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The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Cleanup

I. Overview of the harbor cleanup

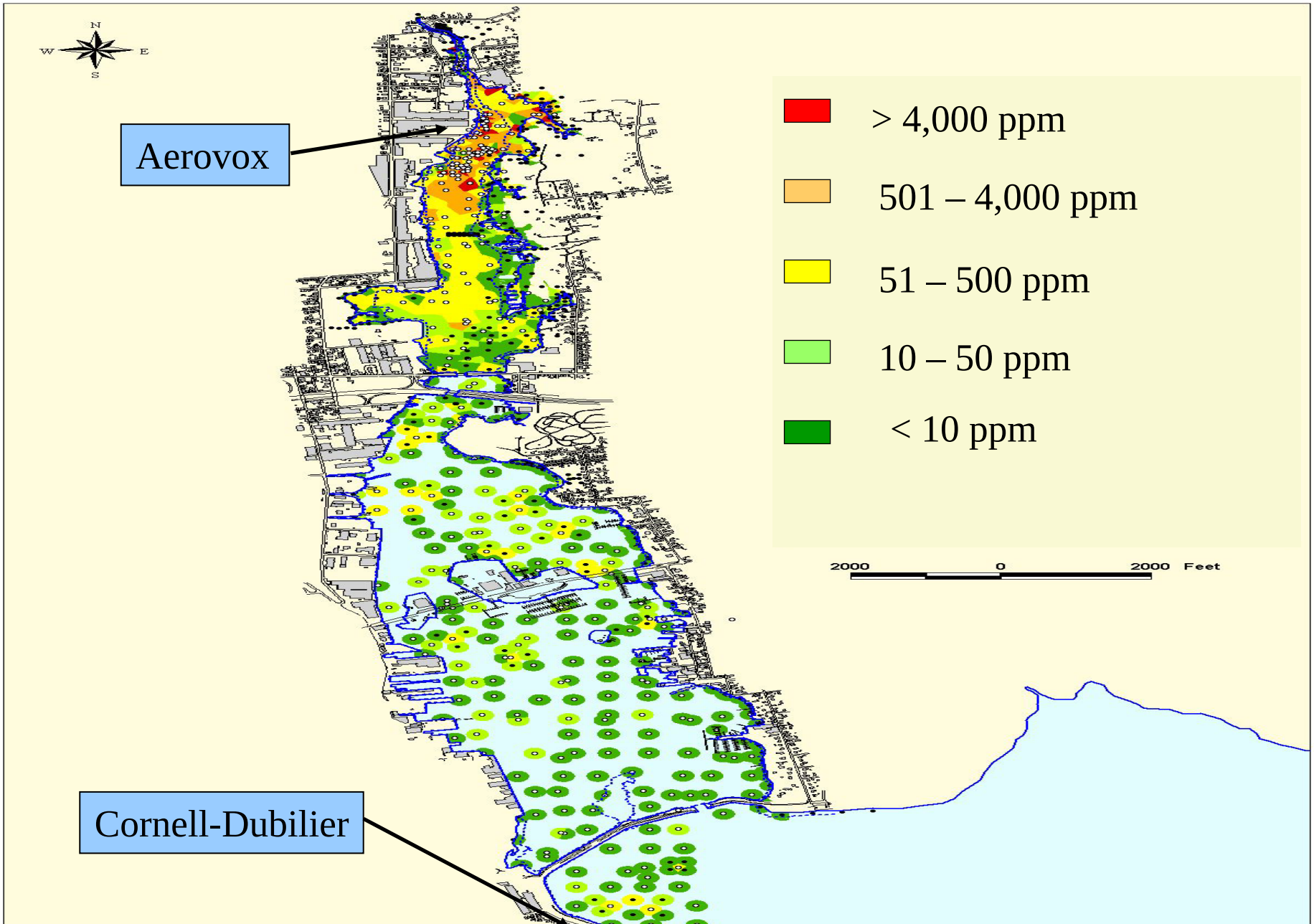
II. The underwater capping pilot project

