three major dredge projects planned for the Hylebos Waterway for the Mouth of Hylebos, northwest of the 11th street bridge.

The Port of Tacoma and Occidental successfully prepared the area for dredging by :

- ✔ Removing two piers, including 3,500 piles taken either to a landfill or a recycling facility.
- ✔ Placing clean fill material behind a berm in Blair Silo 5 to prepare the area for new habitat to offset loss of habitat caused by filling Blair Slip 1.
- ✔ Building a berm at the opening of Blair Slip 1 to receive contaminated sediments in 2003. The Port and Occidental removed 63,894 cubic yards of sediment from the opening of Blair Slip 1, and replaced it with clean gravel and sand.

Dredging southeast of the 11st Street Bridge begins in July 2004. The Port and Occidental are working on preliminary designs dredging and capping from the 11th Street bridge toward the lower turning basin. EPA is working with the Port and Occidental to finalize designs and begin dredging in July 2004.

For more information, contact Peter Contreras at (206) 553-6708 or contreras.peter@epa.gov.

Head of Hylebos: Shoreline Excavation in 2003 – Dredging in 2004

Shoreline cleanup, including excavation and in-water demolition will occur along the ATOFINA shoreline, the former J&G property, and the General Metals graving dock from May through August 2003. Work will occur during low tides, using shore-based equipment.

Beginning in October 2003 through February 2004, Hylebos Marina will be relocating portions of the marina to prepare for dredging. Dredging at the head of Hylebos is now scheduled for July 2004. EPA mailed a letter to Hylebos Marina tenants to provide additional information on how the marina relocation will be coordinated. For more information, contact Peter Contreras at (206) 553-6708 or contreras.peter@epa.gov.

Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways:

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In-Water Work to Begin in August – City Contractor Selected

In February, the City of Tacoma completed early-action cleanup work at six locations in the Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood waterways. This August, the remainder of the cleanup will begin. It will focus on dredging over 500,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from the waterways, disposing of the sediments in a confined disposal facility close to shore in the St. Paul Waterway. Contaminants include chemicals, petroleum products and metals. Thick soil caps will be placed over other portions of the waterways, and some less-contaminated parts of the waterways will be monitored as they recover on their own.
As part of the project, the City will also build several fish habitat mitigation projects.

The Tacoma City Council recently authorized a contract with Manson Construction Company of Seattle to perform the remedial actions in the Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways. Manson will build the confined disposal facility, remove and cap contaminated sediments, and build habitat mitigation features. EPA, the City, and the City's contractor, KPFF Consulting Engineers, are overseeing Manson's efforts. The City expects the cleanup to be complete in three in-water field seasons. In-water work is only allowed between August and February of each year to protect migrating fish species.

In addition to the City's cleanup work in the bulk of the waterway, a group of industry firms (PacifiCorp, Puget Sound Energy, and Advance Ross Sub Company, known as the Utilities) will clean up sediments at the Head of the Foss Waterway. From the head to approximately the SR 509 bridge, contaminated sediments will be covered with a thick soil cap. An underwater wall built nearly all the way across the waterway just south of the bridge will help contain the sediments and the capping materials. The Utilities are working to finalize designs for the cleanup and achieve needed congressional deauthorization of a portion of the navigational channel. They hope to begin in-water
work in mid-August, at the same time the City moves forward with its portion of the waterway cleanup.

Detailed descriptions of planned work can be found in EPA's March 2003 Fact Sheet, on EPA's website at http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cbnt.
For more information, please contact:
Piper Peterson Lee at (206) 553-4951 or Peterson-lee.piper@epa.gov.

Earlier this year, debris was removed and 3 feet of capping material placed underneath the buildings and docks at Martinac Shipbuilding Corp.

St. Paul Waterway:

Sandy Gravel will be added to Prevent Erosion.

