

CLEANING UP THE MESS

New Bedford Harbor, including the mouth of the Acushnet River, was named as a national hazardous waste Superfund site in 1982.

Considered one of the most complex Superfund sites in the nation, the harbor bottom contains toxic metals and some of the highest levels of underwater PCBs anywhere in the country.

To better tackle the clean up, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has split the project up into three phases.

After more than a decade of study, actual clean up work began last year and is expected to continue for years to

PHASE I

4,000 to 200,000 parts per million

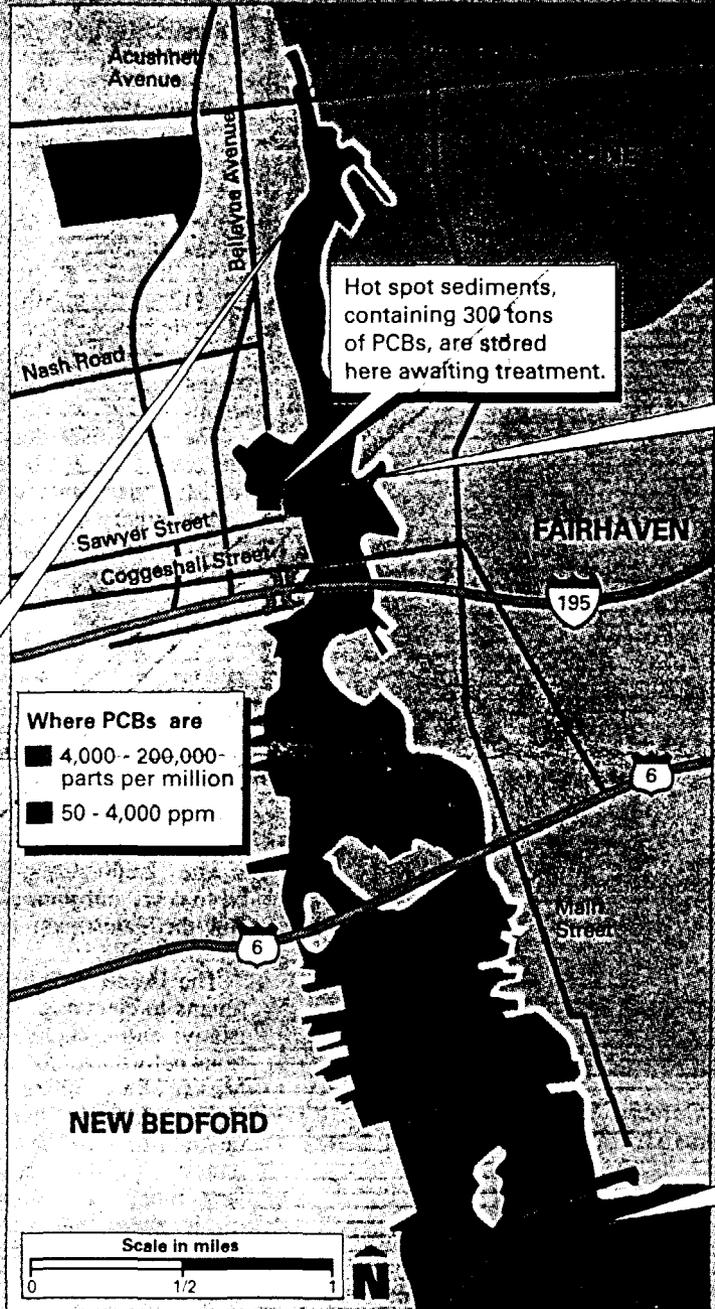
Five acres of PCB hot spots have been dredged, and are now being stored at the foot of Sawyer Street. The EPA is studying ways to remove PCBs from these sediments and plans to test several technologies this fall and next spring.



PHASE III

0 - 50 parts per million

The EPA is currently investigating whether clean up is needed for the least contaminated part of the harbor, tainted with low levels of PCBs of up to 50 parts per million.

