

# Superfund's Role in Great Lakes Restoration: The St. Louis River Area of Concern Project

A Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Priority for Minnesota

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Fall Conference

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St. Paul, Minnesota



# St Louis River Area of Concern Primary Partnering Agencies

## Great Lakes RESTORATION

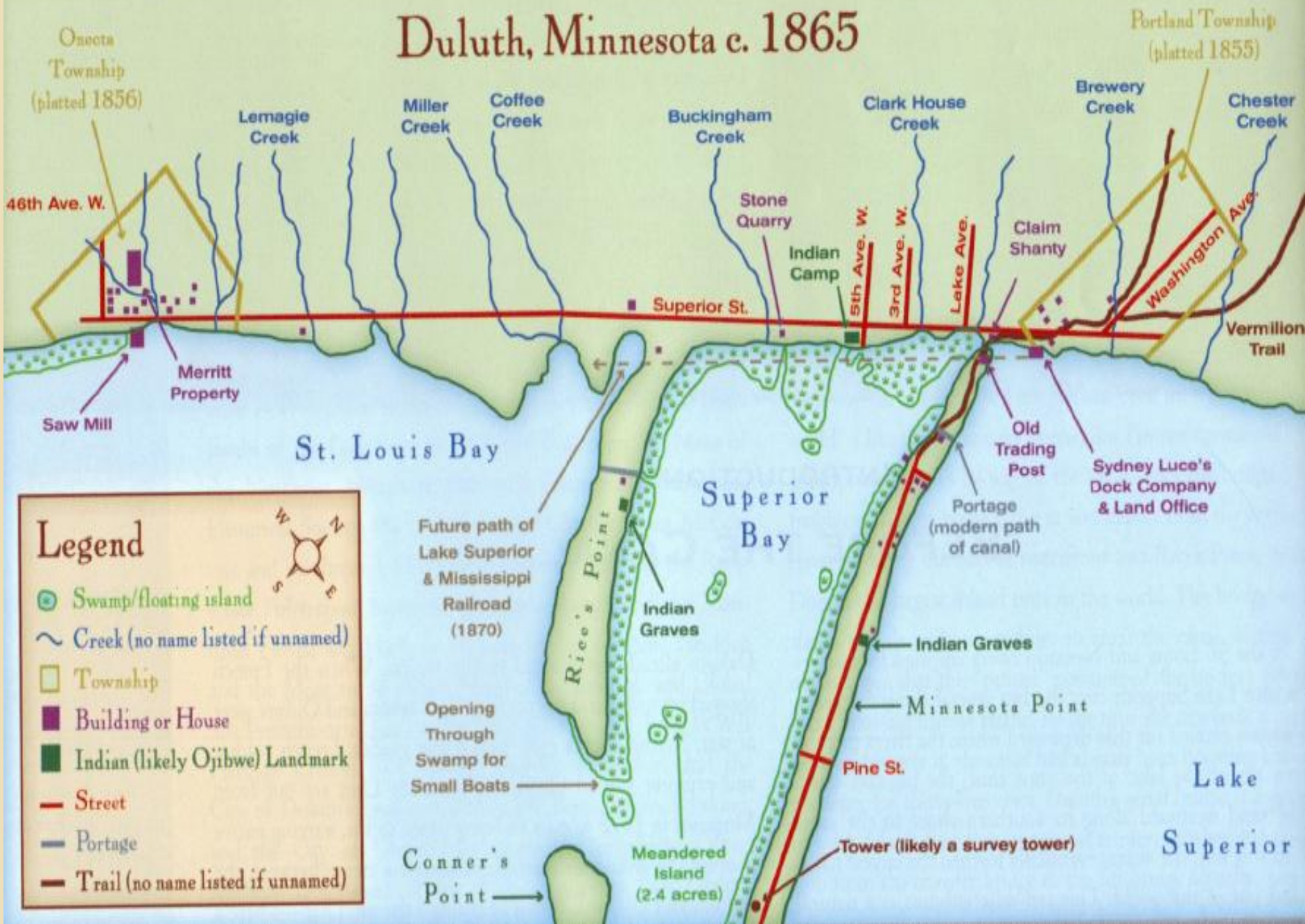




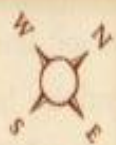
# Overview






- ❖ Past history - a legacy of settlement and development prior to environmental regulation – why we are here
- ❖ Post Environmental Regulation Era, Superfund, Great Lakes Collaborative and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- ❖ Remediation Efforts, Superfund and the Remedial Action Plan
- ❖ Remedial Action Plan Implementation 2014 – 2025...

