

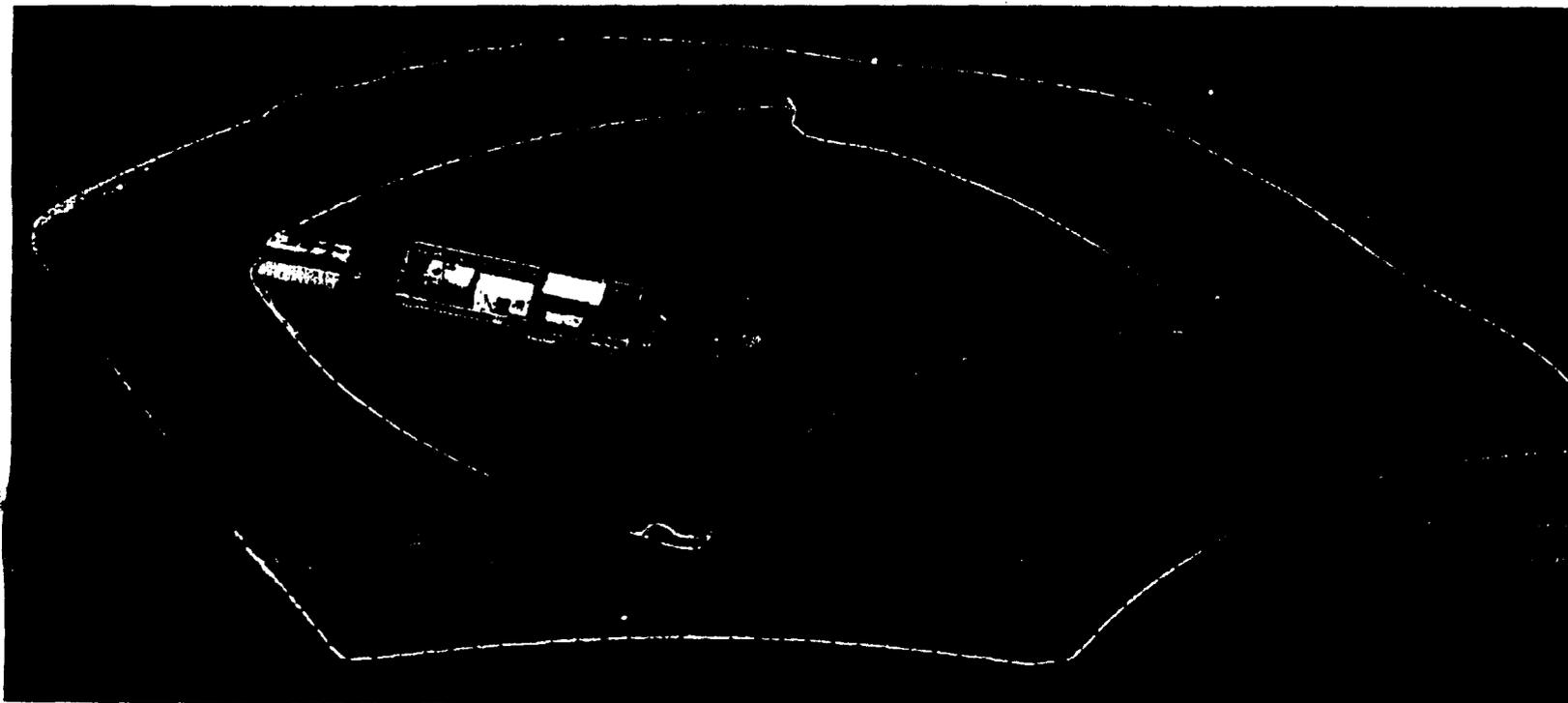
...Republican said, quitting only after
leaders of the Ethics Committee denounced

Democrats and Republicans, had spent 33
months on the investigation. It concluded he

the Senate floor as about half his colleagues
(See PACKWOOD, Page A2)

— MITCH MCCOMMEN,
ethics committee

FIRST PHASE OF CLEANUP IS DONE



A dredge sucks PCB laden sludge from the Acushnet River in this aerial photo taken earlier this year.

