SUPERFUND Fact Sheet

COMMENCEMENT BAY NEARSHORE / TIDEFLATS

Tacoma, Washington

EPA U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY March 2003

City of Tacoma: Completed Six Initial Cleanup Actions; Plan to Start a Major Dredge Project in August;

City Completes Work to Prepare Waterway for Dredging

The City of Tacoma completed six initial cleanup projects at the Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterway's Superfund Site. The work had to be completed by February 15, 2003 when salmon are expected to move through the area for spawning. EPA commends the City for completing these initial cleanup actions. "The City has a big project in its hands and is keeping it on schedule," said Piper Peterson Lee, EPA's Superfund Project Manager in charge of overseeing the cleanup.

Here's the work that was completed:

1) **St. Paul Peninsula** – City contractors pulled 460 pilings from the water (*see photo at right*). These were disposed of at a solid waste facility. This area of the waterway is now clear to plant vegetation and perform other mitigation activities.

2) **Johnny's Seafood**– A permanent steel wall is now in place to keep the shoreline stable while the City dredges the waterway later this year.

(continued on page 2)

Vibratory hammer removing creosote treated pile that previously supported a pier structure at St. Paul Peninsula.

What Happens Next

Starting in August, the City will start dredging large amounts of contaminated sediment and capping some sediments that will remain in place in Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood waterways. The work will be conducted during the next three years for a period of 7–9 months each year. Work will not occur during the "fish window," the time when in-water work is not allowed, to protect salmon and other migratory fish.

The City is considering two disposal options for dredging sediments.

Transporting sediments to an upland landfill or *filling St. Paul's waterway*:

In August of 2000, EPA selected three possible disposal sites for the contaminated sediments to be dredged from Commencement Bay: Blair Slip One, St Paul Waterway and upland disposal. Detailed descriptions of these plans can be found in a document known as the *Explanation of Significant Differences* (ESD, 2000). It was anticipated that the St. Paul Waterway would be the primary disposal location for the Thea Foss sediments.

The City believes it may cost less to construct a pier and transport the dredged sediments to an upland landfill than dispose of sediments in the St. Paul Waterway. Given this, the City requested both disposal options be allowed to go to bid so that it can choose the least expensive option. City bids are due by the end of March 2003. For more

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Completed Work *(continued from page 1)*

3) **Martinac** — City contractors removed slag piles and debris from the two Wharfs (Wharf 2, south, and Wharf 3, north) at Martinac. A cap of three layers, filter material, large rocks, fine sand and small rocks is now on the shoreline. Work is scheduled at the third pier (Wharf 1, central) later this year.

4) **Wheeler-Osgood Waterway** — Two sunken boats and debris were removed from the waterway banks. A sand cap on the banks will rehabilitate the upland areas and prevent the banks from eroding into the waterway. New splash pads are now under outfalls where discharges occurred to prevent erosion of the bank.

5) **Totem Marine** — Along the bank, contractors excavated slag debris, placed a cap and a two-layer grout "blanket" (*see photo below*). The blanket will stabilize the steep slope and keep optimal depth of the marine floats nearest to the shore.

6) **Thea's Park** — a cap was placed on the bank slope of the waterway and filter material was placed deep in the channel.

EPA provided oversight throughout the project to ensure that work was done in accordance with EPA specifications. One of the requirements was for the City to monitor the quality of the water throughout all of the activities.

The shoreline was previously covered with large chunks of slag used to armor the shoreline and is now covered by a grout blanket. Adjacent areas are now covered with large clean rock. Boats are brought right up to the shoreline in this area to be raised out of the water.

What Happens Next *(continued from page 1)*

information about the bidding process please contact Mary Henley, City of Tacoma Project Manager, at 253-502-2113.

If you want to provide feedback to EPA on the disposal sites, please see contact information at the end of this document.