# Duluth, Minnesota c. 1865



## Legend



-  Swamp/floating island
-  Creek (no name listed if unnamed)
-  Township
-  Building or House
-  Indian (likely Ojibwe) Landmark
-  Street
-  Portage
-  Trail (no name listed if unnamed)



By 1890 a bustling inland port...











# Western Lake Superior Sanitary District Came on Line in 1979





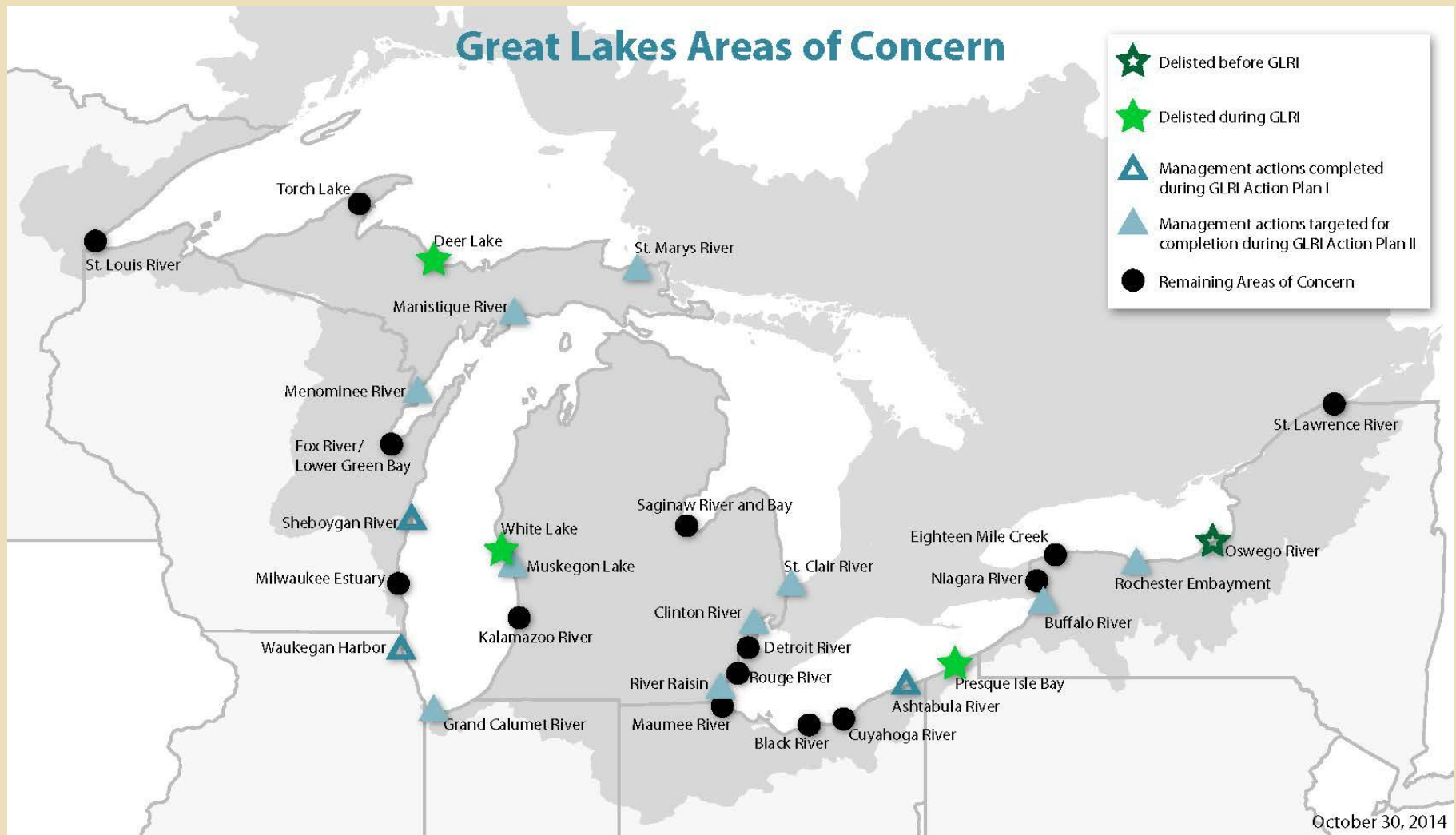
# Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement



Richard Nixon and Pierre Trudeau sign the historic agreement.

