

Suisun Bay National Reserve Fleet Assessment Project

Update – MAY 2008

N OAA's Office of Response and Restoration is investigating environmental contaminants in and around the National Reserve Fleet in Suisun Bay, California. More than 70 obsolete or decommissioned vessels make up the fleet, which is maintained by the United States Maritime Administration (MARAD). Potential environmental concerns include heavy metals and antifouling agents in paint that is peeling off of the vessels, as well as PCBs and other hazardous materials that may have been released. NOAA began work on this project in January. Since then, NOAA's team has assessed existing data from the area to determine data gaps, researched the history and environmental setting of the site, discussed the project with numerous stakeholders, conducted a site visit, and developed and refined a sampling and analysis plan. NOAA will collect sediment and bivalve tissue samples from the area later this summer. The following information is part of a continuing series of monthly project updates.

Recent Progress

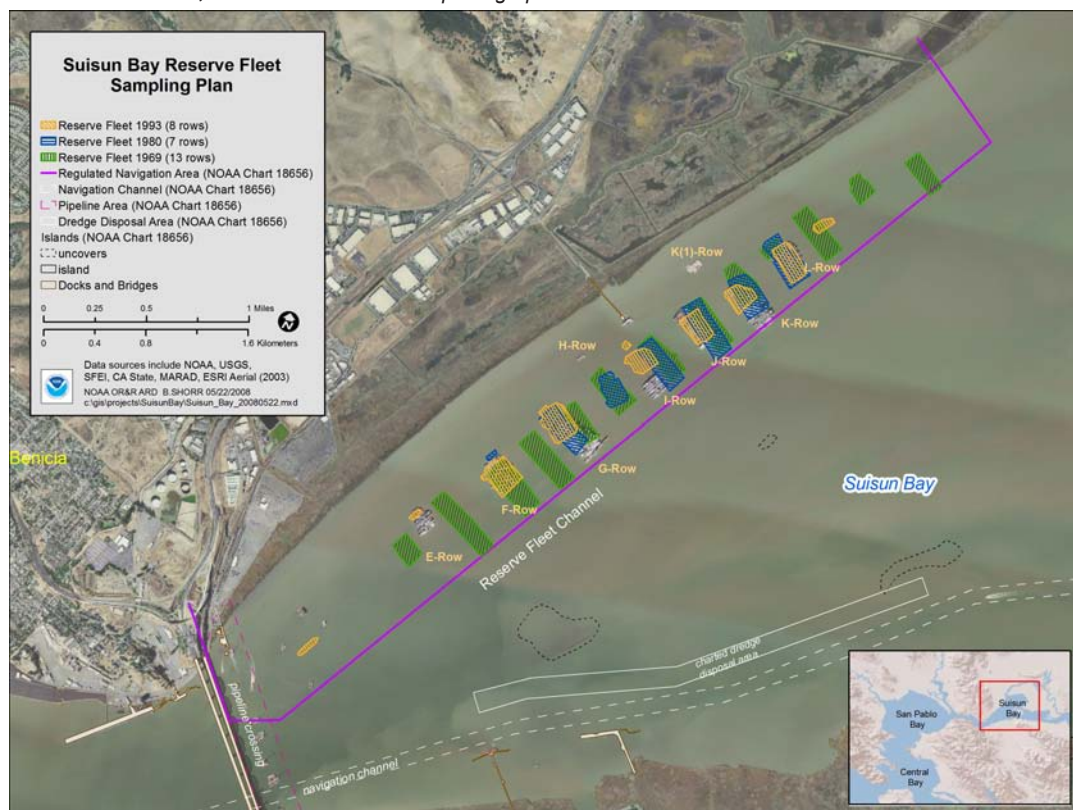
The initial draft of the sampling and analysis plan was released in April, and numerous stakeholders provided comments on the plan. NOAA's technical team has held several meetings with stakeholders to clarify comments received on the plan.

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) collaborates with other agencies, industry, and citizens to protect and restore coastal and marine resources threatened or injured by oil spills, releases of hazardous substances, and vessel groundings.

Extensive changes were made to the draft plan to address stakeholder concerns and more fully explain NOAA's approach and rationale. The revised plan was distributed on May 26. Key revisions include:

- clarification of the project objectives and site conceptual model;
- expanded discussion of the hydrodynamics of the

This figure shows historical moorage footprints of the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet based on aerial photographs from 1969, 1980, and 1993. The base aerial photograph is from 2003 and current rows/nests are labeled.



area and implications for sediment transport and sample placement;

- expanded data interpretation and hypothesis section;
- modifications to planned sample locations based on site accessibility and other logistical issues; and
- additional sediment sample locations and adjusted bivalve sampling methods.

NOAA secured contracts for boats and equipment to assist with field sample collection and for laboratory chemical analytical services.

NOAA coordinated with MARAD regarding logistical support. MARAD will help with the planned bivalve deployment efforts within the fleet and will provide boat access and dock space for the support vessels during the field sampling.

Next Steps

On June 2nd, NOAA will host a web-assisted meeting with stakeholders to review the revised sampling and analysis plan and highlight the changes made to address stakeholder comments.

NOAA's field team will collect bivalves in early June for transport and deployment within the project area in late June.

For More Information

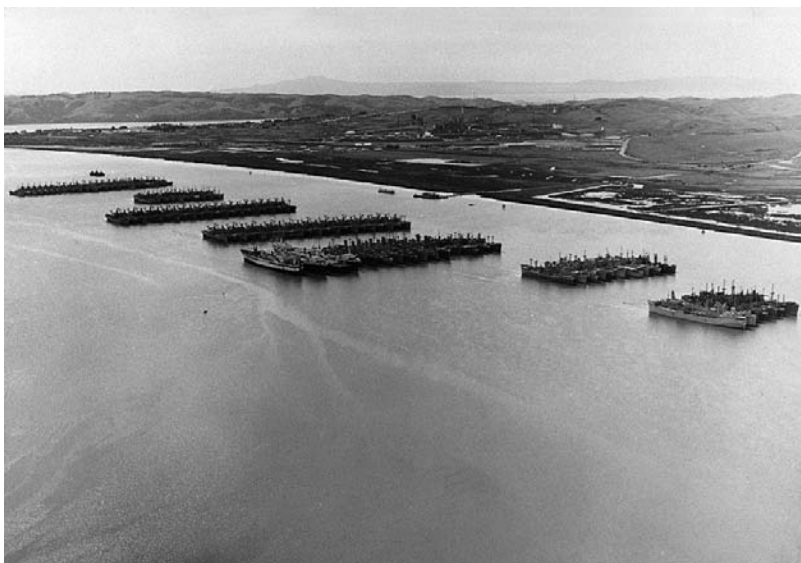
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To learn more about this project and NOAA's program to protect and restore natural resources injured by releases of hazardous materials, visit our Web site:

<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/>



Historic photo of the reserve fleet from the 1950s (photo courtesy of MARAD)

Suisun Bay Timeline