III. Questions and answers

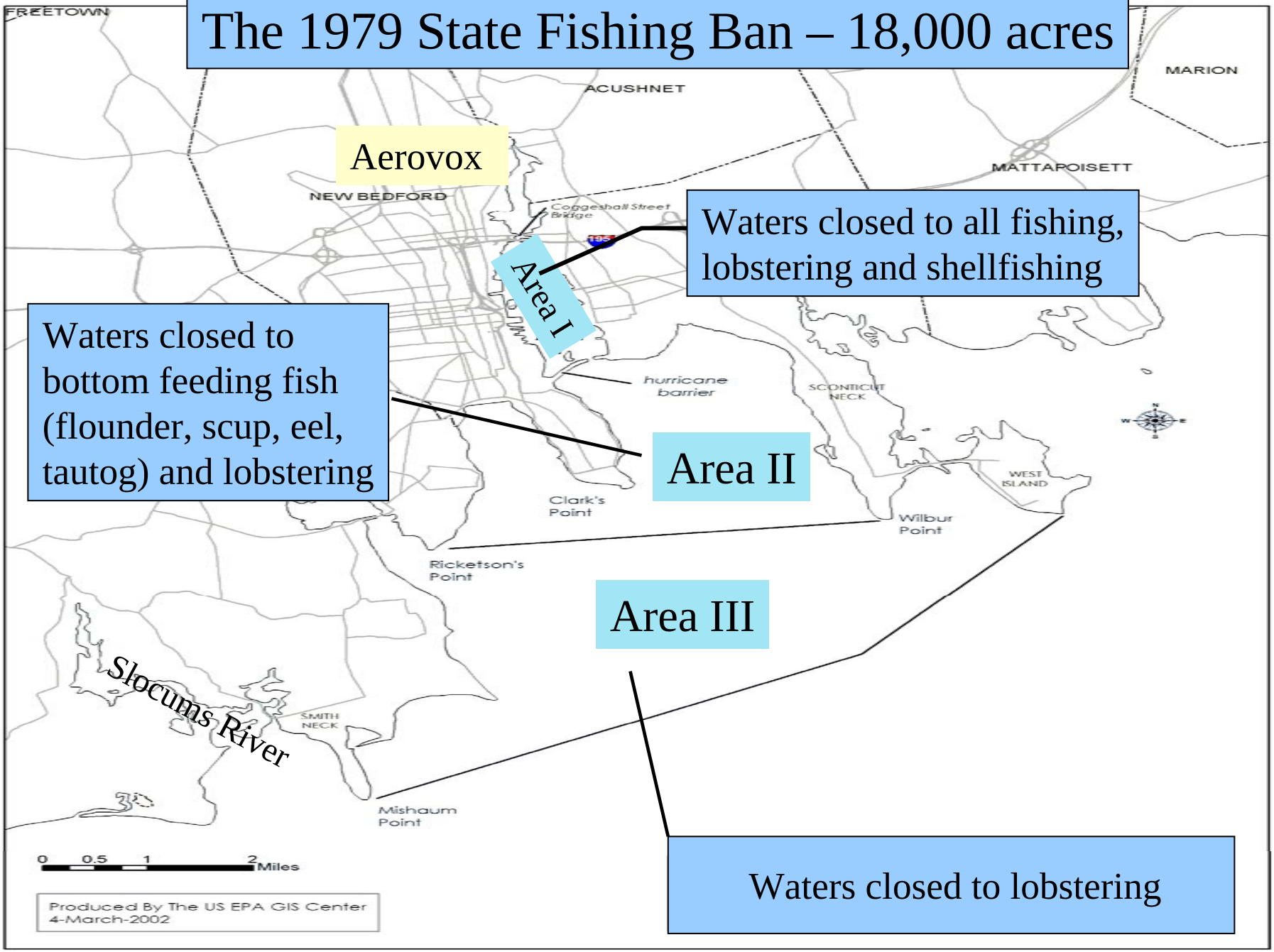
SDMS DocID 222232

Another view of the harbor - looking south

PCBs in sediment – top foot



The 1979 State Fishing Ban – 18,000 acres



2002-03: cleanup and restoration of the Acushnet River north of Wood Street

Flow restored and saltmarsh planted (low tide)

Full scale dredging started in 2004

The main steps of the full scale cleanup process:

1. Dredge(s) - location varies

2. Desanding facility

Submerged pipeline

Dewatering facility

Off site disposal via rail starting in 2005

Some key points of the harbor cleanup:

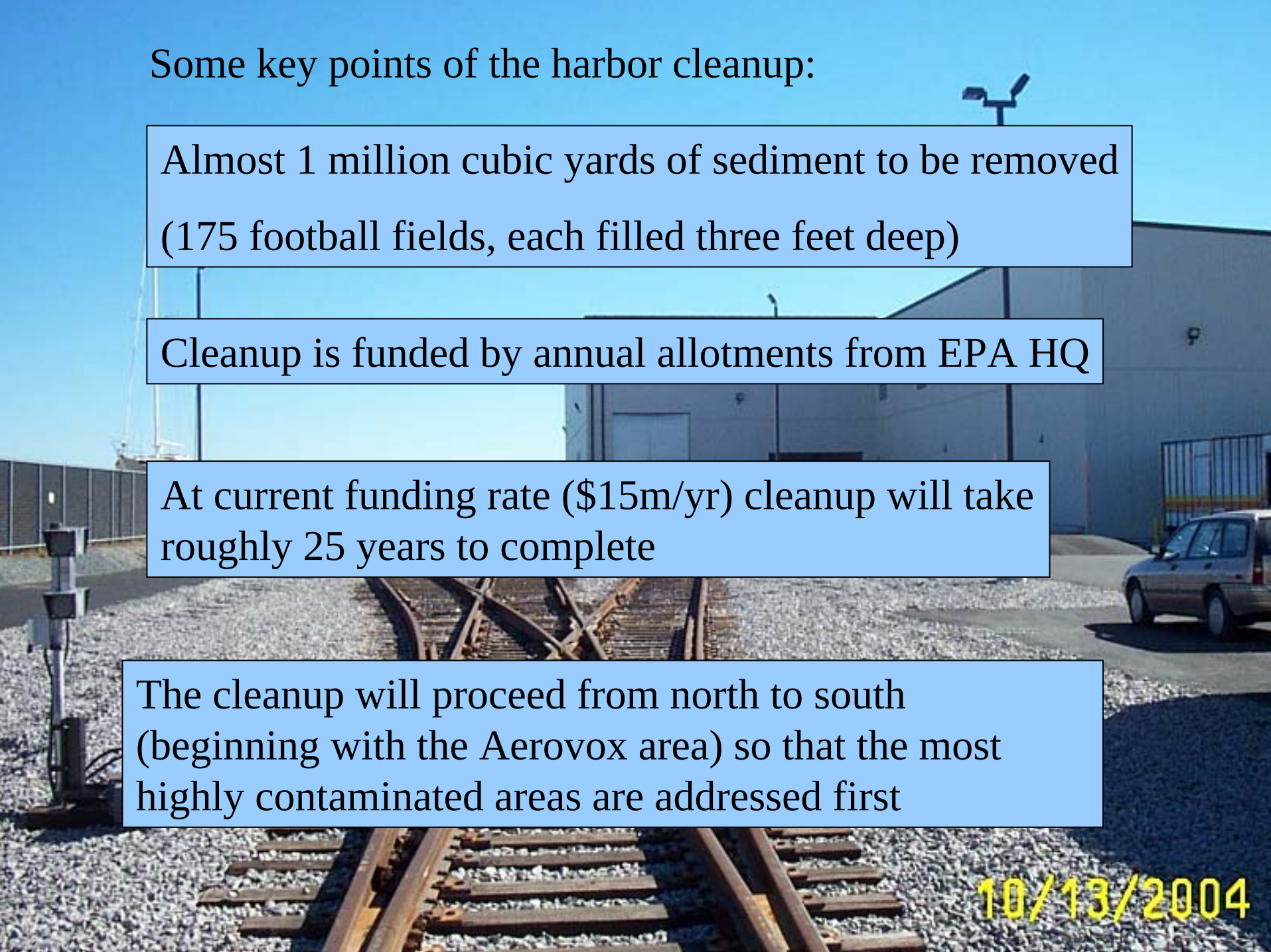
Almost 1 million cubic yards of sediment to be removed

(175 football fields, each filled three feet deep)