**Purpose is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem**

- Signed 1972: focus on nutrients; phosphorus in Lake Erie
- Revised 1978: more focus on toxics
- **Revised 1987:** introduced Lakewide Management Plans and **Areas of Concern**
- Revised in 2012 – continues focus on



### 43 Areas of Concern (AOCs)

- 26 located entirely within the United States (4 delisted, 1 in recovery)
- 12 located wholly within Canada (3 delisted)
- 5 that are shared by Canada and United States

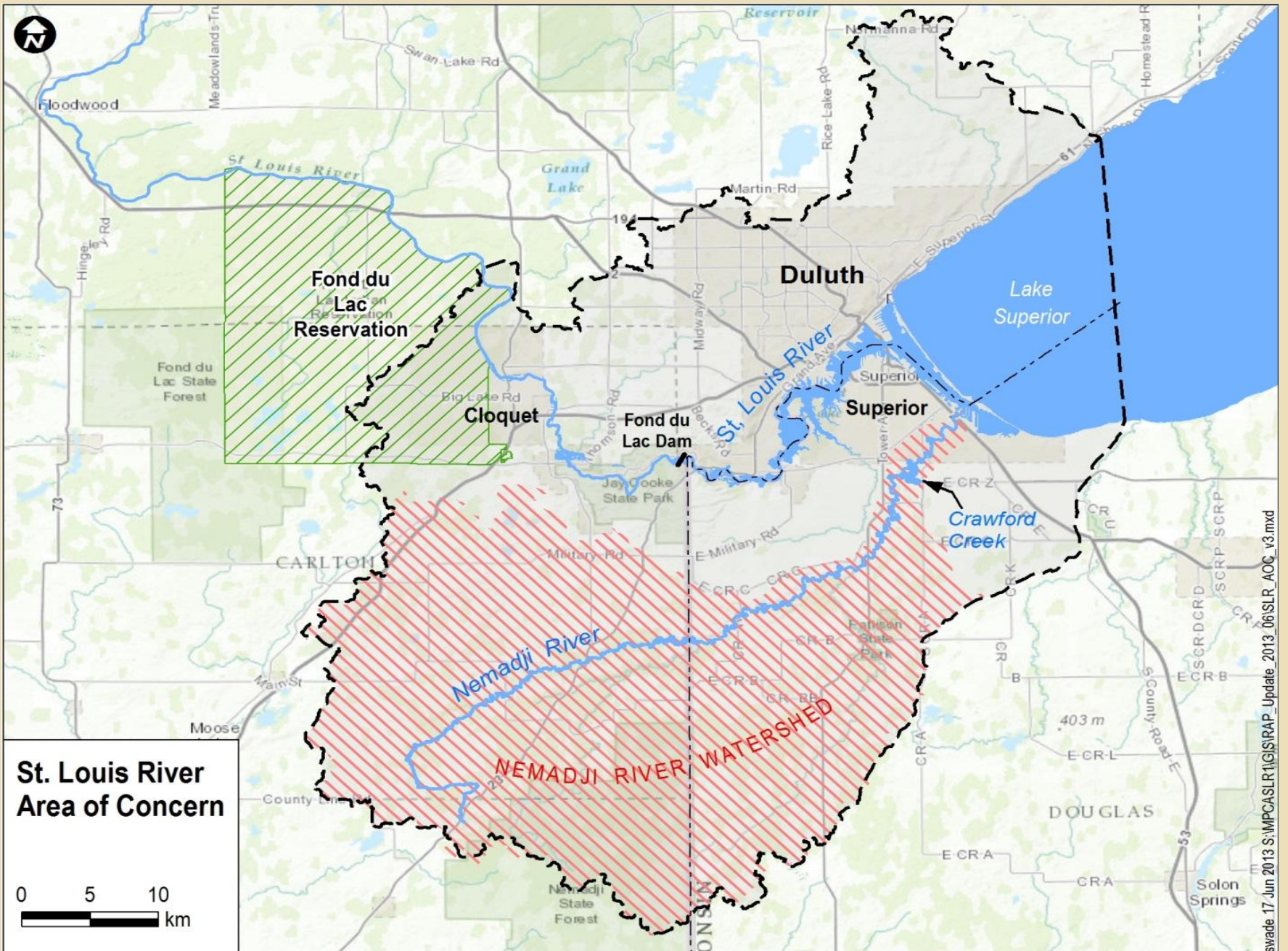


# Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex II 1987

9 of 14 Beneficial Use Impairments Identified in St. Louis River AOC

- ✓ Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption
- ✓ Fish tumors or other deformities
- ✓ Degradation of benthos
- ✓ Restrictions on dredging activities
- ✓ Beach closings
- ✓ Degradation of aesthetics
- ✓ Loss of fish and wildlife habitat
- ✓ Degradation of fish wildlife populations
- ✓ Excessive Loading of Sediment and Nutrients
  - Tainting of fish and wildlife flavor
  - Bird or animal deformities or reproduction problems
  - Restrictions on drinking water consumption, or taste and odor problems
  - Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations
  - Added costs to agriculture or industry







# Great Lakes RESTORATION



FFY 2010-2019 - Largest investment in the Great Lakes in two decades.  
Great Lakes Restoration Action Plan developed by 11 federal agencies  
This current action plan covers fiscal years 2015 through 2019 and addresses five urgent issues:

- **Cleaning up toxics and areas of concern;**
- Combating invasive species;
- Promoting nearshore health by protecting watersheds from polluted run-off;
- **Restoring wetlands and other habitats;** and
- **Tracking progress and working with strategic partners.**

Three key priorities have guided GLRI implementation in the last several years:

- **Cleaning up Areas of Concern**
- Reducing nutrients entering the Lakes
- Preventing the introduction of new invasive species.

