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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DETROIT RIVER'S "BLACK LAGOON" TO BE FIRST GREAT LAKES LEGACY ACT CLEANUP

Trenton, Mich. (Sept. 27, 2004) — The Black Lagoon on the Detroit River in Trenton, Mich., will be the first contaminated sediment site to be cleaned up under the Great Lakes Legacy Act. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Mike Leavitt announced the joint project with Larry Arreguin of Governor Jennifer Granholm's Southeast Michigan office. Site preparation begins this week and the dredging will begin in mid-October. The project will be completed using \$4.2 million in Legacy Act funds and \$2.3 million from the Clean Michigan Initiative.

"Purging the Black Lagoon underscores our commitment to protecting the Great Lakes," Leavitt said. "Targeting this riverbed contamination means every drop of water flowing through here will be cleaner."

"The improved water quality of the Great Lakes and Michigan's lakes and streams continues to be a top priority for the Granholm Administration," said Michigan Dept. of

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Environmental Quality Director Steven E. Chester. "With 14 areas of concern within Michigan's borders alone, it is crucial that funding match our commitment to the restoration of these critical bodies of water."

Contaminated sediment in the lagoon is a source of pollution to the Detroit River and ultimately Lake Erie. EPA and MDEQ will remove approximately 90,000 cubic yards of sediment contaminated with mercury, PCBs, oil and grease, lead and zinc from the bottom of the lagoon. Mercury and PCBs are the leading causes of fish consumption advisories in the Great Lakes.

The cleanup is expected to be completed by mid-January. Once the sediment is removed, it will be disposed of in the Pointe Mouillee Confined Disposal Facility. The bottom of the lagoon will then be covered with sand and rock. The city of Trenton plans to redevelop the area including construction of a marina.

Congress passed and President Bush signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act in 2002. The Act authorizes \$270 million in funding over five years, beginning this year, to assist with the remediation of contaminated sediment in "areas of concern," toxic hot spots around the Great Lakes. The Black Lagoon was chosen as the first project to be funded because the type, amount and extent of the contaminants are well known and they are confined to one area making it possible to improve the environment quickly.

EPA and MDEQ received assistance with planning this cleanup from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the city of Trenton and the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative.

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The Detroit River is a 32-mile international connecting channel linking Lake St. Clair and the upper Great Lakes to Lake Erie. It has been identified as one of 42 areas of concern on the Great Lakes.

More information on this action, the Legacy Act and the Great Lakes is on EPA's Web site www.epa.gov/grtlakes.

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