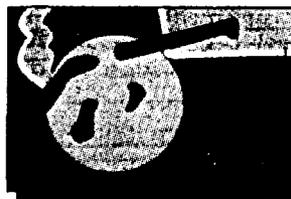


Hot spot sediments, containing 300 tons of PCBs, are stored here awaiting treatment.

PHASE II

50 - 4,000 parts per million

A proposed dredging project calls for sludge to be drained and buried in coves along the water's edge. The plan has already drawn fire.



Foes aim at burial of PCBs

Some residents seek new solution

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series on the Superfund cleanup of New Bedford Harbor.

On Wednesday, Sept. 13, The Standard-Times hosted a roundtable session to discuss what progress has been made to date and what still needs to be done.

During that session, state local and federal officials, along with concerned citizens, conceded they don't agree on how to proceed with the next stage of the cleanup.

Participants did say however they believe the New Bedford Forum — a group which includes a cross-section of those involved with or concerned about the cleanup process — will perhaps be able to find a solution that's acceptable to all.

All said they're convinced that the harbor, someday, will be cleaned up, but as the story below indicates, consensus may not be reached easily.

By Patricia O'Connor
Standard-Times staff writer

Representatives of Hands Across the River and Coffin Avenue area residents have launched a petition drive to voice their opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's plans to dispose of PCBs.

"We the neighbors and abutters of the Acushnet River on Coffin

(See HARBOR, Page A7)