# MPCA Remediation Program AOC Sediment Characterization and Remedial Assessment Project

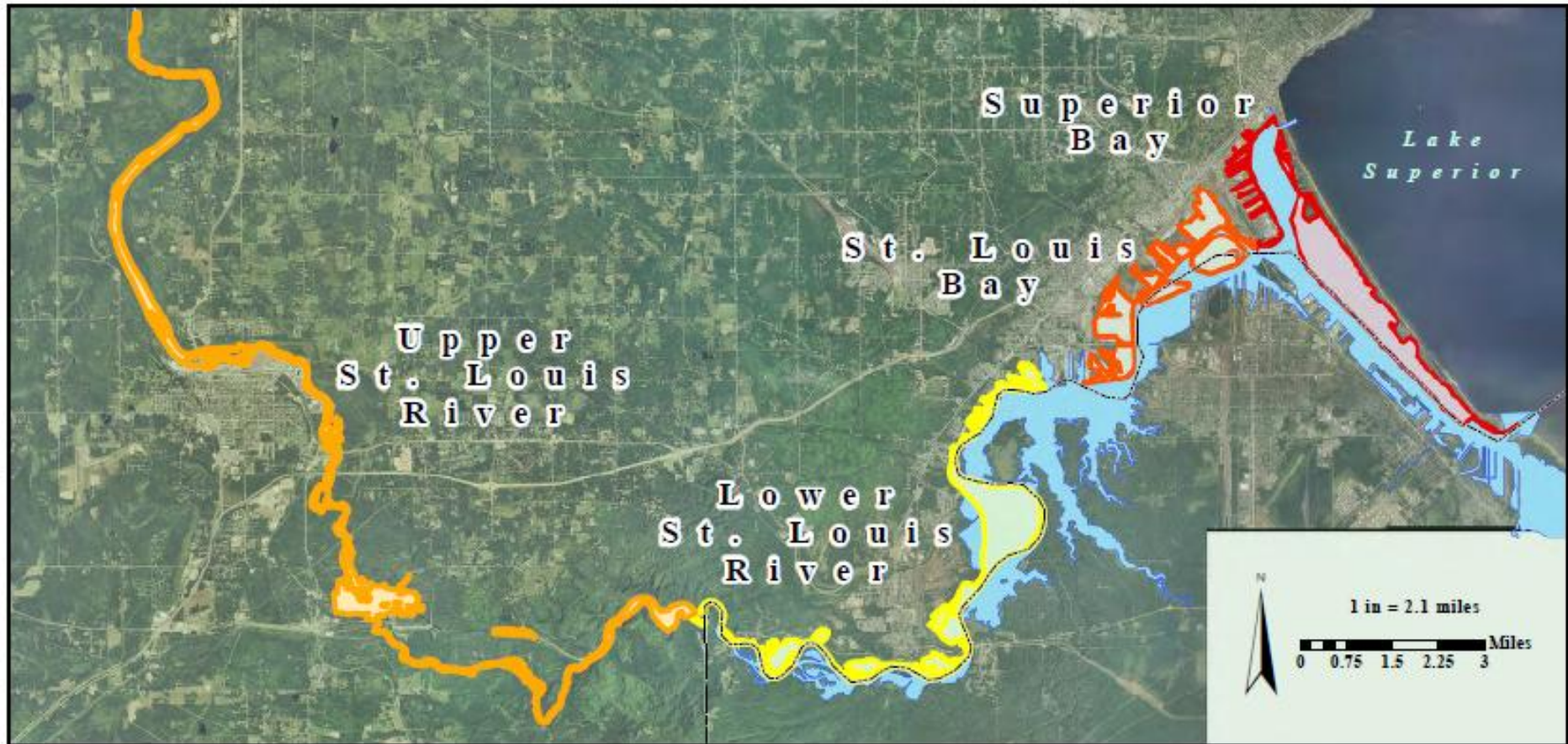


# Historical Remediation Involvement

- **1990s-Worked with water staff on several small, focused projects including MN Slip**
- **2005 - Remediation developed a prototype scope of work - no funding**
- **2008 - 2014 Funding became available from the Federal Partners**



# St. Louis River Area of Concern Sediment Characterization Sites



# **MPCA AOC Assessment Strategy**

- **Obtain spatially diverse, consistent sediment data set**
- **Conduct meaningful comparative analysis on a large geographic scale**
- **Enable a sharper focus on sediment Hotspots on an AOC wide basis**
- **Enable MPCA to prioritize resources for future cleanup and restoration**



# MN Remedial Assessment Areas (RAAs)

77 in MN    43 in WI    120 Total







AFFILIATED RESEARCHERS

Established by Minnesota Co. Association of Fisheries  
(888) 739-5171 [www.affiliatedresearchers.com](http://www.affiliatedresearchers.com)

