

# St. Louis River Area of Concern

Projects in partnership to restore the river  
and revitalize the community

## Howards Bay Sediment Cleanup

### Purpose

Howards Bay is an industrial embayment located next to Connor's Point in Superior, WI. The bay is important for Lake Superior commerce. It's been home to shipyards, grain terminals, commercial fishing operations and other industries for well over 100 years. This history of industrial use had polluted sediments in the bay.

Investigations showed that the sediments were polluted with lead, mercury, tributyltin and PAHs. These pollutants increased costs which made routine dredging impractical and limited access for large vessels over time. These same pollutants also posed a threat to the ecosystem and human health. They hindered aquatic life and degraded habitat for fish and wildlife. In addition, some pollutants like mercury enter the bottom of the food chain and become concentrated in species higher up the chain, including the fish people eat.

The sediment cleanup removed restrictions on dredging and other impairments. In result, the bay will continue to serve commerce while also providing important habitat for fish like musky and northern pike as well as migratory waterfowl.

### Background

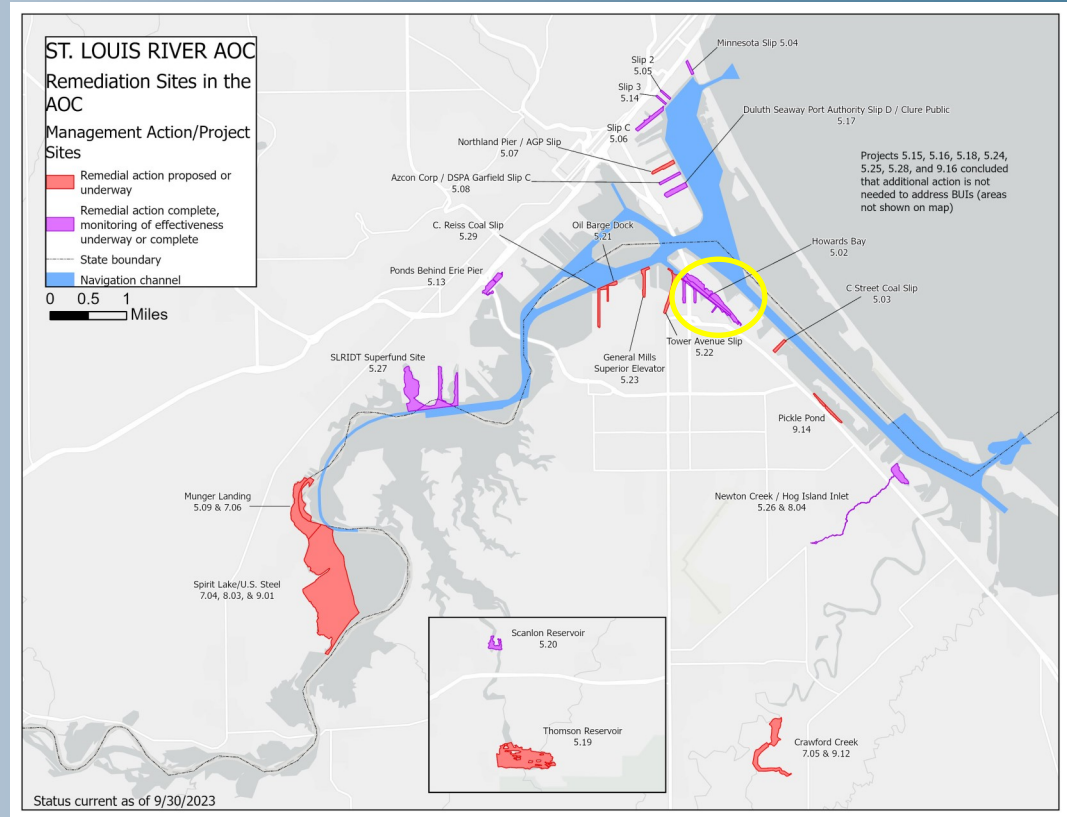
This project combined the resources of federal, state, local and private partners to carry out navigational dredging in the shipping channel and safe cleanup of the contaminated sediment at one time.

Major funding for the cleanup portion was provided by the US EPA through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Great Lakes Legacy Act. The City of Superior provided significant in-kind support by providing a place for excavated dredge material. Fraser Shipyards and the Wisconsin DNR were also major funders for the cleanup project. The US Army Corps of Engineers served as the main contractor for the overall project, as they maintain the shipping channel in the St. Louis River, including portions of Howards Bay.

The project cost \$21.5 million dollars, including federal and non-federal contributions, and was completed in December 2021.



Fraser Shipyards





## Remedial Action

Dredging was completed in 2021. The shipping channel was dredged to a depth suitable for large vessels and dredged materials were taken by barge to the Erie Pier Processing and Reuse Facility. A combination of dredging and covering was used to clean up contaminated sediment.

Dredged material that was safe for recreational development was beneficially used to improve the cap and cover at the closed Wisconsin Point Landfill. Material not suitable for recreational development was disposed of at a licensed landfill.

In total, 34,000 cubic yards of sediments were dredged from the shipping channel in 2020. 84,700 cubic yards of contaminated sediments were removed from Howards Bay in 2021. The City of Superior will add trails, a picnic shelter and benches to the site once stabilization is completed.

## Benefits

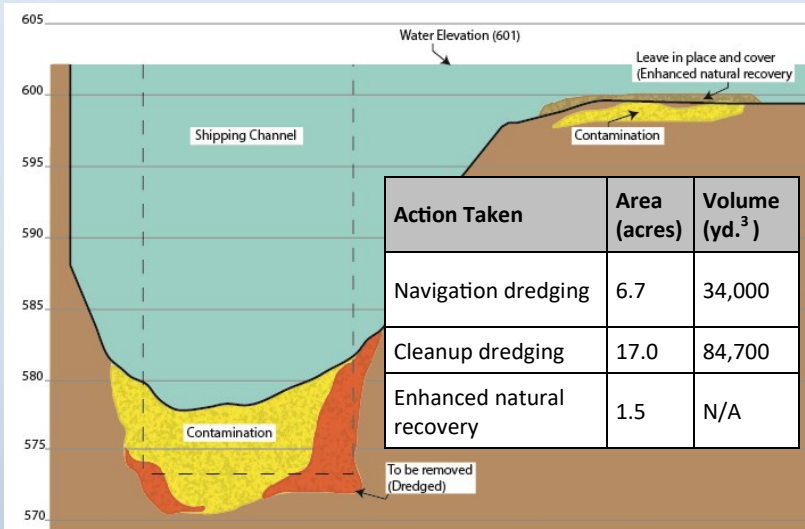
- Addressed contamination in Howards Bay
- Restored navigation depths in Howards Bay
- Beneficial reuse of dredge material
- Improved landfill cap, helped protect environment around landfill
- New recreation area in Superior
- Leveraged available federal funding
- No major cash contributions by City
- Supports local businesses and workers

## Partners

- Fraser Shipyards, Inc.
- City of Superior
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. EPA

## To Learn More

Visit <http://dnr.wi.gov>, search “[St. Louis River AOC](http://www.greatlakesmud.org/howards-bay---st-louis-river-aoc.html)”  
<http://www.greatlakesmud.org/howards-bay---st-louis-river-aoc.html>



Clean sand was placed in the bay after dredging was completed.



Office of Great Waters



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