

took some ribbing at first."

But as the six-person unit began making arrests — and clearing rowdy teen-agers from neighborhood beaches —

the neighborhood type issues."

That's been the experience throughout the region and country as a growing number of police departments roll

Fall River, the first area department with a bike patrol which started in 1991, boasts a 10-person bicycle unit; (See BIKES, Page B2)

Area citizens honored for battle against PCBs

By Natalie White
Standard-Times staff writer

PCBs may or may not cause cancer. The chemical's exact health effects are still unknown.

But PCBs definitely caused Claudia Kirk of Fairhaven to turn from a mild-mannered dental assistant to a savvy grassroots activist and founder of Concerned Parents of Fairhaven, one of several groups responsible for forcing a federal agency to change its mind about incineration and to pay attention to local concerns.

Polychlorinated biphenyls pushed Jim Simmons of New Bedford to the helm of a watchdog group, Hands Across the River, still keeping close tabs on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Superfund cleanup of the New Bedford Harbor.

The organic compounds, used for years by local capacitor manufacturing companies and dumped into the harbor, forced Roland Pepin of Acushnet to become a lay expert on dredging and Carol Sanz of Marion to launch the Downwind Coalition.

On Thursday, the contributions of these four and countless others citizens were acknowledged by the very agency they once sought to turn on its head.

John DeVillars, EPA's regional administrator for the Northeast, thanked these folks, if not exactly for their opposition, then for their cooperation after the opposition in working with the EPA on the New Bedford Forum to help shape the

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clean up and seek alternative technologies to incineration.

"We are here because of a community that came together," Mr. DeVillars said during a press conference at the foot of Sawyer Street. "This is a great day for the harbor cleanup. And I extend my thanks to the citizen activists who have played such an integral part of the process."

On Sept. 6, the cleanup marked a milestone. On Thursday, about 20 people gathered as a celebratory gesture.

A few weeks ago, the last of more than 300 tons of PCBs in five acres of so-called hot spots were dredged from the Acushnet River, removing about half of all the PCBs in the harbor and placing them in a storage lagoon at the bottom of Sawyer Street.

The dredged material — about 14,000 cubic yards of mud — must still be treated and the EPA is exploring several technologies for this. The agency is also trying to decide how to deal with the remainder of the harbor, which is contaminated with PCBs but not to the high levels of the hot spots. Those areas contained up to 200,000 parts per million, some of the highest PCB concentrations ever found in the United States.

In 1993, local citizens groups organized a grassroots fight that

(See EPA, Page B2)



New Bedford Mayor Rosemary S. Tierney listens to EPA Administrator John DeVillars as he speaks Thursday.

Photo by Dana Sriith

Fishing plan wo

By Jack Stewardson
Standard-Times staff writer

FAIRHAVEN — Like a bridegroom at a shotgun fishing industry officials want to embrace new management alternatives will put them out of business.

Instead, industry spokesmen at a New England Fishery Management Council hearing Thursday were unanimous that they should try to rebuild groundfish stocks without the existing management plan.

"It brings forth an old idea that's not working, don't try and do it," said Howard W. Nickerson, director of the Offshore Fishing Association and a member of the Massachusetts Fishermen's Ship. The group says the existing plan — with some modifications — should form the basis of a continuing response to the groundfish crisis.

The partnership, working with Cardinal Bernard L. Cooke, sends fishing ports in New Bedford, Gloucester and Cape Cod drew widespread support. About 150 who attended the hearing at the Seaport Inn, where speaker urged the council to abandon the existing plan, which has been in place about 18 months.

"The plan is only a year old," said Bill Gell, owner of the trawler Xiphias. "Let's really find out what is really happening there first."

nat in mind, they said they for the inclusion of alternations in the prison bill in keep its cost down.

support a bill that not only it looks at alternative sanc-said Rep. Antonio F.D. New Bedford. "In order to e these other bond bills — rt bond bill, the higher ed , the open space bond bill ated, we have to craft a bill at alternative sentences." William Straus, D-Mat-also said he will work for a sentences to be included. is no question thee are oblems, but just building never the whole criminal ue," he said.

eld hopes to turn up the re issue when he holds a nference Monday with riffs and state prison offi-

Nelson, who will attend, id his colleagues will let ring prison populations themselves.

're going to pass truth in s, eliminate good time, er sentences, then gives us ces to deal with it," he

nt from no concentration o having an expert work-us," Dartmouth Chief ares said.

ares called bike patrols a nponent of community at helps link the officer to

opinion that a police s up a physical barrier ie officer and the resi-said. "The bike patrols u with another tool or y for crime prevention." leni agreed. "You're not a big steel box."

aid the

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

Superfund work at Sullivan's Ledge in New Bedford and at ReSolve in Dartmouth could grind to a halt if proposed budget cuts for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency go through, federal and regional EPA officials said Thursday.