Standard-Times library photo by Hank Seaman

Last remains of PCB hot spots sludge removed

River no longer most contaminated

By **Natalie White**
Standard-Times staff writer

NEW BEDFORD — New Bedford Harbor no longer holds some of the highest concentrations of underwater PCB deposits in the world.

At the break of dawn on Wednesday, and with little fanfare, Superfund workers dredged the last of the contaminated

sludge from the five acres of hot spots in the Acushnet River.

About 300 tons of polychlorinated biphenyls, dumped into local waters by electrical capacitor manufacturing companies from the 1930s until the chemical was banned in 1978, now sit in a lagoon at the river's edge awaiting treatment.

"Don't get the wrong idea. We're still at the high end of the spectrum when it comes to PCB concentrations, but we're no longer reigning queen," said EPA's New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Manager David Dickerson. "Getting out the PCBs in the hot spots contributes positively to the overall health of both the air and the food chain."

The dredging crew from AGM Marine Contractors of Mashpee, working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers, sucked up the last bit of polluted mud at 5:12 a.m., too early in the day for celebrating with champagne or fireworks.

"No, nothing like that on the dredge. But the crew is definitely glad to have this job behind them," said Mr. Dickerson.

The EPA is the lead agency on the Superfund site. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is supervising the dredging. (See CLEANUP, Page A2)

Cook OK for criticize police

By **Hans Schattle**
Standard-Times staff

NEW BEDFORD — A haul of Buttonwood night, when city counciling \$1 million to

City councilors shot down Mayor's row \$2.3 million to headquarters. Inst building a new facility Street station.

The \$1 million work, flood control While the zoo over colors, long-time until the end, seized month at a debate appear "inflated."

"Why are we ad inflated?" asked Mr. expansion in Waco. Raboy once work-tors to make money.

Mr. Raboy stood attract roughly 300 claim, he presented ures at numerous. Patten, the city's convinced of the projected \$50,000 \$300,000 a year th

The city has tri said the city will planned to cost \$

NEW BEDFORD

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Parents, teachers demand safe, orderly classes

■ Superfund

(Continued from Page 1)

AGM is a sub-contractor to Perland Environmental Technologies of Framingham, which is the private contractor handling the hot spot dredging.

"This means that (the contaminants) aren't moving around anymore. It's nice to be successful in getting what you wanted to get done," said Maurice Beaudoin, resident engineer at the New Bedford Superfund site.

Dredging began last spring. Often, as on the last day of hot spot dredging when the operation began at 3:30 a.m., engineers found themselves dredging in the middle of the night to keep the summer heat at bay. The hot spots contained about half of all the PCBs lingering in the harbor, some of them at the incredibly high level of 200,000 parts per million. Another 300 tons are left, but at lesser contamination levels, 4,000 parts per million or less, and the chemical is more widespread covering more than 200 acres.

"That 4,000 parts per million is still really high, although there are probably other sites with higher levels than that now. From a health risk standpoint we want to get the levels down to 50 parts per million in some areas and 10 parts per million in others," said Mr. Dickerson. "We're very happy to get the contaminated sediments from the hot spots out. It's very important, but we

can't forget that we've got the rest of the job to do. The hot spots are only five acres."

About 13,600 cubic yards of contaminated sediments were taken from the hot spots. One small area of hot spots was not dredged because it sits over electric cable wires. This area, about 100 feet by 100 feet, will be addressed during the next dredging phase when several cables that run under the harbor will be gathered together and placed in a special tube.

The contaminated sediments are being kept at the foot of Sawyer Street, in a covered lagoon that is called a combined disposal facility or CDF. The material will remain here until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency decides how it should be treated.

