

Draft Proceedings

**Great Lakes Dredging Team
2011 Annual Meeting
May 19-20, 2011
Maumee Bay State Park
Toledo, Ohio**

Day One: May 19

Welcome and introductions

- State Co-chair Gene Clark noted that the GLDT faces many issues and many challenges, but underlying all is the fact that adequate dredging is absolutely necessary to keep Great Lakes ports and harbors viable.
- Federal Co-chair Scott Pickard reflected on the history of the GLDT, noting that the initiative has gone through many changes since its creation in the 1990s. The pattern of change is reflected, he said, in such trends as the attitude of the states toward open lake placement of dredged material which has been significantly reduced; in the decrease of the Corps' floating plant assets; and in the number of dredging contractors operating in the Great Lakes, of which there are now just five or six. These trends, combined with an extended period of reduced operation and maintenance funding for the Corps, present real challenges and have forced the Corps to "have to do more with less." Looking ahead, the hope is to engage more non-federal participation. State involvement, he said, is "of paramount importance."
- Mike Alexander of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality was introduced as a new GLDT member representing that state.

Committee reports

- Beneficial use of dredged material
 - G. Clark reported that a review was conducted of current publications, at least one of which will require updating. He also noted that the website needs work and that each state should consider adding any new projects, summarizing the guidelines utilized and the "speed bumps" encountered.
 - He noted further that there are some differing opinions on just what "beneficial use" is, and that the committee has been deliberate in discussing not just upland uses.
 - One ongoing priority continues to be general promotion of beneficial use as part of a sustainable dredged material management program.
- Confined disposal facility (CDF) management

- Tom Hempfling reported that the committee has been meeting by phone and is complicated by the fact that the subject revolves around several individual locations with specific challenges and issues. One common challenge is the time it currently takes to plan and construct a CDF.
- Environmental windows
 - Pam Horner reported that the committee is largely following up on work done by Doug Clark of the USACE Environmental Research and Development Center (ERDC).
 - Also being studied are existing data gaps.
- Open lake placement
 - S. Pickard reported on the situation in Ohio where the National Wildlife Federation has sued the Ohio EPA over Sec. 401 certification, and the state continues to oppose open lake placement.
 - Some good news is that ERDC has received \$500,000 for a three-year project, to be led by Joe Kreidinger at Cornell, to examine each state's policy toward open lake placement, asking specifically for the basis for any opposition, and for the specific concerns regarding this practice. Also included will be a literature review to look for data gaps, and focus on what we need to learn more about. Included in the review will be a study the Corps did in the 1970s on open lake placement.

Great Lakes System Dredged Material Management Strategic Plan Update

- *See Ppt presentation by Tom Hempfling, who asked for all comments to be submitted to Detroit District by June 19.*

Membership Roundtable

- Jim Casey (Illinois) reported that dredging activity is "going pretty normally" for Illinois projects, including the North Point Marina at North Beach, where dredged material will be used to support state park improvements. He also reported on progress at the Waukegan Superfund site where dredging in the South Harbor is finishing up. Funding for maintenance dredging in Waukegan is threatened by the 1 million-ton threshold for commercial ports. The U.S. Coast Guard Station near the Indiana border has received permission to dredge with material going into the Chicago CDF.
- G. Clark (Minnesota) reported on efforts to transform the Erie Pier facility from a CDF to a recycling facility for material not contaminated, and to work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation on utilizing material from Erie Pier for DOT project work.
- John Watkins (Ohio) reported on several locations, including:

- Conneaut where a Section 1135 study is being explored for the potential of a sand-bypass system, where existing sand could be left and new sand bypassed instead of deposited.
 - Ashtabula, where Legacy Act dredging has largely been completed.
 - Fairport Harbor, where there has been a “very successful” discussion on beach nourishment with dredged material deemed suitable. Also, a regional sediment management (RSM) initiative has been looking for strategic placement locations to ensure that sand ends up on the beach.
 - Cleveland, where partnerships have been established with the Ohio DNR Wildlife Division to study dredging windows in Cuyahoga River navigation channels.
 - Sandusky, where they are looking at using dredged sand for beach nourishment.
 - Lorraine, where dredged material has been used successfully in a major brownfield remediation project.
- Jennifer Street (New York) reported that her agency, the Department of Coastal Resources, has not been directly engaged in dredging issues, but that most material continues to be placed in the open lake.
 - Don Benczkowski (Pennsylvania) reported that material dredged from the Erie harbor was granted 401 certification for placement in the open lake. One question that emerged in the process was whether a submerged lands license agreement was necessary and the PA legal staff said it was not. One of the challenges in managing dredged material, he noted, was the sheer number of interests and agencies involved, a number he would like to see streamlined. Doug Pomorski of the Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority noted that an MOU was recently signed for dredging the inner harbor, and that the fact that state agencies have eased some of the testing requirements, the outlook appears positive.
 - Steve Galarneau (Wisconsin) reported on locations including:
 - Superior, where WI agencies have also been involved with the Erie Pier pilot project work underway in Duluth.
 - Marinette, where there is Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) clean-up site for arsenic.
 - Sheboygan, where progress has been made on delisting a Legacy Act project in the harbor’s main navigation channel, through potential placement of a dewatering facility.
 - Milwaukee, where CDF capacity was significantly increased by building the facility’s walls higher to essentially place a new CDF on top of the existing one.
 - Green Bay, where the Cat Island habitat restoration project will utilize 2.3 million cubic yards of dredged material that would otherwise be placed in a CDF.
 - Floyd Miras (U.S. Maritime Administration) reported on that agency’s U.S.-Flag Fleet Revitalization Study, the public meetings for which in Cleveland, Duluth and

Chicago generated considerable discussion about dredging concerns and the costs of light-loading due to inadequate draft conditions.

Great Lakes Dredging Program Update

- Marie Strum, USACE Detroit District and Great Lakes Navigation Team, (*See Ppt presentation*) reported that budget constraints have reduced the Great Lakes operation and maintenance program for FY12 to a total of 11 projects. At least two commercial harbors, Waukegan IL and St. Joseph MI can be expected to close in 2012 without dredging, and that recent grounding incidents can be directly attributed to inadequate dredging. Budget issues aside, among the efforts the Nav Team continues to pursue include sediment traps and regional sediment management strategies to reduce dredging needs, and leveraging of EPA resources for Great Lakes remediation and restoration as much as possible.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Update

- *See Ppt presentation by Ajit Vidya, EPA-Great Lakes National Program.*

Toledo Harbor Update

- *See Ppt presentation by Kristin Gardner, Lake Erie Commission.*

Environmental Dredging Windows Research Update

- *See Ppt presentation by Doug Clarke, USACE ERDC.*

Day 2: May 20

Cleveland Harbor Update

- USACE Project Manager Frank O'Connor reported that the Cleveland Harbor Task Force created as part of a 2010 summit meeting was producing results, and that the sense of teamwork and trust that has emerged has generated momentum in three key areas:
 - Harvesting of CDF material for beneficial use
 - Better collaboration with the EPA
 - Bringing more science to the solutionsHe noted, however, that there still needs to be a better understanding of background levels of potential contaminants at project sites.

Discussion on what is “clean?” How states determine suitability of dredged material for beneficial use

- Jan Miller, USACE Great Lakes Ohio River Division noted that the history of the definition dates back to efforts to define standards for construction and demolition debris, and was largely based on bulk material chemistry.
- J. Watkins said that all the states are interested in beneficial use of dredged material, but they also have to worry about precedents that could affect other programs.
- Richard Saichek, USACE Chicago District, noted that all parameters are based on risk management, except for benzoate pyrene.
- Mike Alexander, Michigan DEQ, said that for one project he is working on in Michigan where the “clean” standard is in play, is Saginaw, where the issue is dioxins.
- J. Miller said that the ultimate goal should be to establish a standard of “clean” for upland unrestricted, un-engineered placement.
- J. Watkins discussed the “thought process” of beneficial use, how the material is characterized, and using that to determine how it is most appropriately tested, and eventually used.

The Federal Standard: Misnomers and Clarifications

- *See Ppt presentation by Scott Pickard, USACE Buffalo District.*

Action Items

- State GLDT members should review the Great Lakes Dredged Material Management Strategic Plan update and submit comments.
- Monitor and support ERDC open lake placement study.
- Encourage and support greater state engagement in dredging and dredged material management, using the models of the Duluth/Superior Harbor Technical Advisory Council, and task forces that have been successfully established in Cleveland and Toledo.
- GLDT website needs to more visibly reference reports and presentations made at GLDT meetings.
- Work to review and update existing GLDT products, including reports and brochures on such issues as beneficial use; and explore new products that would be of value, particularly to state agencies.

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