

**SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE**

**LOS ANGELES BASIN
CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS TASK FORCE**

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Basin Contaminated Sediments Task Force was established in 1997 by the California Coastal Commission and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board pursuant to Senate Bill 673, Karnette. This second annual report describes progress made during 1999 by the multi-agency Task Force and highlights several major accomplishments of the past year. We are developing a long-term management plan for the dredging and disposal of contaminated sediments found in coastal waters adjacent to Los Angeles County by the statutory deadline of January 1, 2003.

1999 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- First Multi-User Contaminated Sediment Disposal Site
- Streamlining Report - Recommendations to Improve Permitting Process
- Adoption Process Report – Outline to Implement Long-Term Management Strategy
- Identification of Data Gaps
- Second Annual Public Workshop
- Finalization of Memorandum of Understanding
- Improved Internet Communication

ACCOMPLISHMENT 1 – COORDINATION OF A MULTI-USER DISPOSAL SITE

In late 1998, the Port of Long Beach (POLB) informed the Contaminated Sediments Task Force of plans to proceed with development of a constructed fill at its Pier E Slip 2 site. Although POLB planned to use this site to dispose of contaminated sediments from its own Pier T dredging project, the site was large enough to accommodate some contaminated sediments from other projects.

Ultimately, contaminated sediments from Long Beach Harbor (dredged by Port of Long Beach), the Los Angeles River Estuary (dredged by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on behalf of the City of Long Beach), and Marina del Rey (dredged by the Corps of Engineers on behalf of Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors) were disposed of in this site. Approximately 1.4 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments were placed into a constructed fill, completely isolated from the aquatic environment.

The project could not have been concluded successfully without the efforts and existence of the Contaminated Sediments Task Force. The Task Force's Interim Advisory Group served as a forum for problem resolution, successfully coordinated three separate dredging projects and created a functional multi-user disposal site. The Port of Long Beach's staff worked with their counterparts at the Corps of Engineers and LA County Department of Beaches and Harbors to overcome the many logistical and technical challenges associated with managing such large quantities of contaminated sediments.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 2 – IMPROVED PERMITTING PROCESS

The Task Force's Implementation Subcommittee was charged with developing a report summarizing how the existing process for reviewing and approving dredging projects might be improved. The Implementation Subcommittee issued its Streamlining Report in October 1999, proposing several possible mechanisms to make the permitting process more efficient and economical, while also improving protection of water quality and beneficial uses.

Over the past year, the Task Force has convened meetings of this Interim Advisory Group as needed to discuss issues and resolve problems related to specific dredging projects. Although the Interim Advisory Group has functioned very well, it is clear that additional changes are needed to further improve the permitting process. The Streamlining Report evaluates 18 potential short-term or long-term measures which could be adopted to improve the review and approval processes for permitting dredging activities. The Task Force has agreed upon the need for a single dredging permit application and consistent permit requirements, as well as standardization of best management practices for dredging operations. The Task Force plans to develop procedures to implement these changes during the upcoming year.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 3 – PROCESS FOR ADOPTION OF LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Task Force is required to submit the long-term management strategy to the Legislature by January 1, 2003. However, the strategy itself will not become truly effective until it has been adopted and implemented by the four regulatory agencies (California Coastal Commission, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, United States Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

The Task Force's Implementation Committee was charged with producing a report outlining the steps required to allow each agency to complete the adoption and implementation process. Early identification of key issues and planning for completion of critical tasks should help us avoid unnecessary delays. The Strategy Adoption Process report issued in November 1999 establishes a blueprint which would result in formal adoption of the strategy by the four regulatory agencies by mid-2003. To reach this goal, each agency will need to begin certain tasks during the upcoming year.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4 – IDENTIFICATION OF DATA GAPS

Each of the four action subcommittees (Aquatic Disposal and Dredge Operations, Upland Disposal and Beneficial Reuse, Watershed Management and Source Control, Sediment Thresholds) was asked to identify major issues or data gaps that remain to be addressed if we are to develop the long-term management strategy. Without this information, we may not be able to complete all components of the management strategy.

Each subcommittee produced a report in 1999 identifying the data gaps remaining and why it is important to address these issues. The four subcommittees identified 22 data gaps that should be addressed to allow completion of the management strategy. The Task Force prioritized these data gaps so that we could focus on completing the most critical studies. The priority projects are: 1) compile local sediment monitoring data into an electronic database to develop sediment quality guidelines for management of contaminated sediments; 2) evaluate environmental control measures to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts from dredging and disposal operations; 3) evaluate potential locations for a regional aquatic disposal site; 4) conduct a demonstration project for sediment re-use; and 5) identify pollutant sources within the watersheds of concern responsible for sediment contamination in downstream areas requiring dredging.

The Task Force plans to complete the high priority studies over the next two years. At the same time, we will investigate ways to conduct the lower priority studies or substitute information gathered by others.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 5 - ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The Task Force encourages the public to participate in discussions and provide comments on the management plan in annual public workshops. The public also is invited to attend and provide comments at Task Force and subcommittee meetings.