A closer look at the Upland Landfill disposal option

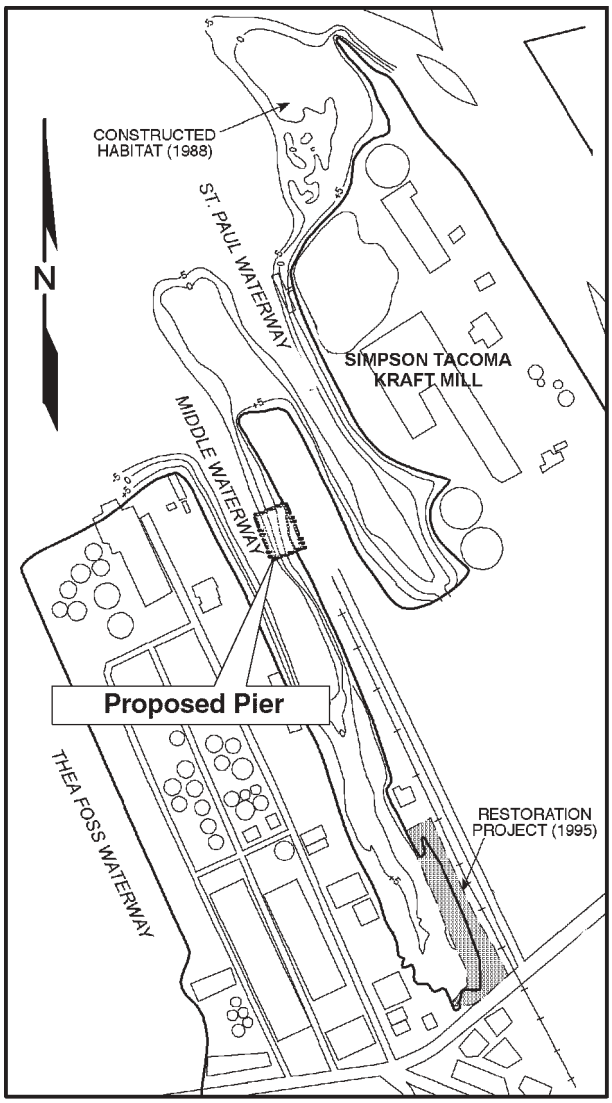
Contaminated sediments would be mechanically dredged from the bottom of the Waterway and collected into two to four barges each day.

Barges would travel from the waterways to a new pier that would be constructed at the Simpson Tacoma Land Company located one quarter of a mile from the entrance of the Thea Foss Waterway, on the peninsula between the St. Paul Waterway and the Middle Waterway (*See map on the facing page*).

The Simpson property was selected as the preferred location because it already has an existing rail spur, it is near the dredging areas, and it decreases transportation time and costs.

The property is available at no cost to the City of Tacoma. EPA anticipated in the Explanation of Significant Differences that a pier related to Simpson's operation would be constructed at this location.

Proposed Pier on Middle Waterway



Dredged sediments would be loaded onto railcars at a new pier located on the Simpson's property.

The new pier must be strong enough to support 6,000 tons of wet sediment each day and heavy equipment lifting the sediment, and to provide moorage for the barges while sediments are unloaded.

The pier would be about 21,900 square feet, made of steel-concrete piling. The pier would be equipped with a crane-mounted clamshell bucket and conveyor belts to unload the sediment from the boats to railcars or storage containers.

Railcars will be parked along the railway until enough containers are filled with sediment to make up a train that will travel to a landfill and unload the sediments there.

Constructing a pier will result in the loss of about half an acre of aquatic habitat. Three acres of additional mudflats to the north and south of the pier will be restored to offset short-and long-term effects from installing the pier and for cleanup work in the Thea Foss and Wheeler Osgood Waterways. The property owner will also provide land for habitat mitigation/restoration at no cost. Specific documentation can be found at EPA's information repositories.

Pier would remain after sediment cleanup is completed.

This pier would be used by Simpson as a marine cargo facility – which includes log barge loading, unloading, temporary moorage, and marine barge commerce typical of Puget sound west coast marine terminals. The City and Simpson are coordinating with both the Corps of Engineers and EPA on construction of the pier for remedial activities and future uses.

Simpson Tacoma Land Company applied for a permit from the Department of the Army to keep the pier in place after the cleanup. The Corps of Engineers , in accordance with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 will issue a separate Public Notice (reference # 2003-1-00224) for the proposed retention and future alternative uses of the pier.

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 10 (ECO-081)
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA 98101

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COMMENCEMENT BAY NEARSHORE/TIDEFLATS

Tacoma, Washington

City of Tacoma preparing to dredge
Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways

Thea Foss Cleanup

The City of Tacoma will clean 80 percent of the Thea Foss Waterway – starting near the SR 509 Bridge up to the mouth of the waterway and including the small Wheeler-Osgood Waterway.

In the Fall of 2003, Puget Sound Energy, PacifiCorp and Advance Ross Sub Co. will clean up the head of the Thea Foss – an area extending south of SR 509 Bridge to the head of the waterway. The work will include: installation of a sheetpile wall, some dredging and capping. EPA will oversee all of the work.

Soon, a separate fact sheet will be available that describes the legal agreements and announces public comment periods for more agreements.

For More Information Contact:

Environmental Protection Agency 1-800-424-4372
serrano-velez.lilibeth@epa.gov,
Community Involvement Coordinator, ext. 1388
peterson-lee.piper@epa.gov,
Superfund Project Manager, ext. 4951

City of Tacoma
Mary Henley, Project Manager, 253-502-2113
Linda Farmer, Community Relations, 253-591-5064

Repositories

The *Explanation of Significant Differences*, final design of the Pier (*Appendix V*) and other documents can be found at:

- **Tacoma Public Library – Main Branch**, 1102 Tacoma Avenue South, Northwest Room, Tacoma, Washington. 253-591-5666
- **Citizens for a Healthy Bay** 917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 406, Tacoma, Washington. 253-383-2429
- **Environmental Protection Agency, Superfund Records Center**, 1200 Sixth Avenue, 7th Floor, Seattle, Washington. 206-553-4494