Cleanup is funded by annual allotments from EPA HQ

At current funding rate ($15m/yr) cleanup will take roughly 25 years to complete

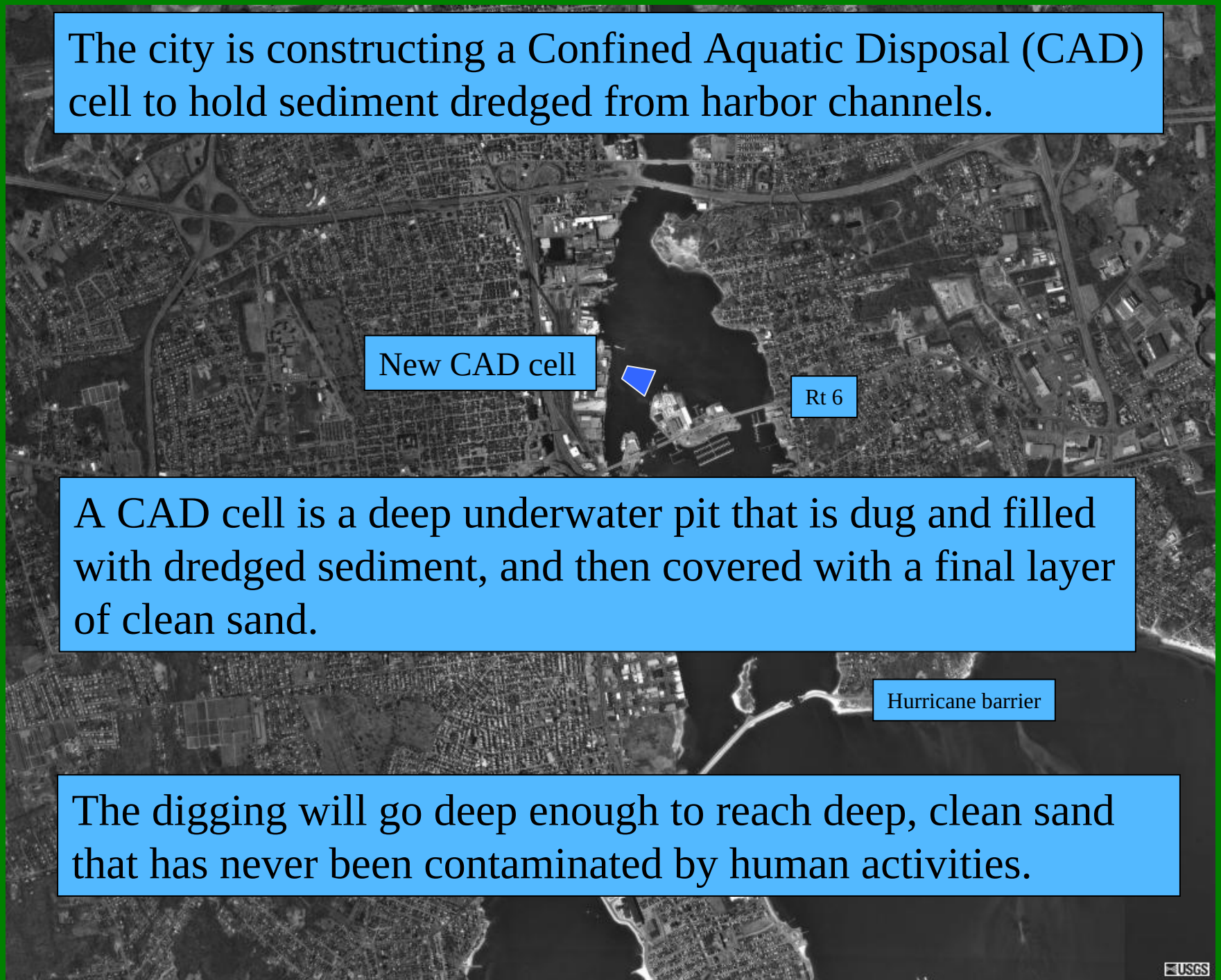
The cleanup will proceed from north to south (beginning with the Aerovox area) so that the most highly contaminated areas are addressed first



The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site Cleanup

II. The underwater capping project

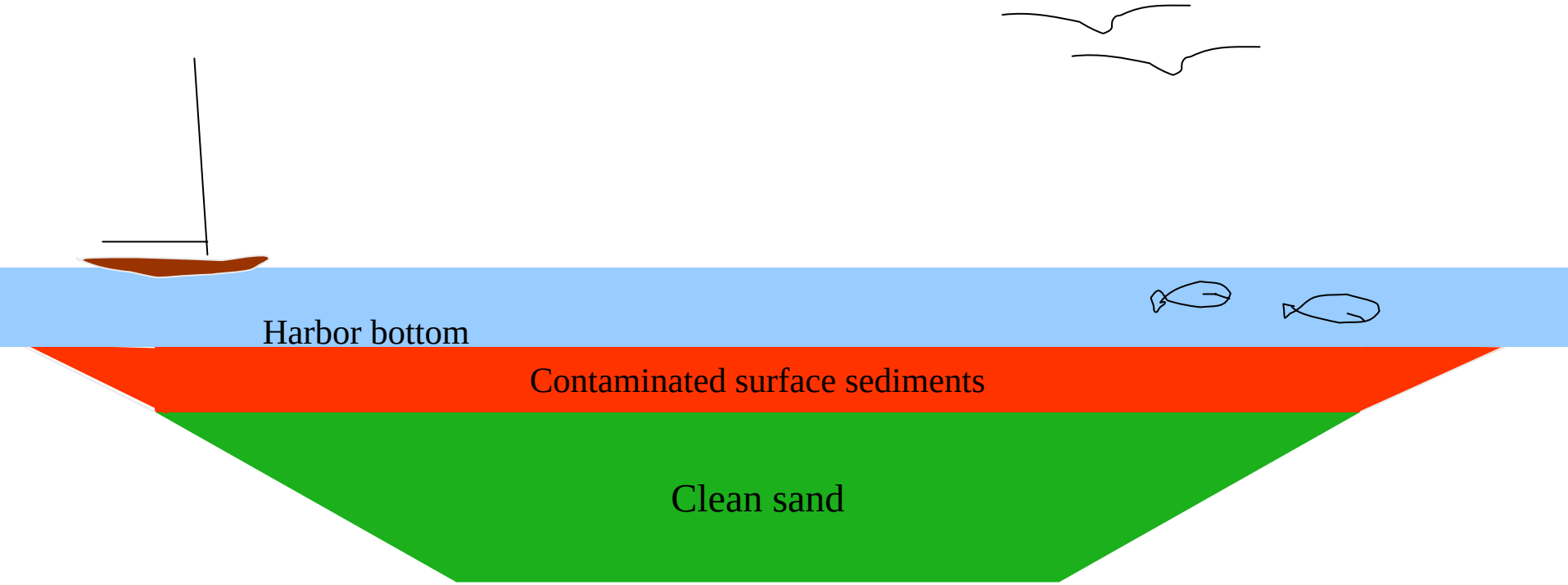
The city is constructing a Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) cell to hold sediment dredged from harbor channels.