On November 2, 1999, the Task Force held its second annual public workshop as part of the California Coastal Commission's meeting in Santa Monica. Staff from the Coastal Commission and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board presented a brief description of the Task Force's goals, highlighted the major success stories of the past year, and discussed major tasks to be accomplished during the next year and future years. This progress report prompted discussion of major issues by the Commissioners and members of the public.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 6 – FINALIZATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Eight federal, state and local agencies now have signed both the original MOU and Amendment Number 1, signaling their commitment to work towards development and implementation of a long-term management strategy. Although these agreements did not take effect officially until March 15, 1999, each agency has been participating actively in the Task Force for a much longer time. The eight signatory agencies are: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Coastal Commission, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, City of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, and Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 7 – IMPROVED INTERNET COMMUNICATION

The Task Force maintains a page on the California Coastal Commission's web site to provide access to information about the project. This information is updated regularly, particularly the calendar listing upcoming meetings of the Task Force and its subcommittees. The goal is provide timely information so that the public or other interested parties can keep up with the Task Force's progress and attend any meetings, as desired. The web site includes summaries of each meeting, as well as background documents and reports produced by the Task Force. We have received requests for additional information from people who discovered the Task Force via the web site.

CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS TASK FORCE WEB PAGE

www.coastal.ca.gov/sediment/sdindex.html

[Please note: web site address is updated only in web version of report.]

MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

The Task Force made excellent progress during the past year towards developing the long-term plan for managing contaminated sediments. The Task Force has identified five subcommittees that focus on specific elements of the management strategy, namely Upland Disposal and Beneficial Re-Use, Aquatic Disposal and Dredge Operations, Sediment Thresholds, Watershed Management and Source Reduction, and Implementation. Each of the Subcommittees met regularly throughout the year and recently updated their workplans to identify the priority tasks to be accomplished during the upcoming year.

Achievements during the past year included:

- The Upland Disposal and Beneficial Re-Use Subcommittee completed a preliminary evaluation of the economic and technical feasibility of several disposal and re-use alternatives (including landfills, constructed fill, wetlands creation, concrete stabilization, physical separation). The subcommittee also initiated a study to gather information on the use of these alternatives around the world.
- The Watershed Management and Source Reduction Subcommittee analyzed existing sediment contamination data to attempt to identify a list of pollutants of concern within each watershed of interest (Ballona Creek, Dominguez Channel, Los Angeles River, San Gabriel River) that would narrow the focus for source control measures. The subcommittee reviewed and provided comments on the proposed scope of work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' study of sediment contamination within the Ballona Creek watershed, which ultimately could lead to the development of best management practices for source control of pollutants.
- The Aquatic Disposal and Dredge Operations Subcommittee reviewed and commented on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers modeling studies for evaluation and development of a confined aquatic disposal site for contaminated sediments. The subcommittee also began work on defining appropriate permit limits, best management practices and standard monitoring requirements for dredging operations involving contaminated sediments.
- The Sediment Thresholds Subcommittee sponsored a workshop with an expert from the Washington Department of Ecology to discuss the development and use of sediment criteria in the regulation of dredging activities. The subcommittee also agreed on a framework for moving forward with the development of sediment guidelines for the Los Angeles Region. Several preliminary tasks must be completed to define the scope and objectives for this process.

- The Implementation Subcommittee completed the Permit Streamlining Report and the Strategy Adoption Process Report during the past year. The Implementation Subcommittee also investigated several potential funding mechanisms to obtain additional funds to conduct special studies to fill the data gaps identified by the other subcommittees.

CONCLUSION

One of the major benefits of the Task Force has been improved communication between dredging applicants, the regulatory agencies and the environmental community. The Task Force has provided an opportunity for early identification of problems and a mechanism for resolution of the complex issues related to contaminated sediment management.

We particularly are pleased with the successful creation of a multi-user disposal site during the past year, resulting from the cooperation and diligent work of our Task Force members. By overcoming the technical and logistical obstacles posed by such a site, we have demonstrated the feasibility of such projects in the future. This should offer us an efficient, effective and environmentally sound method for managing contaminated sediments in the Los Angeles region. The California Coastal Commission and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board are looking forward to continued success as the members of the Task Force move towards completing and implementing the long-term management strategy.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Streamlining Report for Improving the Permitting Process for Review and Evaluation of Dredging Permits
- Appendix B: Strategy Adoption Report for Implementation of Long-Term Management Plan for Dredging and Disposal of Contaminated Sediments
- Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding Between Eight Agencies to Develop Management Strategies for Contaminated Sediments + Amendment No. 1 to the Memorandum of Understanding (March 15, 1999). 1

APPENDIX A

STREAMLINING REPORT FOR IMPROVING
THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR
REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF DREDGING PERMITS

APPENDIX B

STRATEGY ADOPTION REPORT FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR DREDGING AND DISPOSAL OF CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

APPENDIX C

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
EIGHT AGENCIES TO DEVELOP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
FOR CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

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AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING