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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1

August 23, 1999

New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Update

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is an 18,000 acre urban estuary reaching from the upper Acushnet River into Buzzards Bay. Its sediments are highly contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals. Cleanup of the site has been divided into three phases or "operable units:" the hot spots, the upper and lower harbor, and the outer harbor areas.

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Community Forum was formed in 1994 to develop a consensus-based cleanup plan to replace on-site incineration as the selected treatment technology for the hot spot sediments. Having developed consensus-based cleanup plans for both the hot spots and the upper and lower harbor, the Forum's current mission is advising the regulatory agencies as the cleanup efforts progress.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE NEW BEDFORD HARBOR CLEANUP?

Hot Spot Sediment Removal

The five worst acres of PCB-contaminated sediment were removed from the Acushnet River in 1994 and 1995 and placed in interim storage in a shoreline facility on Sawyer Street. After performing treatability studies on the dredged sediment and building local consensus for a final remedy, EPA in April 1999 selected off-site landfilling as the final location for these 14,000 cubic yards of sediment. Preparatory work for this remedy is now underway and removal of these sediments from the Sawyer Street facility to an off-site landfill is scheduled to start this fall and be completed next spring.

Cleanup of the Upper and Lower Harbor (Phase Two)

Dredging

To address remaining PCB-contaminated sediments north of the hurricane barrier, EPA in September 1998 selected dredging and shoreline containment of approximately 450,000 cubic yards of sediment as the final remedy for this area. Over the next seven years, approximately 170 acres of seabed will be dredged and placed in four shoreline "confined disposal facilities" or CDFs. Phase Two dredging is currently scheduled to begin in summer 2001.

Once the consolidation of the dredged sediment is complete, approximately 44 acres of new waterfront land will be created. EPA is working with the City of New Bedford to make this new land available for reuse as both shoreline greenspace and working waterfront.

CDFs

Work is on track to start construction of the first CDF near Sawyer Street in summer 2000. Prior to that, beginning in Spring 2000, construction will begin in the Sawyer Street area for relocation of a "combined sewer overflow," or CSO, which has to be moved to make way for the CDF. EPA contractors have been operating drill rigs in the harbor to gather soil and

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- **Forum Meeting**
  Sept. 28, 1999 at 6 p.m.
  New Bedford Voc Tech
  High School Auditorium
- **Business Outreach Open House**
  Sept. 1999 (tentative)
- **Site Open House**
  October 19, 1999
  Time will be announced
  Sawyer Street Facility

For More Information on Site Activities Call:

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sediment information to prepare for these construction activities.