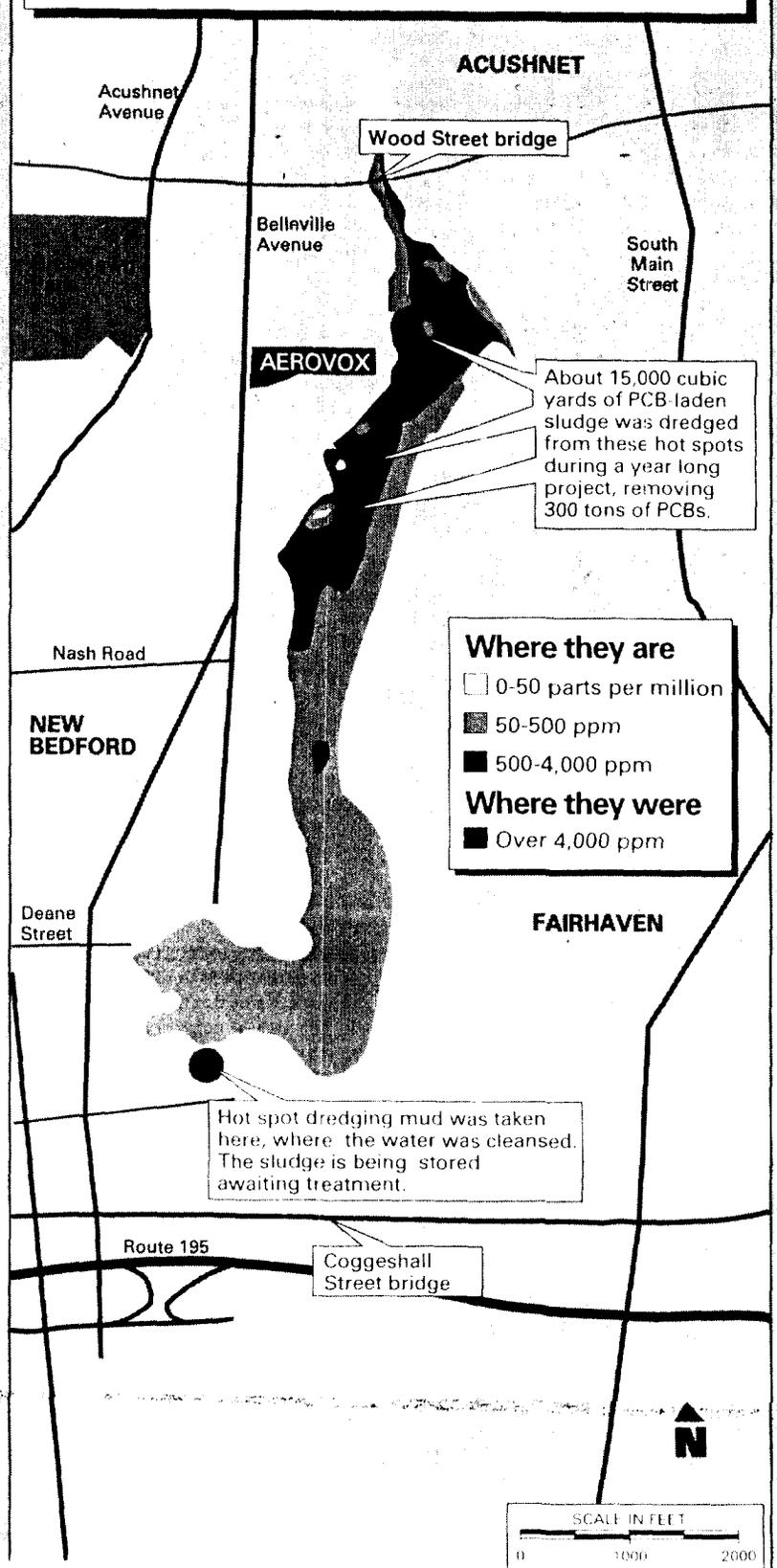
Staff / George A. Heath

The Standard-Times 9/25/95

Simpson

PCBs IN THE HARBOR

Dredging of the hot spots was completed earlier this month, removing half of the PCBs in the Acushnet River and New Bedford Harbor. The toxic material is being stored in a covered lagoon, called a combined disposal facility, while officials test a variety of PCB treatment technologies this fall and spring. About 300 tons of the chemical still linger in the sediments, slowly evaporating into the air during low tides, slipping into the food chain and spreading into the waters of Buzzards Bay and beyond.



cleanup of resources. The interest from this fund is also redeposited.

25 Sep 95

■ Harbor

(Continued from Page A1)

Avenue do not want the (area of the Acushnet River known as the Coffin Avenue lagoon) filled in or made into a toxic dump in front of our homes," reads the petition which, as of Tuesday, had almost 30 signatures.

"We as taxpayers and tenants like

and enjoy our lagoon as it is. We object and do not want any filling of the lagoon now or ever...don't spoil it, please!"

Those involved in the drive plan to deliver the petition to EPA officials."

As part of the second phase of the cleanup of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site, the EPA is expected

to propose storing untreated, contaminated material dredged from the river in lagoons along the riverbank.

Those lagoons, known as combined disposal facilities, or CDF's, will be lined on the sides but not the bottom. They will be capped within five years.

"In my opinion they should put it (the contaminated sludge) back on

the property of the people who put it in the water," said Manuel Sylvia, a Coffin Avenue resident and one of the leaders of the petition drive. "Instead of doing that, they want to plunk it in front of us. If the children play on it (the capped CDF) it's like giving them a bottle of poison. I don't believe it will be safe."

EPA representatives have main-

tained the use of CDF's is safe.

While the New Bedford Forum, a group of local, state and federal officials and concerned citizens continue to meet to discuss how to proceed with the cleanup, Mr. Sylvia said he doesn't think they'll ever reach a solution that's acceptable to the residents of the Coffin Avenue area.

"I think most of them (EPA offi-

cial) are one-minded. they want to put it in a (CDF) and they'll fight until they get it into a CDF."

"I don't think it (the EPA's proposal) will work at all," Mr. Sylvia said. "I think 20, 40 years down the road there'll still be telling kids not to swim in that water. As far as I'm concerned, I don't trust them. they are going to do what they want."