"It could be devastating," EPA's Northeast Regional Administrator John DeVillars said during an afternoon press conference at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site, which he said could also be affected, although money for this cleanup has already been set aside.

The proposed cuts would slash the EPA's budget by a third.

"We will not be able to provide the level of protection to the American people that they now count on," said Carol Browner, federal administrator of the EPA. She spoke to reporters from New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont during a Thursday morning telephone press conference. "It would quite literally mean sewage and toxic waste in our waters."

They both said enforcement would be seriously weakened and that Superfund cleanups, including

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Re-Solve and Sullivan's Ledge, could be slowed or stopped.

The Re-Solve site, a former waste reclamation dump for hazardous waste materials, is polluted with PCBs and other toxics. Work is nearly complete, but could be slowed significantly.

The Sullivan's Ledge cleanup is still in the design stages. It is one site officials said would fall off the priority list if EPA's budget is severely cut. The area could be vital to the area's economic development since it is being considered for a casino.

Mr. DeVillars and Ms. Browner weren't the only ones holding press conferences Thursday. The local chapter of MassPIRG, based at UMass Dartmouth, stated its concerns from the steps of the Federal Building in New Bedford.

"We need to breathe the air. We need to drink the water. If anything, we need to strengthen environmental protections, not weaken them," said Robin Eiseman, UMass campus coordinator for MassPIRG.

"The EPA's budget is about to be slashed. The environment is really taking a large hit."

She said in the last six months environmental groups nationwide gathered more than a million signatures on an Environmental Bill of Rights, which asks elected officials to protect programs such as the EPA and legislation such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

"We need to stop the rollback of 25 years of progress," said Ms. Eiseman, who added the petition will be delivered to congressional leaders in October. More than 60,000 of the signatures were collected in Massachusetts, Ms. Eiseman said, with the help of groups such as the Coalition for Buzzards Bay.

"We are coming to a critical point in the debate of the future," said Ms. Browner.

The House Appropriations bill for the EPA would cut the agency's budget by \$2.5 billion, or 34 percent of President Clinton's budget request. The Senate will take up the debate next week.

President Clinton has said he will veto the House's version if it gets to his desk.

Details

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a form, signed by the people on the staff, which substantiates what was done.

"I have never signed an authorization for payment without that form."

And what of the police chief's authorization?

"The chief doesn't have the authority to spend the DPW budget," Mr. Hannon said. "And I don't have the authority to spend his budget."

"But all of this will not mean that I will not listen to reason tomorrow."

Fishing

(Continued from Page B2)

survival of the fish stocks, but it will also cause the collapse of the fishing industry and its infrastructure," said James M. Kendall, executive director of the New Bedford Seafood Industry Coalition.

"This is stopping people from making a living, abruptly," said Harriet Didriksen, a Mattapoisett fishing vessel owner.

enough time to work," said Mayor Rosemary S. Tierney, who spoke in support of the status quo.

Sharing her message were representatives of the area's legislative delegation, including Elsie Souza, local aide to Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass.

Kevin Ferreira, president of the Whaling City Seafood Display Auction, which handled 10.4 million pounds in its first year, said "any assessment of the merits of Amendment 5 are premature" at this point.

EPA

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Elsie Souza, aide to U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., remembers.

"This is government of the people, by the people and for the people and I watched it happen," said Ms. Souza. "I remember when David Hammond (a founder of Hands Across the River) was in my office every day. When Claudia was banging her fist on my desk."

The congressman, as well as several city officials, were instrumental in making the EPA rethink its decision to burn the material from the hot spots.

But it was ordinary citizens who relentlessly kept at their elected officials, who organized rally after rally, who launched telephone calling tree after letter writing campaign, who passed around petitions and demanded action.

"I remember the frustration, when

no one would listen," Mr. Simmons said.

But they did. After a bitter battle, incineration was dropped.

"If the EPA didn't listen, none of this would be happening," said City Councilor Fred Kalisz. "Now, we may not all always agree but there is an openness there and that has been key."

In addition to Mr. DeVillars, others who spoke at the gathering included Mr. Pepin, Mr. Simmons, Mayor Rosemary Tierney, state Department of Environmental Protection Regional Administrator Andrea Papadopoulos and Larry Rosenberg of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Despite the congratulations, all involved said this is no time for complacency.

"There still isn't a solution," said Mr. Pepin.

"But there's a lot more trust," said Frank Ciavattieri of the EPA.