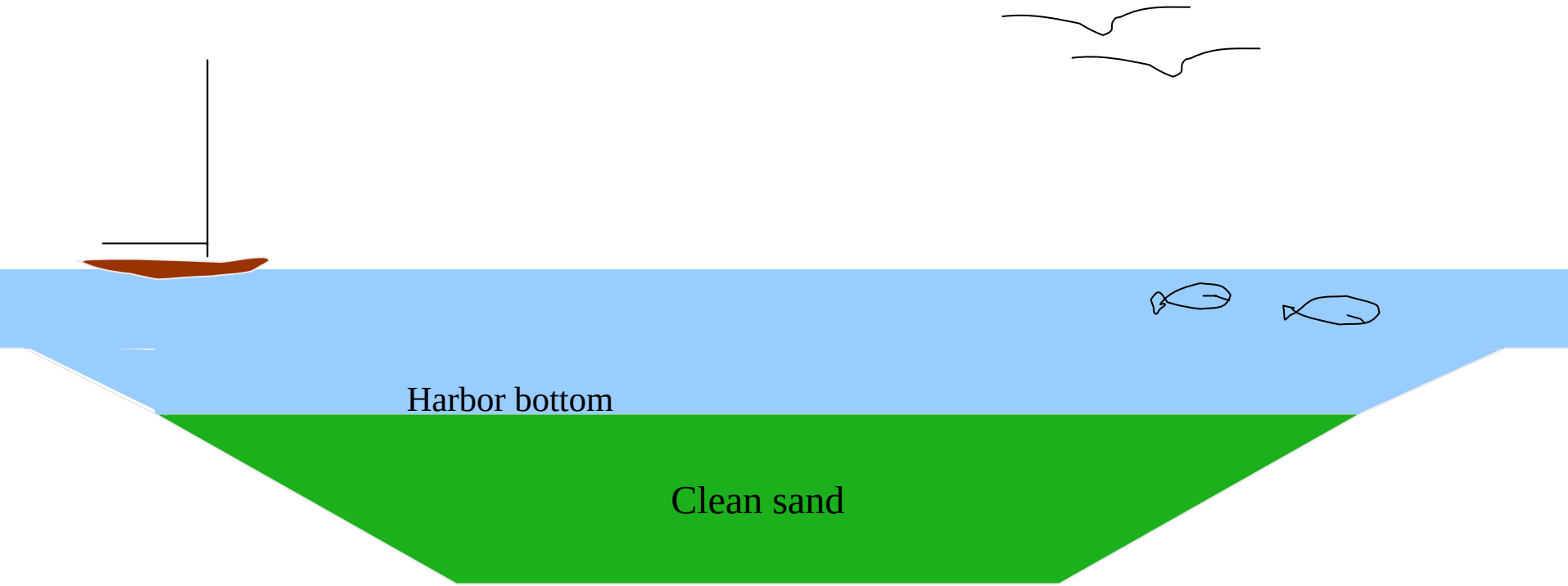
A CAD cell is a deep underwater pit that is dug and filled with dredged sediment, and then covered with a final layer of clean sand.

The digging will go deep enough to reach deep, clean sand that has never been contaminated by human activities.

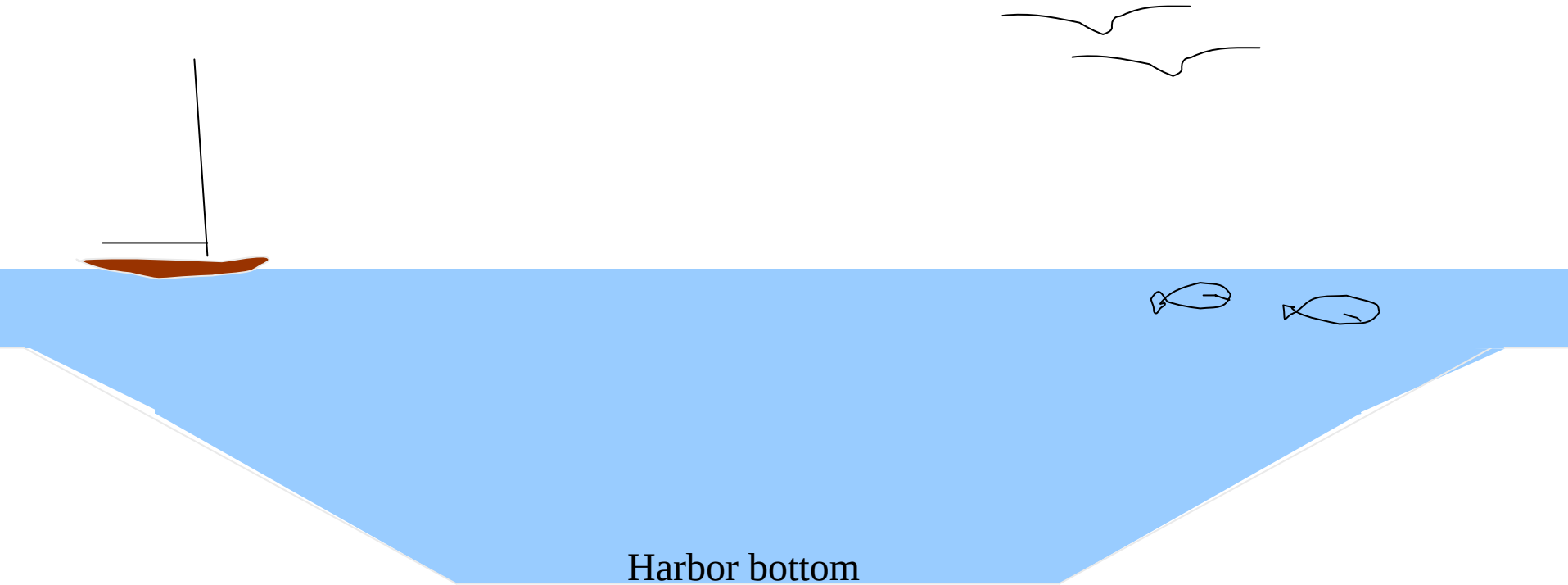
Next: a series of slides explaining what a CAD is and how it is constructed…