MC 8228 TG











marine

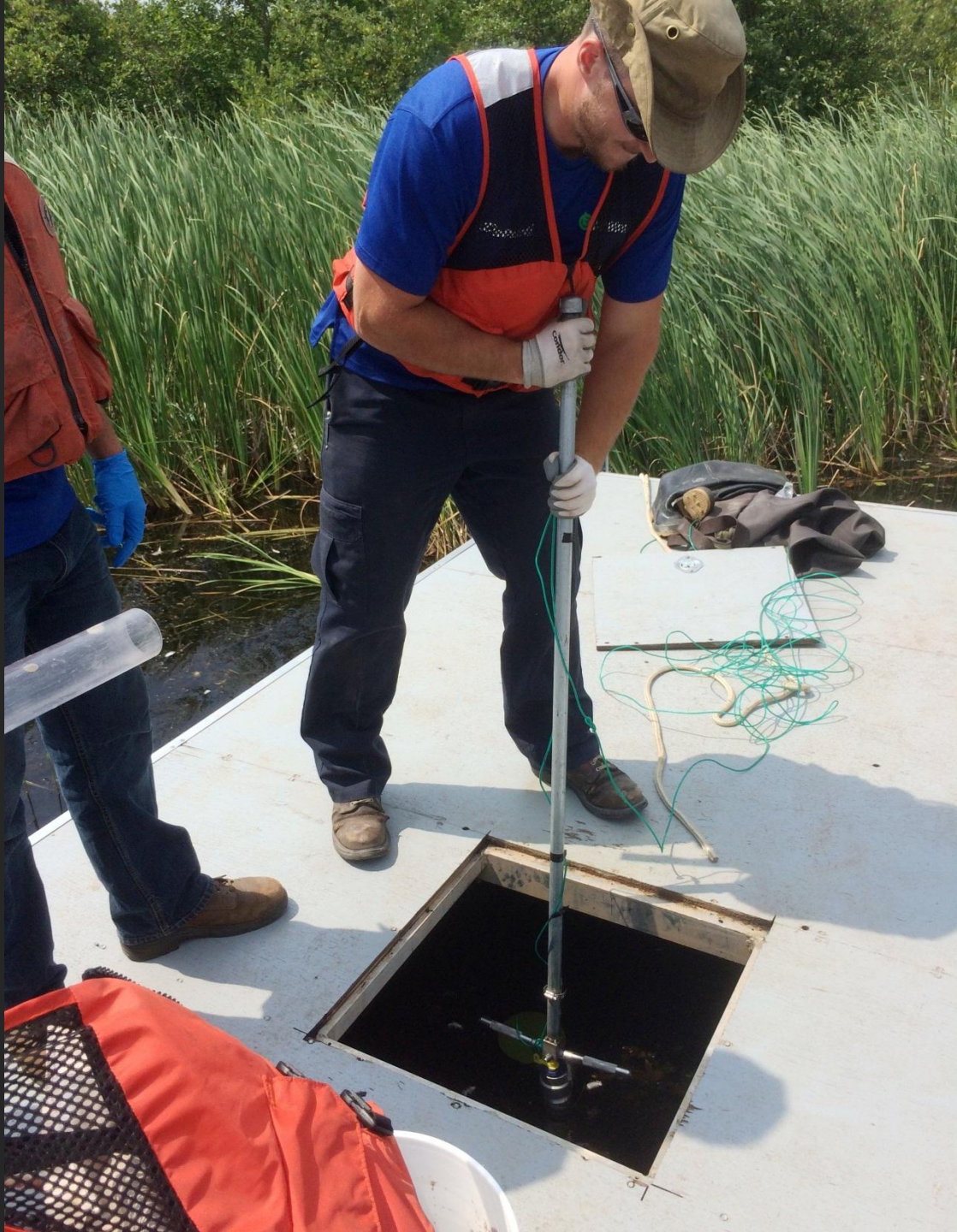
R/V MUDDUPPY II  
BAY CITY, MI













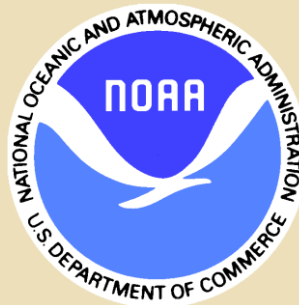




# St. Louis River AOC Sediment Database

## Phase VII

- Updated from previous MPCA Sediment database (Judy Crane)
- Developed by LimnoTech
  - Access Based
  - Specialized Queries
- Administered by NOAA/Lake Superior NERR
  - 84 Studies
  - 2,684 Stations
  - 6,181 samples
  - 271,531 Chemistry Results

