

Dredging Project Set to Start; Legacy Act Funding a First

Black Lagoon

Trenton, Michigan

September 2004

Meeting scheduled

You are invited to attend a public meeting **Monday, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m.** in the Fireplace Room of Westfield Activities Center, 2700 Westfield Center in Trenton. EPA and DEQ will join local officials to explain the work at Black Lagoon and how it will affect local residents.

For special accommodations at the meeting, contact Bri Bill at EPA. If you have questions about the meeting, or about the project itself, contact any of these team members:

Bri Bill
EPA Region 5
(312) 353-6646
(800) 621-8431
bill.briana@epa.gov

Marc Tuchman
Great Lakes National Program
Office
(312) 353-1369
(800) 621-8431
tuchman.marc@epa.gov

Michelle Jaster
EPA Grosse Ile Office
(734) 692-7683
jaster.michelle@epa.gov

Mike Alexander
Michigan Department of
Environmental Quality
(517) 335-4189
alexandm@michigan.gov

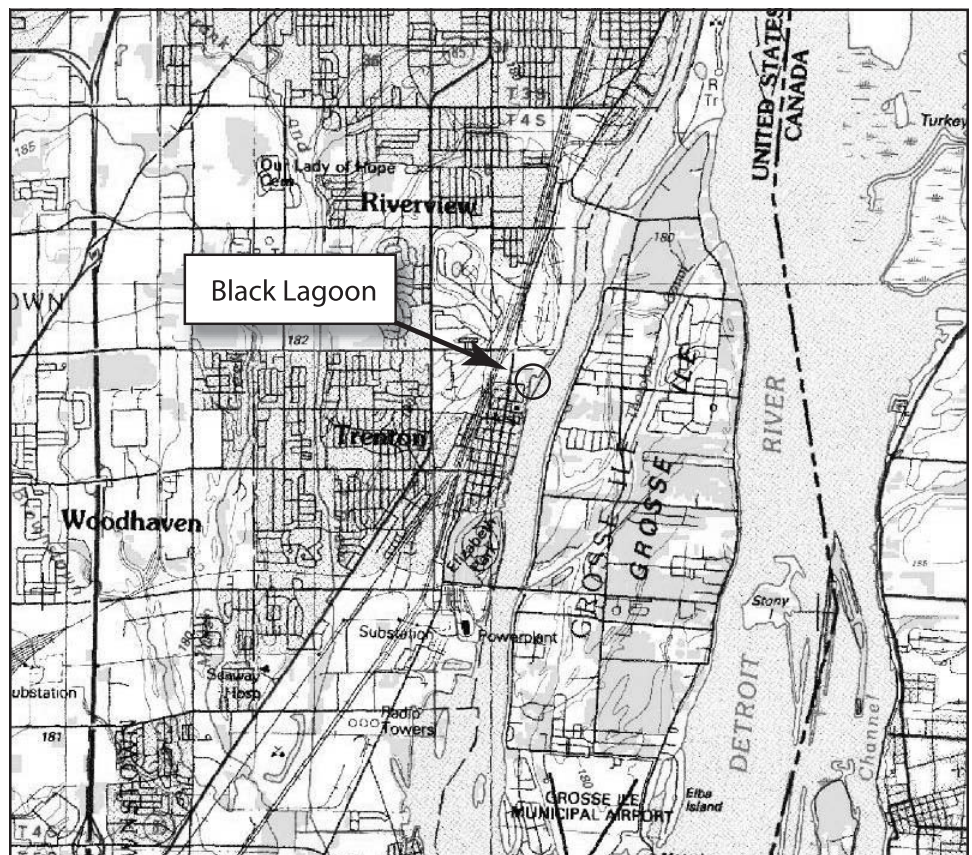
Once work begins, you may also visit the on-site construction office in a trailer at the park.

Work is about to begin on the removal of about 90,000 cubic yards of polluted sediment (mud) from Black Lagoon. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office and Michigan Department of Environment Quality will jointly oversee this \$6.5 million project. Equipment will be moved into place during the last week in September and dredging should begin in mid-October.

Officials of both agencies will explain the project at a public meeting Monday, Oct. 4, in Trenton (see box at left). EPA, DEQ and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are collaborating on the dredging project.

The project involves dredging up polluted sediment from the bottom of the lagoon and taking it to Pte. Mouillee Confined Disposal Facility, which is operated by the Corps of Engineers.

Most of the work will be done in the lagoon, but project offices will be set up in Trenton's Meyer Ellias Memorial Park on Helen Avenue. The park will also serve as a staging area for equipment and personnel. The waterfront area will be fenced off during the project, which is expected to be completed in early 2005. Once the dredging is complete, workers will place layers of sand and rock on the bottom of the lagoon. Any damage to the park will be repaired once the project is completed.





This aerial photo shows Black Lagoon, a 2-acre cove in the Detroit River where EPA plans to dredge up contaminated sediment. Trenton's Meyer Ellias Memorial Park will serve as a staging area and house project offices.

Drawbridges will affect local traffic

People who live and work in the area will be interested in how the project will affect the flow of traffic. The polluted sediment will be taken by barge to Pte. Mouillee for disposal. That means the toll bridge on Bridge Road between Grosse Ile and Trenton will be opened at least twice a day to allow barge traffic to travel up the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River.

EPA and DEQ are working closely with local officials and the company that operates the toll bridge to minimize the effect on traffic. Current plans are to make barge trips only before 6 a.m. and after 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. That means the drawbridge would be opened twice a day during non-peak traffic hours. EPA officials estimate that the bridge could be open for as much as 10 minutes for each barge trip.

There may also be increased traffic around the park during the day, for 10 to 12 hours a day. Once the dredging is complete, trucks will haul in sand and rock

to be placed on the bottom of the lagoon. That means more truck traffic on Jefferson Avenue and possibly Helen Avenue for several weeks. However, this stage of the project most likely won't begin until early next year.

A first for the Legacy Act

The Black Lagoon project is significant because it is the first cleanup project to be paid for in part with funds provided by the Great Lakes Legacy Act. Passed by Congress and signed by the President in 2002, the Act authorizes federal funds specifically to clean up polluted sediment in specific areas of the Great Lakes (see box below).

Additional funds provided by the Clean Michigan Initiative

The Clean Michigan Initiative is a \$675 million bond to clean up, protect and enhance Michigan's environmental quality and natural resources. DEQ reserved \$25 million for nine watersheds in the state, including the Detroit River and Black Lagoon. About \$2 million of that is being used for the Black Lagoon project

Environmental controls in place

The sediment in Black Lagoon is contaminated with PCBs, as well as oil, grease, mercury and other heavy metals. Several techniques will be in place to guard against any accidental release of pollution. For example, a device called a "silt curtain" will be placed around the dredging area to prevent contaminated sediment from drifting away. As an additional precaution, several oil spill booms will help contain and collect any oil released as a result of the dredging.

Throughout the project, EPA will monitor the air around the site regularly to ensure the safety of workers and those who live nearby. Monitors will specifically test for contaminants known to be in the sediment in Black Lagoon. Also, the water immediately outside the lagoon will be tested regularly to be sure oil and grease is not moving away from the site due to the dredging.

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 31 AOCs on the American side of the Great Lakes. Black Lagoon is part of the Detroit River AOC.

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. This includes funds for public outreach and research, in addition to money for cleaning up the sediment. Fiscal Year 2004 is the first in which Legacy Act funds were available for projects, and Congress appropriated \$10 million.