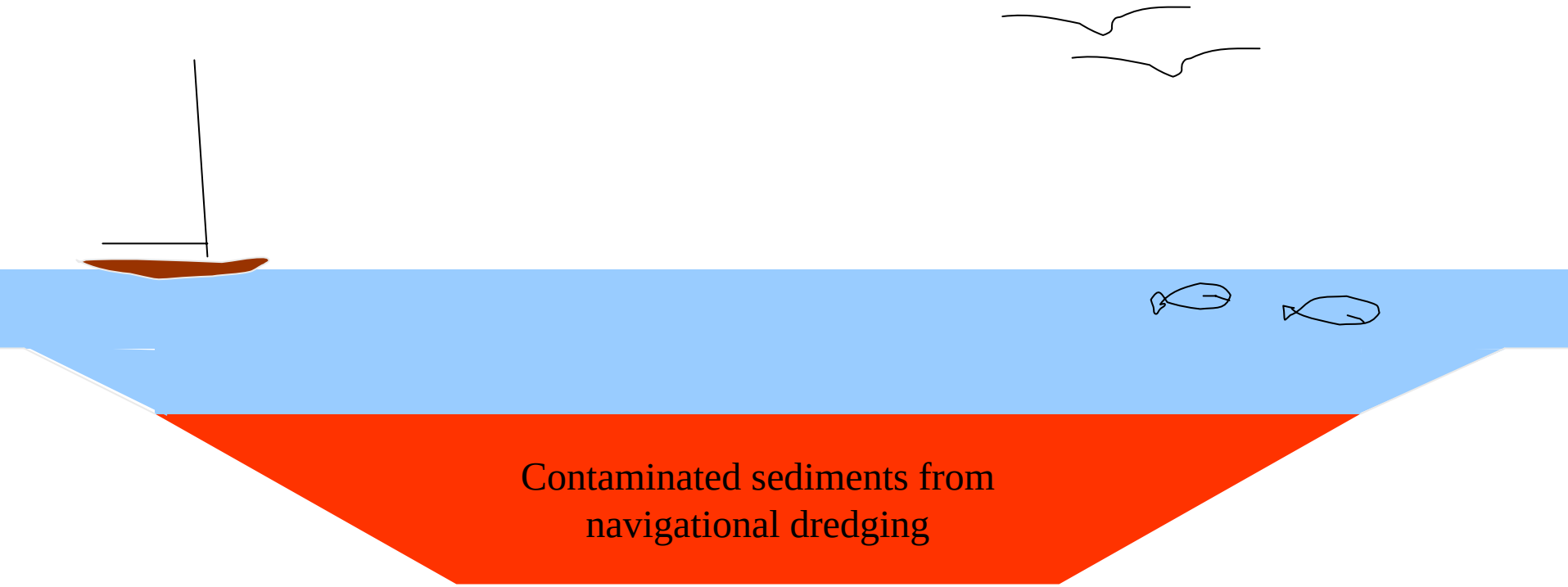
As is: New Bedford Harbor



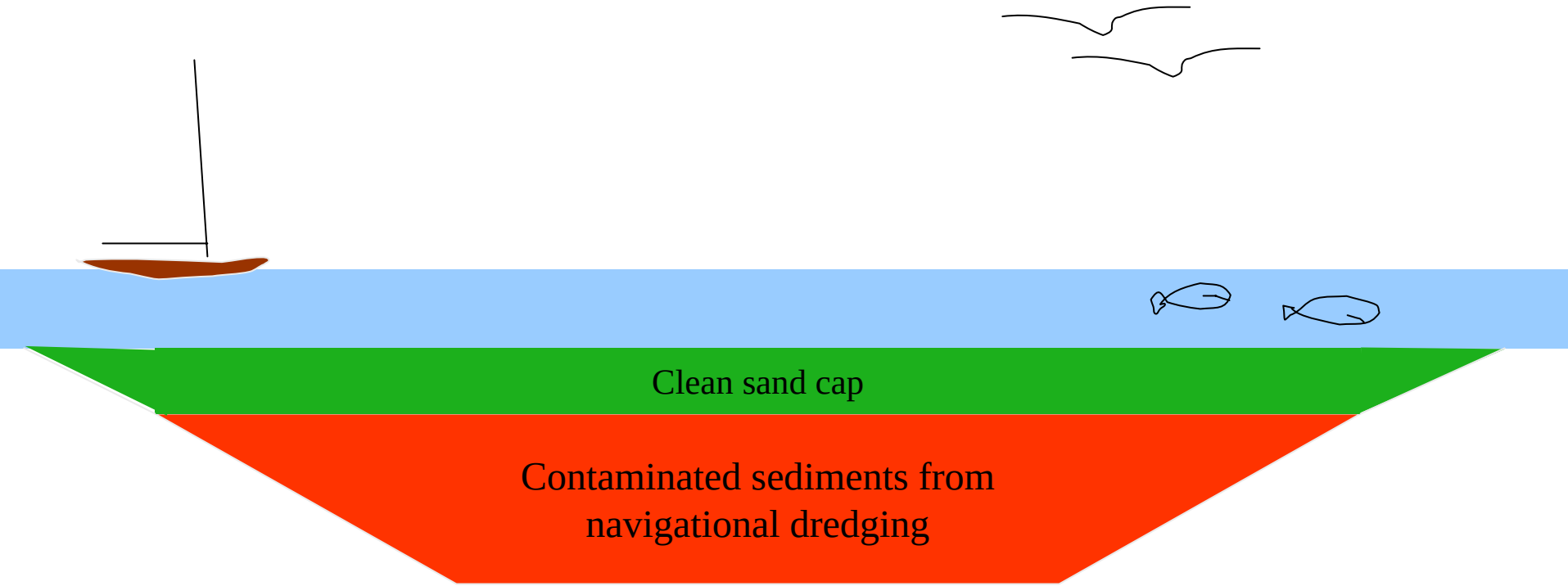
Step 1: the contaminated surface sediments are removed



Step 2: the underlying clean sand is removed



Step 3: the CAD is filled with contaminated sediments from <u>navigational</u> dredging.



Step 4: clean sand is placed as a final cap.

