



June 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 began construction activities April 2006. Areas of construction include sediment basins, restoration channels around islands, wetland restoration areas, and island creation/improvement. Estimated completion of current work is early 2008.

Sediment Basins. In order to meet current TMDL limits, the two sediment basins have been sized for a capacity to capture incoming sediments, such that the need for maintenance dredging will be based upon a 21-year cycle. The access channel to the Unit II Basin was dredged during April 2006. The access channel within the Unit II Basin and the New Least Tern Island Pit has been dredged. The clamshell dredge DB-3 continues to dredge sediments from Unit II Basin. A portion of Unit I/III Basin was dredged with the 10-inch hydraulic cutter suction dredge in March 2007. The sediment basins are being deepened to about -17 feet MLLW and the access channels are about 100 feet wide and about -11 feet MLLW in depth.

Restoration Channels. The islands in the Upper Bay are nesting areas for endangered species. The channels surrounding the islands had shoaled and needed restoration to depths to protect the island from predator access during low tides. The depth of the side channels are about -2 feet MLLW and have varying widths. The side channels around Middle Island, Shellmaker Island, and New Island were dredged from May 2006 to July 2006. The Hotdog Tern Island Restoration Channel was completed in April 2007.

Wetland Restoration Areas. Years ago, prior construction activities disposed of the dredged material on top of mudflat areas. This project includes removal of these materials to restore the area to mudflat again. Bullnose West has been cleared of vegetation, and the hydraulic dredge is currently removing sediments from the area to restore to mudflat. The hydraulic dredge is subject to tides, and work continues into June 2007. Work has also begun in clearing and grubbing the areas upon Shellmaker Island and 23rd Street. Work has slowed at 23rd Street because of nesting Clapper Rails. Land-based equipment on site includes Caterpillar dozers, excavator, dump truck, Tele-lift, and boom truck.

Least Tern Island Creation/Improvement. Hotdog Tern Island required resurfacing in order to become a more viable habitat for the California Least Tern, an endangered species. Clearing the vegetation, grading of on site materials, and placement and grading of coarser-grained sand cap was performed and completed in April 2007. Construction of the New Least Tern Island has begun using materials from on site, but is not yet visible. It is located adjacent to the main dike next to Basin II.

Material disposal. The majority of dredged sediments are being disposed offshore at LA-3, with the use of towed disposal barges. Two 1000 cubic yard scows are currently being utilized for disposal operations. 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 May 2007, about 500,000 cubic yards of material have been removed from the Upper Bay by the dredging of the access and side channels, and Sediment Basins, 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, New Island, and Hotdog Tern 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 average 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. At the beginning of the restoration project, 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 Main Dike (Top of Unit II Basin); and, 3) boating is not permitted in side channels or anywhere from the Main 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 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.

Question #3: What is happening to the open space area off Constellation Drive?

Answer #3: This area is referred to as 23rd Street Wetland Restoration Area. In the 1970's, dredged material from Basin II was placed upon mudflats in this area and the project includes restoring part of this area to original mudflat. Some of the work conducted to date is clearing of vegetation in the construction zone and partial dredging of the access channel to the 23rd Street site.

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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Dredging Hotdog Tern Island Restoration Channel and resurfacing Hotdog Island.



Construction Equipment and temporary bridge March 15, Hotdog Island.



Hotdog Island April 3, with beginning of sand capping.



Hotdog Island April 28 2007 with sand capping completed.



Hotdog Island April 28 2007 chick shelter tiles placed.



Clamshell Dredge with 5 cubic yard bucket and 3000 cubic yard scow, dredging Sediment Basin II.