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# Cleanup Work Completed at Tannery Bay Site

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**Tannery Bay Legacy Act Site/St. Marys River AOC**  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan September 2007

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## Two Meetings Set

EPA, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Phelps Dodge will present information about the Tannery Bay cleanup:

**Wednesday, Sep. 19, 7 p.m.**  
**Binational Public Advisory  
Council**

**Lake Superior State University's  
Cisler Student and Conference  
Center**  
**650 W. Easterday Ave.**  
**Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**

You are also invited to participate in an on-site open house to see the results and ask questions about the cleanup of the site. The open house will be:

**Thursday, Sep. 20, 10 a.m.**  
**East of the intersection  
of South and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets**

For special accommodations at the open house, contact:

Don de Blasio  
EPA Community Involvement  
Coordinator  
312-886-4360  
Or, toll-free 800-621-8431 (in U.S.),  
10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays  
deblasio.don@epa.gov.

A cleanup project to remove contaminated sediment from Tannery Bay is done, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office. It is the fourth sediment cleanup – and the third in Michigan – to be completed using funds provided by the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002.

Dredging began last September and was halted during the winter months. Work resumed in June and was completed by the end of August. In that time, workers dredged 41,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment out of Tannery Bay.

The contaminated sediment was transported by barge to the MCM Marine location east of the Soo Locks. At MCM Marine, the water was allowed to drain out of the sediment and the water was treated at the site before being sent to the local wastewater treatment plant. The remaining material, containing chromium and mercury from a former tannery on the site, was then taken to nearby Dafter Landfill for disposal. The former tannery site itself was cleaned up under EPA's Superfund program in 1999.

Final figures show the cleanup removed 880,000 pounds of chromium and more than 70 pounds of mercury from the bay and the wetland on Tannery Point.



**Aerial view of Tannery Bay. The dredging operation platform can be seen on the right.**

The \$8 million cost of the project was shared by the Great Lakes Legacy Act (\$4.8 million), site owner Phelps Dodge Corp. (\$2.6 million) and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, through the state's Clean Michigan Initiative (\$600,000). The St. Marys River is a joint U.S.-Canadian "area of concern," which marks the region for special environmental attention.

All the dredging equipment has been removed from the bay and surrounding area, and workers have lined the shoreline with native plant seedlings to control erosion. This work was completed in August.

Other completed Legacy Act cleanups are the Black Lagoon near Detroit, Hog Island Inlet/St. Louis River in Superior, Wis., and Ruddiman Creek in Muskegon, Mich. The Ashtabula River cleanup in Ashtabula, Ohio, is under way. Several other cleanup projects using Legacy Act funds have been proposed.



**A dredge deposits sediment dug out of Tannery Bay onto a barge. Workers removed the water from the mud, treated the water and disposed of the contaminated materials.**

### **About the Great Lakes Legacy Act**

Although discharges of toxic substances into the Great Lakes have been reduced over the last 20 years, high concentrations of pollution remain in the bottom of some rivers and harbors. That poses a potential risk to people and wildlife. As a result, states have issued advisories in most locations around the Great Lakes against eating locally caught fish.

The tributaries and harbors identified as having pollution problems are known as "areas of concern," or AOCs. There are 42 AOCs on the Great Lakes – 25 on the U.S. side, 12 in Canada and five shared between the two countries. Tannery Bay is part of the 69-mile-long St. Marys River AOC, which connects lakes Superior and Huron through the Soo Locks.

Congress passed and the President signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 to address the problem of contaminated sediment in these 31 areas. The Legacy Act authorizes \$270 million in funding over five years for cleanups. Fiscal Year 2004 was the first in which Legacy Act funds were available for projects, and Congress appropriated \$9.9 million. In 2005, Congress appropriated \$22.3 million, and \$29.6 million was appropriated in 2006 for Legacy Act cleanups. In fiscal 2007, \$30 million was appropriated for the program.