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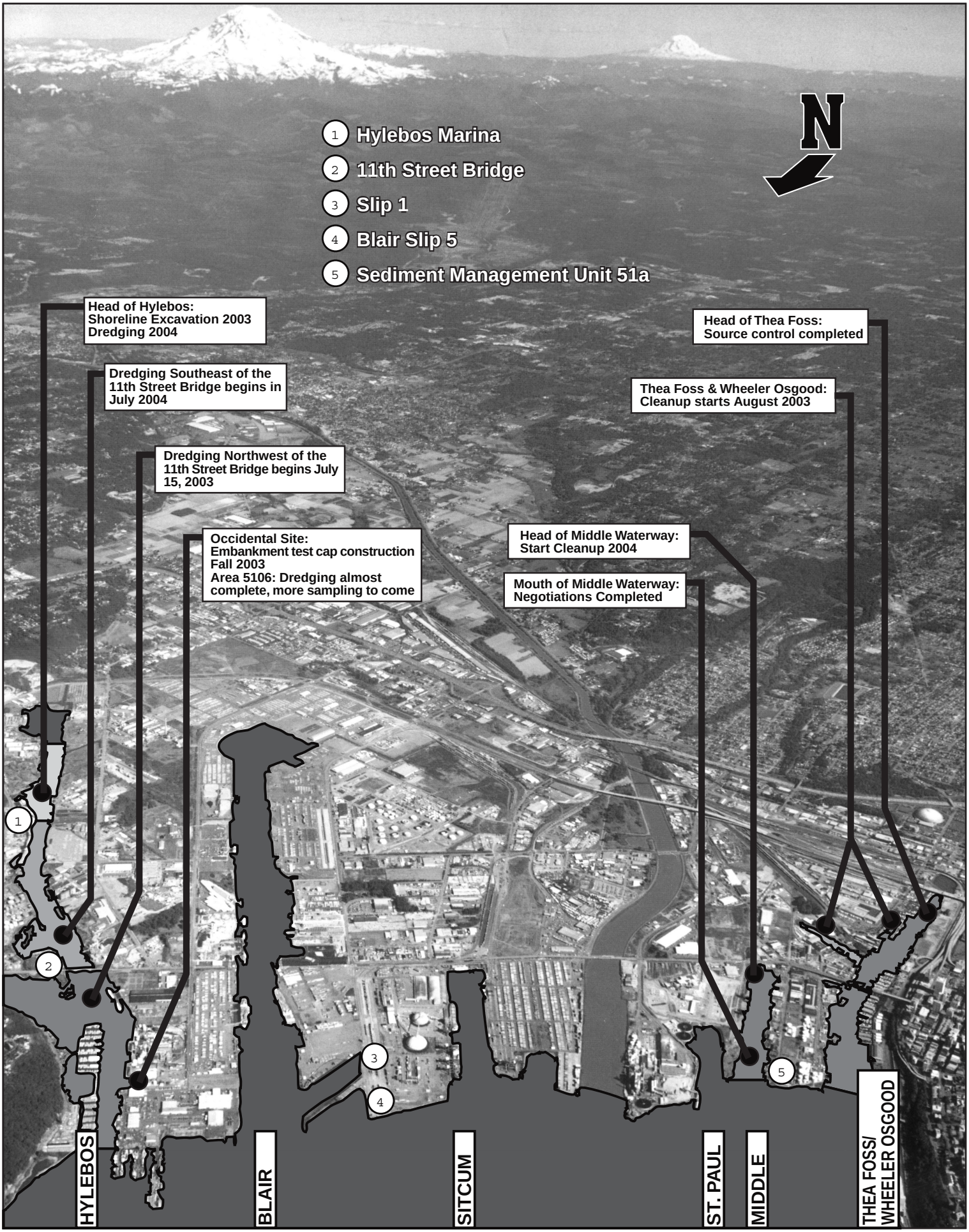
The sandy gravel will serve as a buffer zone between the waves and a cap built in 1987 to contain polluted sediments, as part of the Superfund Cleanup. This beach nourishment project is a preventive measure to keep the cap working effectively by ensuring the cap thickness remains adequate to isolate chemical contamination.

A similar nourishment project was successfully completed in 1995 by Simpson at Transect 5, located southwest of Transect 4. To date, benthic communities (flora and fauna at the bottom of the waterway) have successfully returned throughout the entire sediment cap. For more information, please contact Karen Keleey at (206) 553-2141 or keeley.karen@epa.gov.



Cleanup work to begin in three waterways

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10 Community Involvement and Outreach
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECO-081
Seattle, Washington 98101-1128

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Need More Information?

Documents about the Commencement Bay Cleanup 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, South 406
Tacoma, Washington
253-383-2429

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

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EPA would like to develop an e-mail list for future fact sheets 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 out paper copies.

Questions? Comments?

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

TTY ***For people with disabilities:***
Please call Lilibeth to request reasonable accommodations. TTY users please call 1-800-877-8339.