UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1

October 26, 1999

New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site

The New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site is an 18,000 acre urban estuary with sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals. The five worst acres of PCB-contaminated sediment -or hot spot sediment–were removed in 1994 and 1995 and placed into a confined disposal facility (CDF) at the bottom of Sawyer Street, New Bedford. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing the hot spot sediment for transportation to an out-of-state chemical landfill.

Removing the Hot Spot Sediment

Several steps have to occur before the contaminated sediment can be loaded on trucks and hauled away.

Sediment Dewatering

The hot spot sediment in the confined disposal facility (CDF) has too much water mixed in with it to simply haul it away. Dewatering is a two-step process that makes the sediment dry enough for transport and disposal.

First, water in the sediment is pumped out of the CDF to the water treatment plant that is a part of the Sawyer Street Facility.

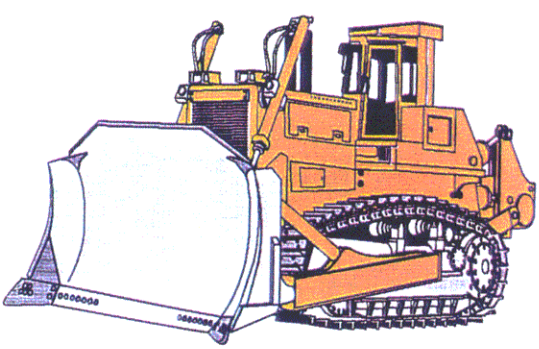
Second, because pumping doesn't remove all of the water, lime is mixed into the sediment until the sediment is dry enough to be transported to an out-of-state chemical waste landfill.

Treating the Water Removed from the Sediment

The water that is removed from the CDF is pumped to the on-site wastewater treatment plant where it is treated and then sent for additional processing to the City of New Bedford Waste Water Treatment Plant. Approximately 1.5 million gallons of water will be treated.

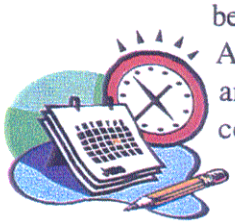
Sediment Removal

Once the sediment is dry enough, an excavator and small bulldozer remove and load the dried sediment into trucks. The trucks bring the sediment to an out-of-state chemical waste landfill for disposal.



When Is All This Activity Happening?

Dewatering and water treatment began in August 1999 and will be completed by the end of December 1999. The trucking of the sediment will begin in mid-November 1999 and will be completed by Spring 2000.



What Should Neighbors Expect?

Monday through Friday, during regular business hours, trucks will be hauling the sediment to an out-of-state landfill. The number of trucks will range from 20 to 30 per day.

The exact truck route hasn't been determined yet, but a likely path which minimizes trucks going through neighborhood streets is:

⇨Left from Sawyer Street onto Belleville Ave;
⇨Left onto Coggeshall;
⇨And then right onto I 195.

Possible Truck Route

New Bedford police officers will provide traffic control, ensuring the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

Each day during dewatering and removal activities, a portion of the sediment is exposed. To make sure the exposed sediment does not emit any unsafe levels of contamination into the air, samplers are monitoring the air during the entire six month project.

It is possible that an odor may be detectable while lime is mixed with the sediment during the dewatering process. If this occurs, action will be taken to lessen the problem. The opportunity for an odor problem is short because the dewatering process will be over by the end of December 1999.

What Will Happen to the Sawyer Street Facility After the Hot Spot Sediment is Removed?

Once all the hot spot sediment is removed from Sawyer Street, the facility will continue to be used in the on-going cleanup of the upper and lower Harbor.

Call For More Information

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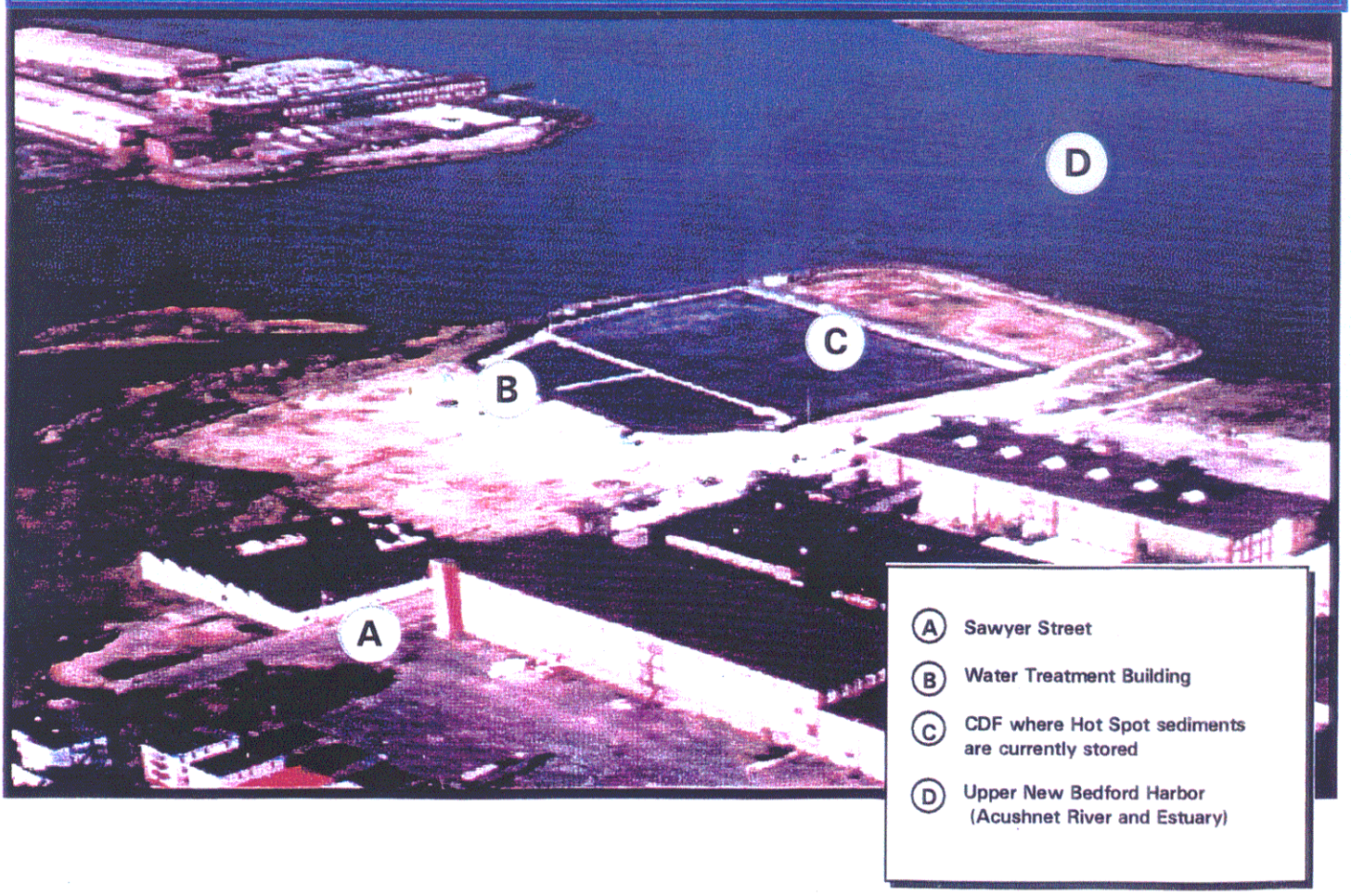
Aerial Photograph of the Sawyer Street Facility