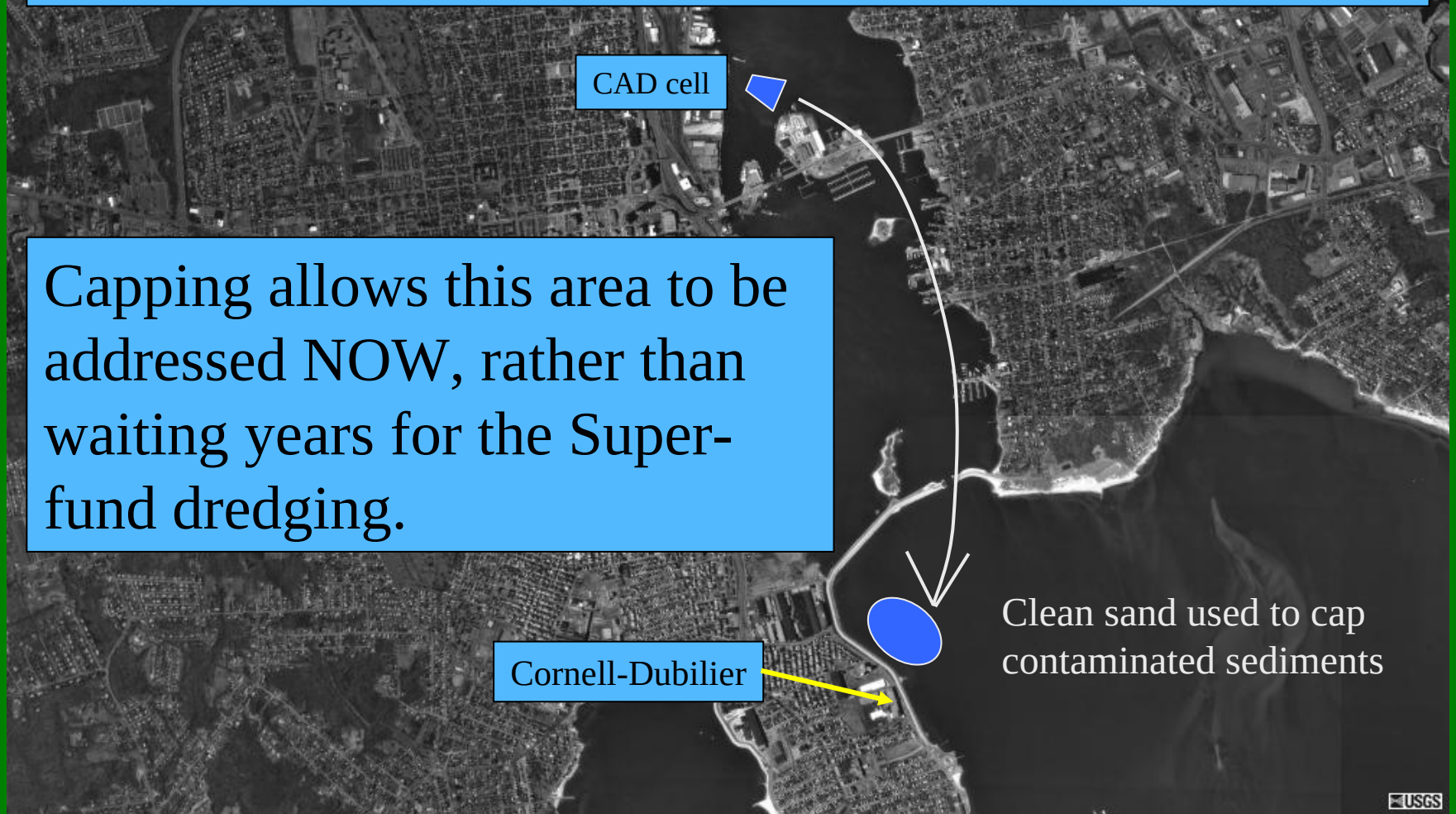
So…a flip flop:

BEFORE

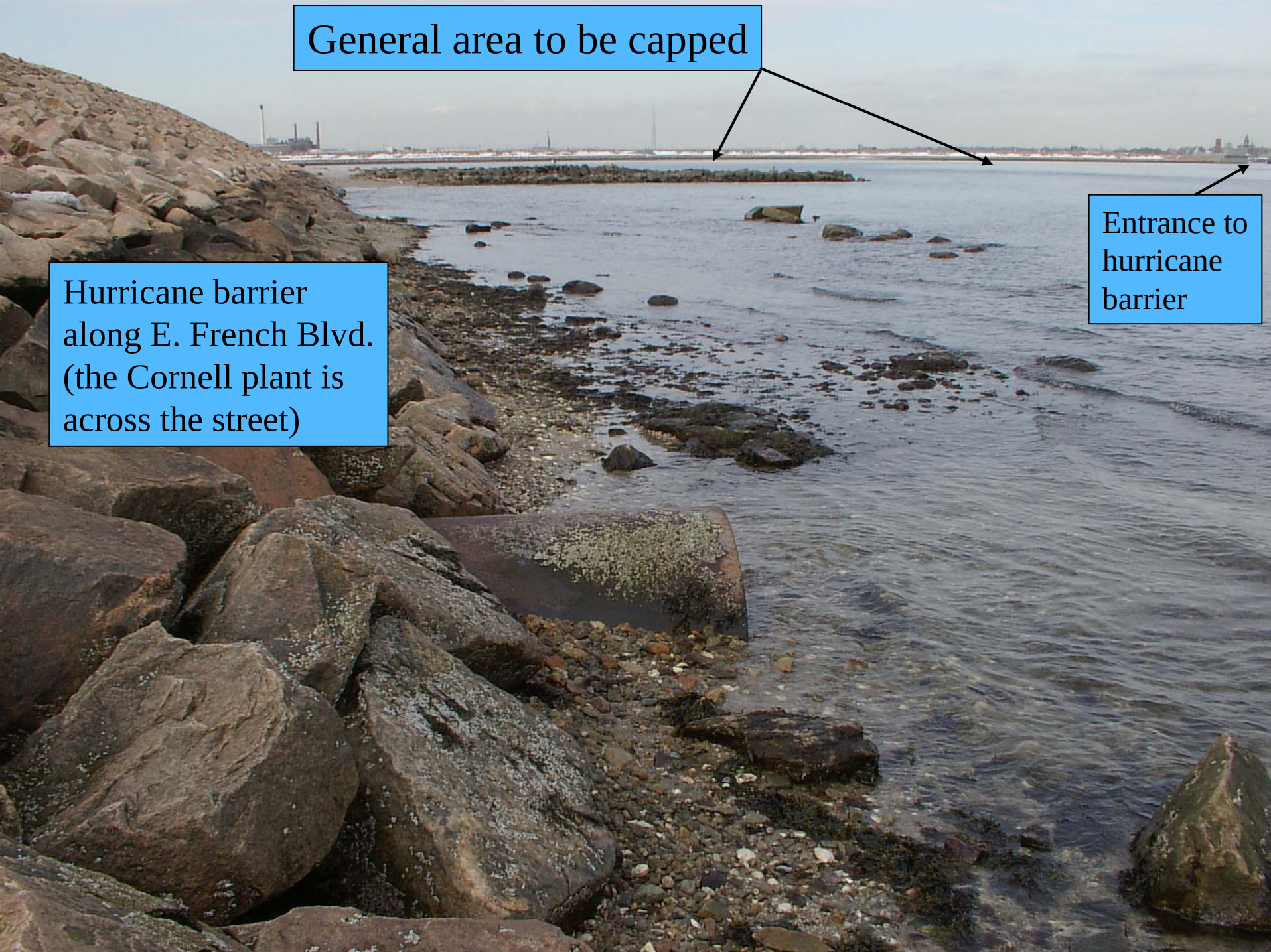
AFTER

Remember step 2?