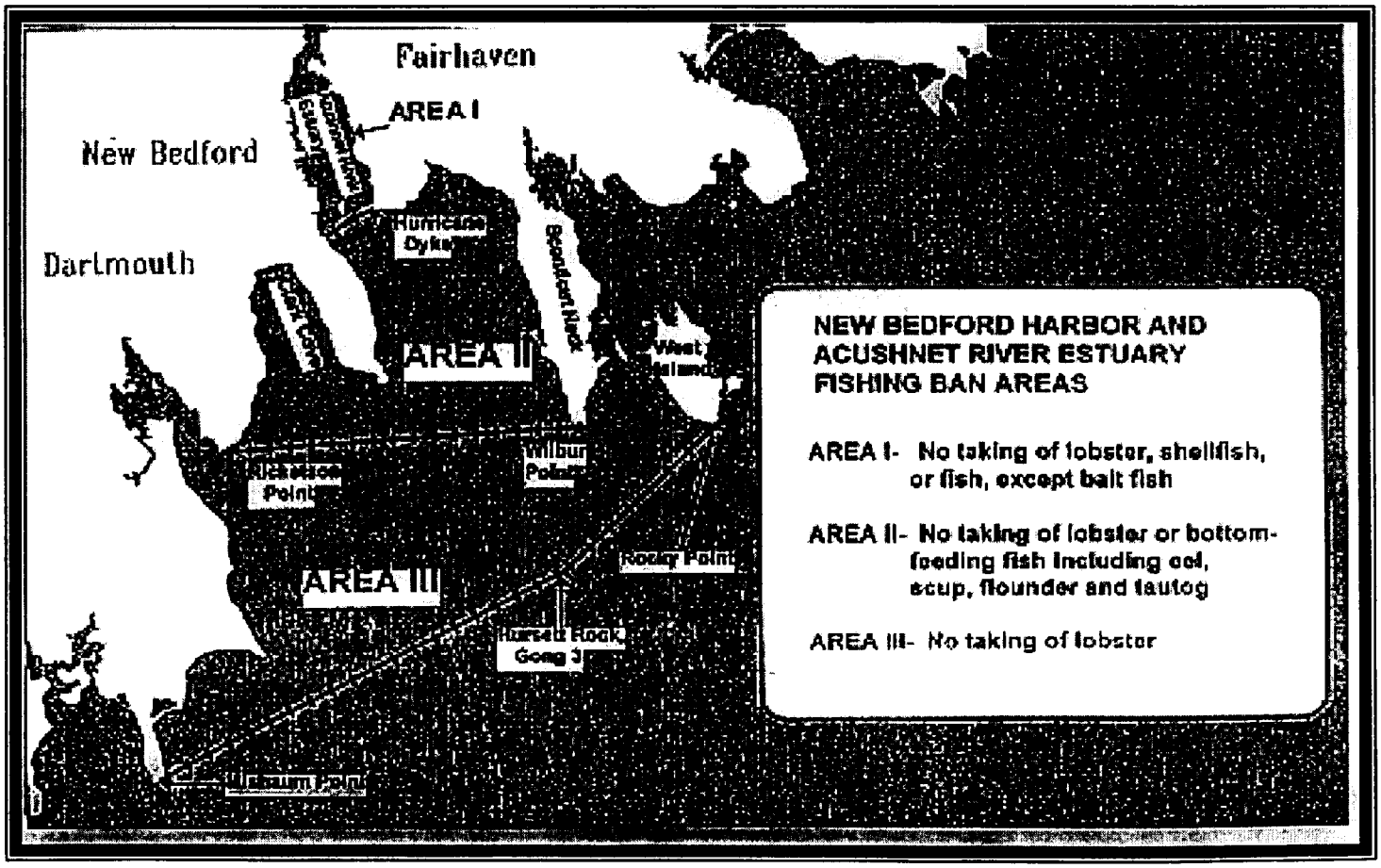
Phase Two Efforts Underway

As part of EPA's efforts to fine-tune the cleanup process, an extensive shoreline and wetland sampling program is underway until the end of October 1999. Sediments are being monitored for PCBs to determine those areas between high and low tides and in wetlands that have PCBs above EPA's cleanup levels. Sediments with PCB levels above cleanup levels will be removed.

The sampling team may be seen wearing protective white clothing. They are doing so to prevent contaminated sediment from splashing on themselves during the sampling process. This sampling effort will not result in the release or spread of PCB-contaminated sediment outside of the site area.

Other work that has started for the Phase Two remedy includes land surveying, geophysical (i.e., shoreline sonor) surveying, air monitoring and the detailed engineering for the Sawyer Street CSO and CDF construction. Progress is also being made towards relocation (tunneling) of the underwater high-voltage cables in the upper harbor. These cables have to be relocated to allow for the Phase Two dredging to proceed.

FISHING & LOBSTERING RESTRICTIONS IN NEW BEDFORD AND THE ACUSHNET RIVER STILL APPLY!

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency would like to remind residents:

- State law prohibits fishing, shell fishing and lobstering in certain areas both inside and outside of the harbor.
- Eating PCB-contaminated local seafood is the major source of exposure to PCBs and represents the single biggest risk to human health presented by this Superfund Site.
- The map below lists the specific prohibitions and affected areas.