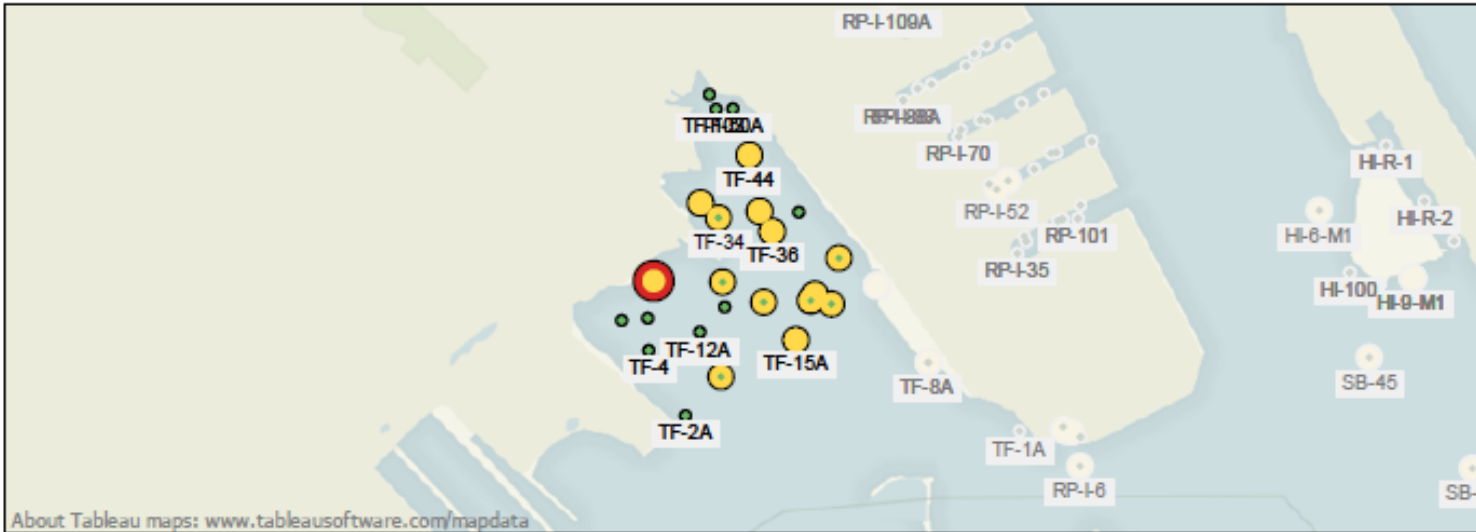




# Analysis Tools

## Tableau Loaded with Phase 6 Mercury Data

Map with SQGs (highlight specific stations to filter the graph below further)



About Tableau maps: [www.tableausoftware.com/mapdata](http://www.tableausoftware.com/mapdata)

Analyte Class

All

Analyte Name (choose one)

Mercury

ND Treatment

Nondetects as 0

High nondetects

Exclude high ND