Two years ago, the agency announced that it planned to burn the sludge to destroy the PCBs. Citizens groups and politicians objected, and the EPA backed down from its decision. It is now involved with the New Bedford Forum, a panel of federal, state and local officials as well as citizens, that is helping to find an alternative PCB treatment. The forum is being held up across the country as a model of government agencies working with a local community. Roland Pepin is Acushnet's representative to the New Bedford Forum. He is also chairman of the forum's dredging subcommittee that has been meeting regularly with dredging officials.

"This is just fantastic. New Bed-

ford no longer has the highest contaminated river. It no longer has that mark against it. Of course, it's still here. But it's in a container now," said Mr. Pepin. "This is something I've been following for a year and a half. Sometimes I thought we'd never reach this point. I always thought there'd be some emergency and we'd have to stop. But we didn't. And over the last year the agencies worked so well with the citizens. They've been really great about keeping us informed and educating us, and I think they understand now that we weren't out to sabotage their efforts."

Early on, there were some high air readings in areas where dredging was occurring and adjustments had to be made in the process. But overall, the hot spot project went smoothly.

"It's great to be able to say that we accomplished what we set out to accomplish and without any accidents," said Mr. Beaudoin.

The next step is for the EPA to test some PCB treatment technology to find an alternative to incineration. The EPA is looking at several companies to perform bench-scale and pilot studies on contaminated materials this fall, and has asked interested parties to put in bids on solvent extraction and solidification technologies.

Whatever treatment is selected must also address the heavy metals, such as cadmium and lead, that also are found in the sediments.

The agency is also tackling the

question of what to do with the second phase of lesser contaminated areas of the harbor. The EPA has said it wants to dredge these areas as well, and then store the material in lagoons along the Acushnet River.

Citizens groups have already said they are opposed to the idea, since it doesn't call for the material to be treated. Hands Across the River Coalition has said they are not convinced such lagoons wouldn't leak, and that the lagoons amount to permanent hazardous waste dumps.

EPA officials counter that removing the contaminants from the river is better than leaving it in, and that the lagoons are safe.

Air monitors and groundwater monitors are set up around the lagoon holding the hot spot sediment, said Mr. Dickerson. New Bedford Harbor was named a Superfund hazardous waste site in 1982.

The EPA sued several electrical capacitor companies for the pollution. The case was settled with the companies agreeing to pay close to \$56 million for cleanup costs, \$20 million for natural resource restoration and another \$10 million to be used for restoration if it isn't needed for cleanup.

The U.S. government banned the use of PCBs in 1978 and declared it to be a probable human carcinogen because some forms of the chemical — not the type found in New Bedford — have caused cancer in laboratory animals. PCBs may also cause other problems such as skin rashes and reproductive troubles.

■ Literacy

(Continued from Page 1)

International Literacy National Newspaper Day

The observance, sponsored by the International Reading Association and the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, underscores the importance of reading and education and the many doors they open.

Mrs. Pereira, the mother of three

offered, she said.

Ms. Wilde said while Mrs. Pereira was enrolled in Shirley David's adult basic education class last year, she did so well that she is being promoted to pre-adult secondary education this year.

"She has worked very hard and has been very dedicated. She's an intelligent lady," Ms. Wilde said.

Mrs. Pereira also is typical of many of the students the city sees in its adult education programs, Ms. Wilde said.

her husband Firmino just before her 19th birthday.

"He had gone to America because he had family there. He came to Portugal to get me, and then we came back," Mrs. Pereira said.

Soon after settling in the United States, the Pereiras began their own family.

Daughter Sandra, 18, just graduated from Bishop Stang High School. Sons Alex, 16, and Daniel, 12, attend Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High

Mrs. Pereira has proudly noted Sandra, who finished second in her Class of 1995 at Stang, just started her freshman year at Boston University — noting an impressive array of scholarships.

With her children older and more self-sufficient, Mrs. Pereira said she decided the time was right to go back to school herself.

"I don't have a problem reading. I have more problems writing," said Mrs. Pereira, who learned English from her kids.