Great Lakes Dredging
Impacts of GLLA and GLRI

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• Visions of Section 123, PL 91-611 and GL Water Quality Agreement being fulfilled
• Sediments in navigation channels rapidly becoming clean enough that confined disposal is no longer required
• Corps, EPA, States, and Locals having to re-think long-term disposal options for dredged material at many harbors
• Future success relies on shared responsibilities for dredged material management
• Competition for federal funding for navigation dredging is more intense than 20 years ago
• CDFs in Great Lakes are at capacity or approaching it rapidly
• New CDFs must be cost-shared and actions to increase capacity at existing CDF are often viewed as a new CDF
• USACE looking to return all filled CDFs to non-federal partners ASAP
Good News

- Sediments dredged from navigation channels are much cleaner than 20 years ago
- Most sediments may be suitable for unconfined upland placement or beneficial use
- Some sediments now suitable for open water placement
- Funding for “strategic” dredging and beneficial use available through GLRI for navigation projects within AOCs
How Did We Get Here?

- **Source control**
  - CWA point and non-point controls

- **Cleanup hot spots**
  - Superfund actions
  - Enforcement actions
  - GLLA projects

- **Remove residual contaminants**
  - Maintenance dredging
  - GLLA projects
  - GLRI projects
Historical Perspective

- 1960 Grassy Island CDF on Detroit River
- 1967-68 Pilot Program evaluated options for managing contaminated sediments
- 1970 Great Lakes CDFs (PL 91-611, Sec 123)
- 1987 AOCs defined in GLWQA amendments
- 1996 National CDF authority (WRDA, Sec 201)
- 2002 GLLA authorized (CWA, Sec 118)
- 2010 GLRI authorized (Interior/EPA Approps)
Drivers for Change

• Over 120 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments confined at 48 Great Lakes CDFs

  ➢ Cost-sharing waived for Section 123 CDFs if CWA plan in place
  ➢ Capacity intended to last only 10 years
  ➢ Only a few built under national authority
  ➢ CDFs used for GLLA and GLRI dredging
Drivers for Change

• **Restrictions on Dredging Activities** a critical BUI at most of AOCs
  - AOC funding limited first 15 years
  - Superfund a double-edged sword
  - GLLA picked up pace
  - GLRI enabled AOC delisting to move into high gear
Actions Required

• AOC Delisting and Elimination of Dredging Restriction BUI
  - Consistent interpretation of what it means to remove dredging restrictions
  - Comprehensive plan for removal of contaminated sediments from AOC
  - Long-term plans for managing dredged material from former AOCs
Actions Required

• Removal of Contaminated Sediments at AOC Harbors
  - Exhaust all Superfund and Enforcement options to remove hot spots
  - Legacy Act removal of residual contaminated sediments outside navigation channel
  - Removal of contaminated sediments inside navigation channel through combination of O&M dredging and “Strategic” navigation dredging
Actions Required

• Use and Closure of Existing CDF(s)
  - Use existing CDFs to manage residual contaminated sediments from AOC
  - Plan for CDF closure and ultimate use
  - Plan for satisfying maintenance and monitoring requirements
Actions Required

• Maximize Beneficial Use
  ➢ Clarity and consistency in state policies on upland disposal of dredged material
  ➢ Understanding and developing local markets for dredged material
  ➢ Building partnerships to deliver the necessary real estate and money
Challenges

• Changing common misperceptions
  
  ➢ *sediments are a pollutant created by dredging*
  ➢ *all sediments will be contaminated forever and need to be placed in CDFs*
  ➢ *CDFs have unlimited capacity and will always be needed*
  ➢ *dredged material management is entirely a USACE responsibility*
Questions?