

UPDATE: Thunder Bay North Harbour Sediment Project

August 2014

Thank you for providing questions and comments regarding the evaluation of options for managing contaminated sediment in the Thunder Bay North Harbour. EcoSuperior will continue with our consultation program until December 2014 and will be preparing a summary document to outline the information gathered through various outreach events.

We have two objectives for the consultation program;

1. Inform others about the area of sediment contamination and the evaluation of management options.
2. Obtain feedback on the options presented and gather information on local considerations.

Your comments and questions will help inform the design and engineering phase of the project and will help ensure that local concerns are identified and addressed. Answers to some of the most common questions received have been included with this update.

To date, there have been several activities;

- Two open house information sessions
- Six meetings with interested stakeholder and Aboriginal groups
- Displays, notices and comment forms at local events, exhibitions and trade shows

Responses received indicate;

- a general understanding of the sediment concerns
- strongest support for removal (dredging) of the contaminated sediment
- support for disposal of the dredged material at either the Thunder Bay Port Authority's Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) or a new CDF at the site

Previous studies and other relevant documents can be accessed at www.infosuperior.com. Visit www.ecosuperior.org for regular updates on this project and to submit comments on-line.

Please contact Jamie Saunders, EcoSuperior Program Coordinator, at (807) 624-2658 or by email at Jamie@ecosuperior.org for further project information.



*Community partnerships promoting environmental stewardship
in Northwestern Ontario and the Lake Superior Basin.*



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Questions and Answers

Q1. Could dredging result in contaminants, such as mercury, moving elsewhere?

A1. Resuspension of some sediment will occur during dredging or any remedial work. There would be control measures to contain the work area and prevent off-site movement of suspended solids. Pilot studies or test plots, if needed, will help in the design phase to determine what control measures are required. A monitoring program will be in place during and following the remedial work.

Q2. What is the difference between the mercury concentrations at the site vs. the surrounding areas?

A2. On average, total mercury levels are 5.9 ug/g in the study area versus 0.55 ug/g in the harbour, and 0.016 ug/g methylmercury in the study area versus 0.0031 ug/g in the harbour.

Q3. Is the contamination primarily on the bottom of the lake or mixed in with the sediment?

A3. The contamination exists throughout the organic sediment which ranges up to 4 m thick within the area of impact. The contaminant levels in the native sediment are below detection levels or at lower concentrations.

Q4. What about fish and the fact that they are mobile? Is there a risk associated with them?

A4. This project is designed to address and reduce the risk associated with the contaminated material in the harbour. The Franz ERA/HHRA studied the risks associated with the EOS in the harbour. Overall there should be a decrease of contaminants in fish tissue although it may take years for a trend to be measured.

Q5. Is there potential for negative impacts at the Thunder Bay Port Authority's Confined Disposal Facility (CDF)?

A5. The CDF is a waste disposal site and has been used for dredge spoils for many years. During the Design and Engineering Phase, the facility would be assessed to confirm whether any work is required to ensure containment of contaminants. A long-term monitoring program would also be implemented.

Concerns raised regarding lost habitat for birds currently utilizing the open water area at the CDF would be considered in the design phase along with potential need for compensating habitat or viewing areas. It should be noted that the currently approved purpose of the CDF is to receive dredged materials and ultimately this area is intended to be filled and capped, resulting in loss of the open water.

Q6. Who will pay for the clean-up?

A6. Funding of the remedial work will be determined after the management option is selected and better estimated costs are known.

Q7. When will the final option be decided?

A7. The Advisory Committee which includes representatives from Environment Canada, Thunder Bay Port Authority and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will consider recommendations from the consultants along with information gathered during the consultation program to determine the preferred option for sediment management. Public consultation will hopefully wrap up by December 2014 with a preferred option selected shortly after.