We will use the clean sand removed from the CAD cell to accelerate the remediation of PCB-contaminated sediments near the Cornell-Dubilier plant:



Capping allows this area to be addressed NOW, rather than waiting years for the Super-fund dredging.

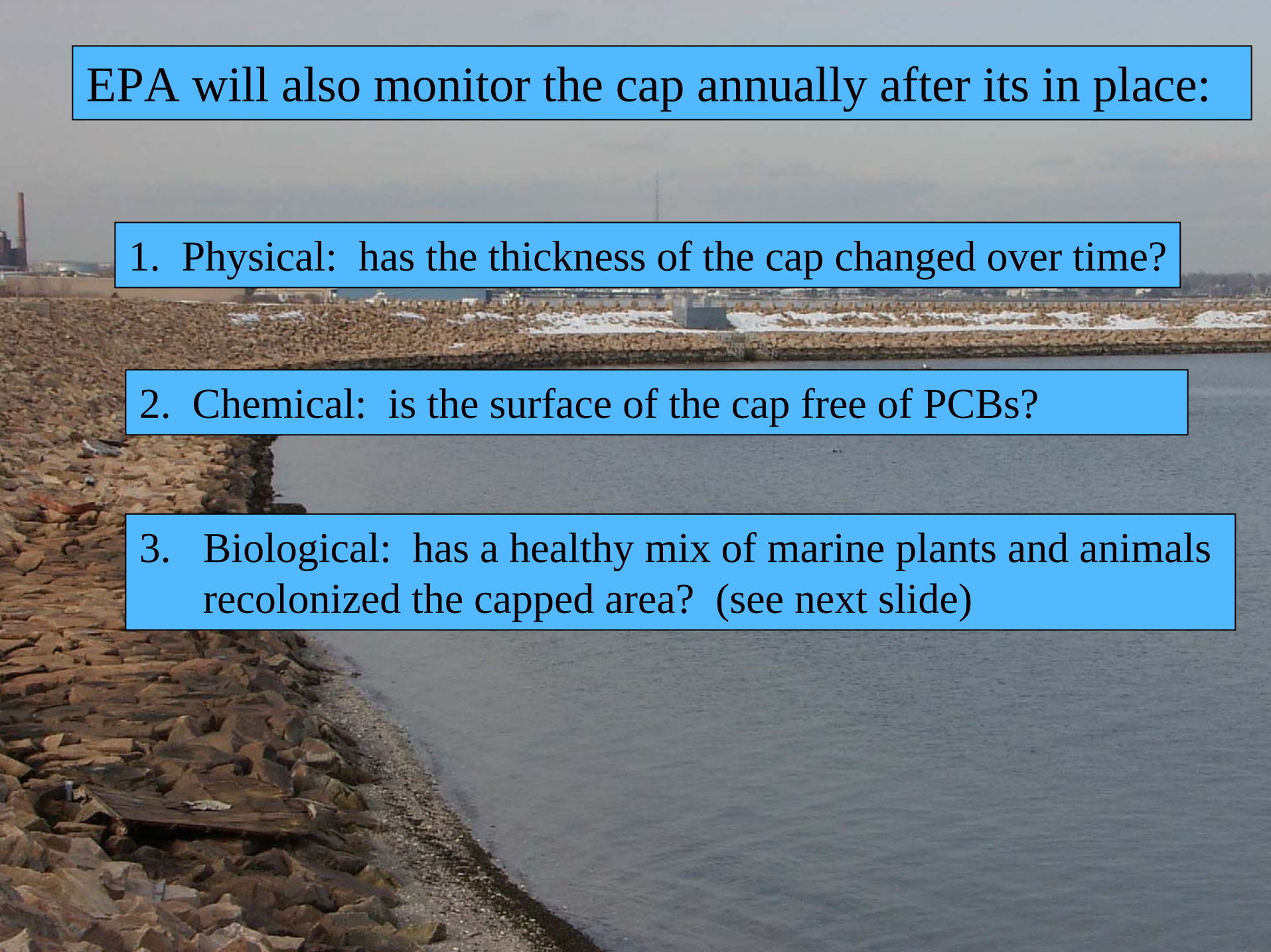

General area to be capped
Entrance to hurricane barrier
Hurricane barrier along E. French Blvd. (the Cornell plant is across the street)

EPA will monitor the process of placing the cap to make sure it is done safely:

1. Daily surveys of water depth to monitor cap thickness

2. Daily surveys of turbidity and water quality

3. Chemical analysis of water samples to see if PCBs are being released



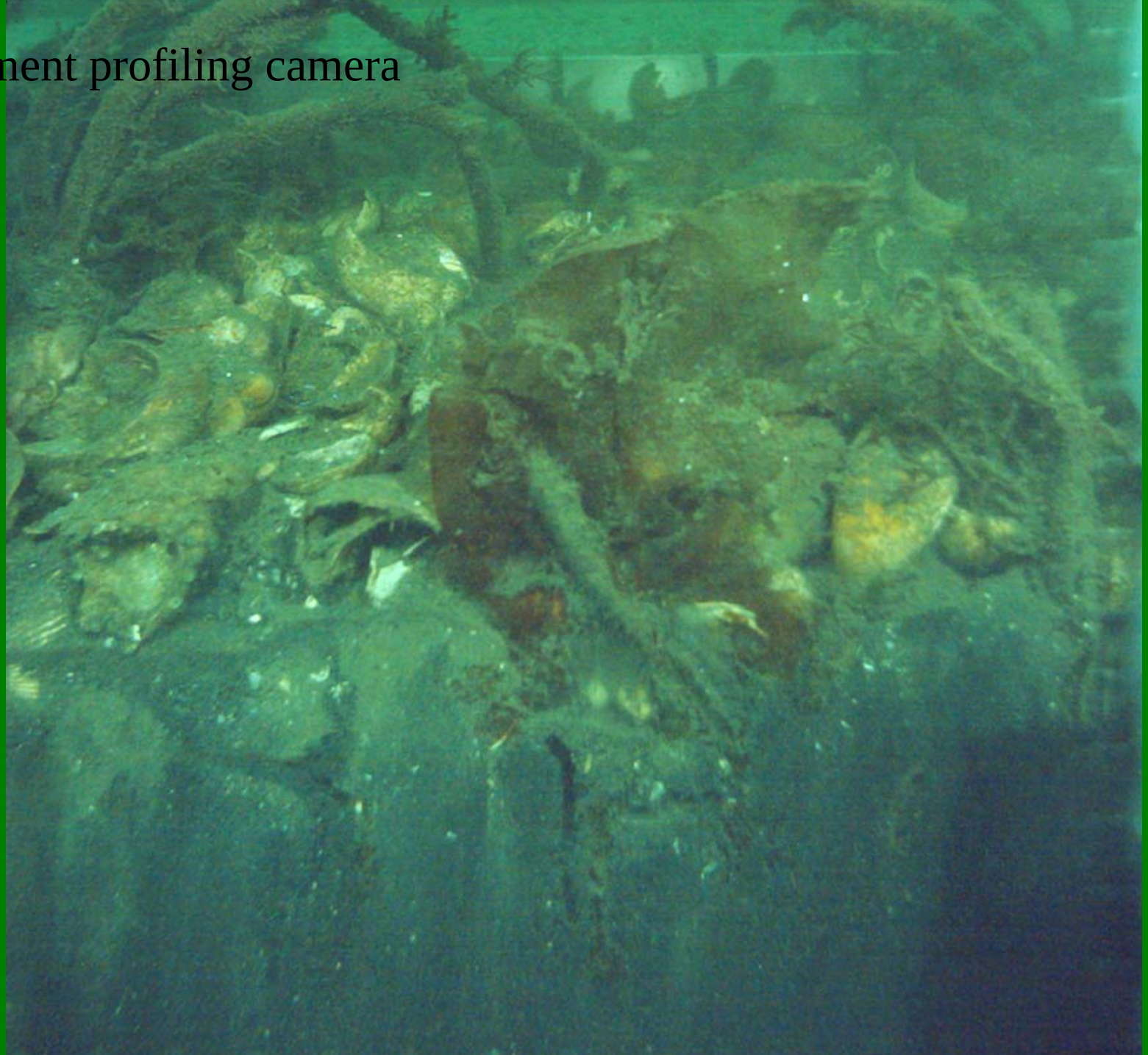
EPA will also monitor the cap annually after its in place:

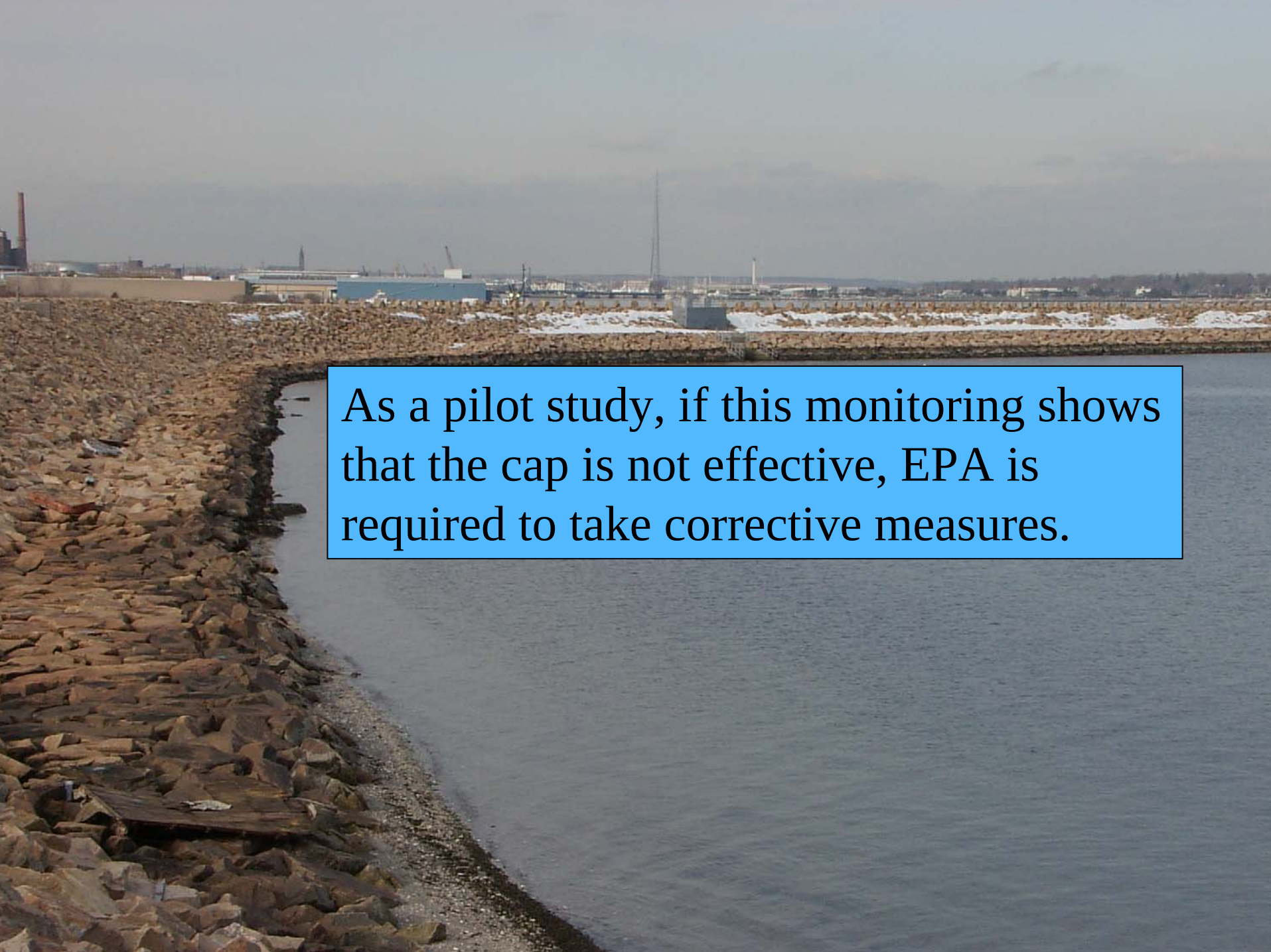
1. Physical: has the thickness of the cap changed over time?

2. Chemical: is the surface of the cap free of PCBs?

3. Biological: has a healthy mix of marine plants and animals recolonized the capped area? (see next slide)

Sediment profiling camera





As a pilot study, if this monitoring shows that the cap is not effective, EPA is required to take corrective measures.

Questions?

Also see the project web site:
www.epa.gov/ne/nbh