

# MONTROSE SETTLEMENTS RESTORATION PROGRAM

Planning is underway to restore natural resources injured by DDTs and PCBs in the Southern California marine environment

## LITIGATION ENDS, RESTORATION BEGINS

From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, millions of pounds of DDTs and PCBs were discharged from industrial sources through a sewer outfall into the ocean near Los Angeles. More than 100 tons of these chemicals remain in the marine environment and continue to harm birds and impair fishing in the Southern California Bight (see map).

DDTs in the food of bald eagles and peregrine falcons have caused these birds to lay defective eggs. Bald eagles reintroduced to Santa Catalina Island have had difficulty hatching their eggs without human assistance. For certain species of fish contaminated with high levels of DDTs and PCBs near Los Angeles, the State of California has issued fish consumption advisories. The state has also banned commercial fishing for white croaker near the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Certain species of fish in the ocean near Los Angeles are contaminated with high levels of DDTs and PCBs. The State of California has issued public fish consumption advisories for these fish. The State has also banned commercial fishing for white croaker near the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

**DDTs and PCBs** are slow to break down in the environment and accumulate in plants and animals.

"DDTs" refers to a mixture of similar chemicals widely used as pesticides starting in the 1940s. The U.S. banned the use of DDTs in 1973.

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are a group of 206 related chemicals once widely used in electrical transformers, hydraulic fluids and paints.



Photo: John and Karen Hollingsworth, USFWS

The State and Federal governments held the polluters responsible, and in December 2000 the final settlement was signed, ending ten years of litigation. Under the terms of four separate settlement agreements, Montrose Chemical Corporation and the other defendants agreed to pay \$140 million to the government.

Following Superfund law, these funds will be used for two different types of activities:

1. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control will use a share of the funds to reduce the exposure of people and wildlife to DDTs and PCBs. For example, these agencies are considering covering the contaminated sediments with clean sediments and conducting additional efforts to reduce public consumption and prevent commercial catch of contaminated fish. (For more about EPA's activities, contact them at (800) 231-3075.)

2. **State and federal resource agencies**, collectively known as the **Natural Resource Trustees**, will use approximately \$30 million to restore public resources harmed by the DDTs and PCBs.

**This fact sheet describes how the Natural Resource Trustees will plan the restoration projects**

## RESTORATION GOALS

As required by Superfund law, the Natural Resource Trustees must use the settlement monies to restore natural resources that were harmed by chemicals at issue in this case. The highest priority will go to projects that most directly and effectively restore the natural resources harmed by the DDTs and PCBs. Thus, the Trustees will focus restoration efforts on the birds and fishing resources affected by these contaminants.

## TAKING ACTION

In the coming months, the Natural Resource Trustees will be asking the public to help identify the best projects to meet the restoration goals. Some of the initial activities include:

- ▶Creating a website, fact sheets, and other educational materials to exchange information with the public;
- ▶Releasing a document in the summer of 2001 describing the Trustees' plans to involve the public in restoration planning and requesting comments on initial restoration concepts;
- ▶Soliciting public input by attending various events, holding public meetings, and conducting surveys;
- ▶Coordinating restoration efforts with other agencies and groups conducting similar work in Southern California;
- ▶Releasing a Draft Restoration Plan for public comment in 2002;
- ▶Surveying contaminant levels in sport and commercial fish, allowing Trustees to plan projects to create better fishing environments and inform the public about fish and fishing locations with low levels of contamination;
- ▶Initiating a study in summer 2002 to evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing bald eagles to the Channel Islands National Park; and
- ▶Establishing a restoration staff and science review boards to ensure an effective restoration program.

To find out more about the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program, visit our web site at [www.darcnw.noaa.gov/montrose.htm](http://www.darcnw.noaa.gov/montrose.htm), or send us a request to be placed on our mailing list. See the different ways to contact us on the other side of this fact sheet.

**YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS IMPORTANT**

DDTs and PCBs dumped in the ocean years ago continue to harm natural resources in coastal southern California. Now that the Natural Resource Trustees have settled lawsuits brought against those responsible, you can help us select the best restoration projects. Please read this brochure, visit our web site at [www.darcnw.noaa.gov/montrose.htm](http://www.darcnw.noaa.gov/montrose.htm), and watch for announcements on meetings and events. Call (866) 795-7786 or e-mail us at [msrp@noaa.gov](mailto:msrp@noaa.gov) to be placed on a distribution list to receive notices of upcoming events and document releases.



Photo: John Cubitt, NOAA



**DDTs & PCBs IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIGHT.**

From the late 1940's to about 1970, DDTs and PCBs were discharged through the sewer outfall at White Point, contaminating the marine environment shown in this map.

Because DDTs and PCBs persist in this area, the State of California has issued warnings to limit the consumption of certain fish caught at specific locations between Pt. Dume and Newport Beach and has issued a ban on commercial fishing for white croaker around the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The DDTs continue to cause eggshell thinning for peregrine falcons on the northern Channel Islands and prevent bald eagles from naturally reproducing on Santa Catalina.

**MONTROSE SETTLEMENTS RESTORATION PROGRAM**  
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*The above logos represent the Natural Resources Trustees for  
the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program.*