



February 2007

PARTNERS: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the County of Orange, the California Department of Fish & Game and the California Coastal Conservancy are serving as the federal, state and local partners to restore and enhance Upper Newport Bay's ecosystem.

CONSTRUCTION STATUS: The Corps of Engineers' construction contractor, DD-M Crane & Rigging, dredged the access channel to the Unit II Basin during April 2006 and within the side channels around Middle Island, Shellmaker Island, and New Island from May to July 2006. DD-M has dredged the access channel within the Unit II Basin and the New Least Tern Island Pit. DD-M will continue to move its equipment to dredge sediments from Unit II Basin and Unit I/III Basin. The disposal barge moorage area previously located immediately south of Harbor Island has been relocated to deeper water west of Harbor Island. The Lower Bay moorage area will continue to be used, but less frequently, to accommodate the disposal barges as they await appropriate tide levels to transit upstream to the Upper Bay work area. By February 2007, about 180,000 cubic yards of material have been removed from the Upper Bay by the dredging of the access and side channels, and Unit II Basin, with the dredged material placed at the LA-3 ocean disposal site, located 5-miles southwest of the entrance to Newport harbor.

FEATURE BENEFIT: The dredging of the side channels around Middle Island, Shellmaker Island and New Island will increase habitat for aquatic species, improve tidal circulation and isolate the islands from terrestrial predators such as dogs, cats and coyotes. These channels were designed to be deepened to minus 2.23-ft MLLW, which is a depth that will provide at least two feet of water in the side channels during low tide. Dredging of the Unit II Basin will allow for the capture of sediments discharged from San Diego Creek which currently find their way to the Lower Bay, and which settle in other areas within the Upper Bay resulting in unwanted habitat changes. Currently the Unit II Basin, and its sister basin Unit I/III, are at capacity and are no longer functional as sediment catch basins.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH:

Question #1: There are signs posted prohibiting boaters, canoeists and kayakers from proceeding beyond the disposal barge within the Upper Bay (Back Bay). Why is this prohibition in place and will there be opportunities in the future for water craft to visit areas in the Upper Bay upstream of dredge operations?

Answer #1: For safety reasons, water craft in the Upper Bay (Back Bay) need to remain downstream of the disposal barge. The submerged pipeline leading from the dredge platform to the disposal barge can at times unexpectedly surface, potentially causing harm to water craft floating above the pipeline. Prohibiting boaters, canoeists and kayakers from transiting upstream of the disposal barge will eliminate this hazard to water craft. However, restricted boating access to the Upper Bay (Back Bay) is permitted during times the dredge contractor is not scheduled to work, normally on Sundays and holidays. These restrictions generally include: 1) boating is limited to non-motorized water craft and a 5 MPH speed limit; 2) boating is permitted in the main channel up to the Salt Dike (Top of Unit II Basin); and, 3) boating is not permitted in side channels or anywhere from the Salt Dike to Jamboree Road. Additionally, guided group tours of the Upper

Bay (Back Bay) are allowed upstream of the disposal barge during operating hours for the dredge, only if the tour group has obtained a permit from the California Department of Fish & Game for transit, and adheres to the protocol of notifying the dredge platform on Channel 82 upon approach to the dredge and/or disposal barge.

Question #2: What is the equipment in the Unit II Basin?

Answer #2: DD-M Crane and Rigging has brought in a clamshell dredge to deepen the Sediment Control Unit II Basin. The clamshell dredge began dredging on September 15, 2006. Materials are placed in a 3000 or 1500 cubic yard scow, and hauled and disposed of at LA-3 Ocean Disposal Area. The hydraulic cutterhead suction dredge will continue to be utilized for various parts of the construction. There is no impact to the overall schedule for completion of this phase of the project.

WEB SITE: For additional information on the Upper Newport Bay Ecosystem Restoration project please go to one of the following web sites:

<http://www.city.newport-beach.ca.us/UpperBayProject.html>
<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/uppernewport.htm>

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