



Contaminated Sediment Removed in Lincoln Park & Milwaukee River

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

February 2012

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

The GLRI is the largest investment in the Great Lakes in two decades. Eleven federal agencies are working together on five priorities:

- Cleaning up toxins and Areas of Concern.
- Combating invasive species.
- Protecting watersheds from polluted runoff.
- Restoring wetlands and other habitats.
- Education, tracking progress and working with partners.

GLRI's Legacy Act

Under the first priority of the GLRI, the Great Lakes Legacy Act provides up to 65 percent of the cost of a project, with the remaining non-federal match coming from local partners such as cities, states and businesses. Legacy Act partnerships have resulted in the cleanup of 12 sites and removal of some 1.5 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment.

Completed cleanups have been a springboard for local communities to convert areas that were once obstacles to economic growth into valuable waterfront assets. These communities are transforming former toxic hotspots into attractive locations, building a foundation for future growth.

Contact EPA

For more information, questions or to apply for a Legacy Act project, visit www.epa.gov/glla or contact:

Great Lakes Legacy Act

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Aerial view of Lincoln Creek and the Milwaukee River Channels Great Lakes Legacy Act Project.

The Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern is one step closer to being taken off the list of the most polluted places around the Great Lakes. Work wrapped up in January on removing contaminated sediment from Lincoln Creek and the Milwaukee River. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency worked with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Milwaukee County Parks. The project began in the summer of 2011.

The \$24.6 million Great Lakes Legacy Act project removed about 140,000 cubic yards of sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PCBs and PAHs. Legacy Act funds covered 65 percent of the total cost, or about \$16 million. WDNR paid the required non-federal 35 percent share, about \$8.6 million.

Workers removed an estimated 5,000 pounds of PCBs and 4,000 pounds of PAHs from the area. That represents the largest known deposit of PCB-contaminated sediment in the Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern.

The Milwaukee River portion of the Area of Concern extends from Cedar Creek in Cedarburg, downstream through the Outer Harbor. It includes Cedar Creek; Lincoln Creek, which feeds into the west oxbow of the Milwaukee River; and portions of the Menomonee, Little Menomonee and Kinnickinnic rivers.

Project details

Workers walled off portions of the site, pumped water out and removed the sediment. They took the contaminated material to Waste Management's Orchard Ridge facility in Menomonee Falls. More highly contaminated sediment went to the Heritage Environmental Services Landfill in Indiana.

Wastewater was processed at the temporary treatment plant built for this project, then released into the Milwaukee River.

Work will continue at the site through this summer. The next step is restoring wildlife habitat. This includes planting trees and native plants along the banks of the creek and the oxbow.

EPA and WDNR worked closely with Milwaukee County Parks, Milwaukee County Department of Public Works, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, City of Milwaukee Health Department, North Shore Health Department and many others.



North oxbow as it looks today, waiting for final habitat restoration including plantings of trees and other native species.



Contaminated sediments being excavated from the project area and loaded onto trucks.