Sediment Quality Guidelines

MN Level I & II SQTs (2000)

Conc compared to SQGs

<Level I

Between Level I & II

Depth Intervals

All

Known / unknown depths

Known depth

Known / unknown location

Known location

Study Group

St Louis River & Duluth Harbor

Study Name

Assessment Study of Slip C, 1...

Bay West Intlk Reconnaissanc...

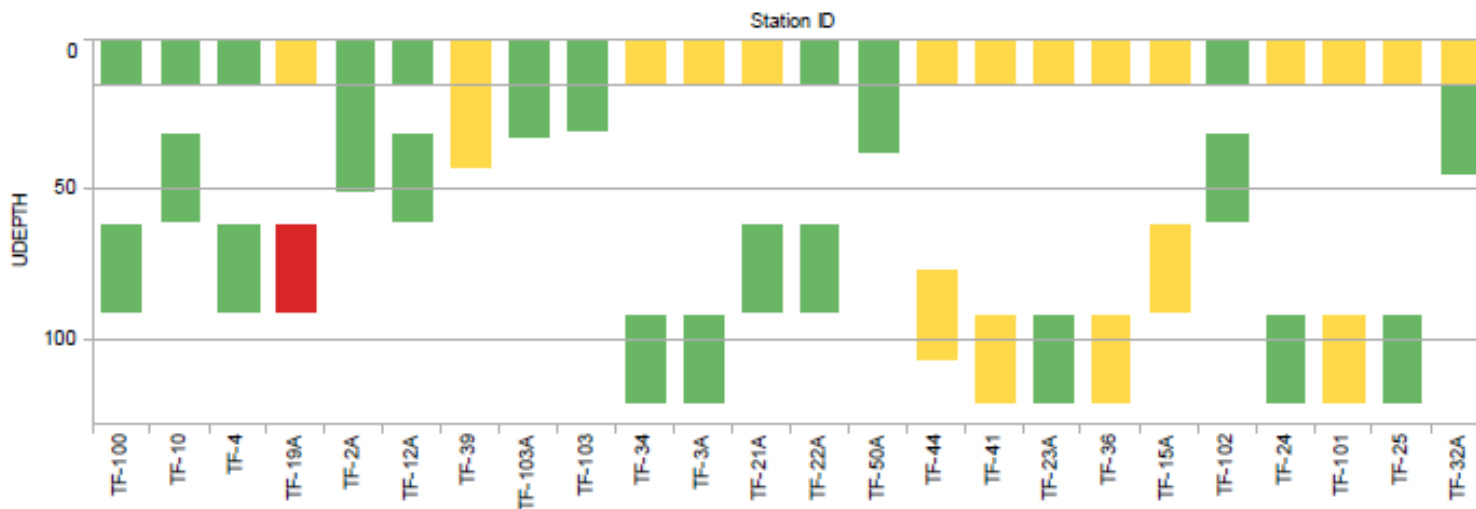
Bay West Intlk Reconnaissanc...

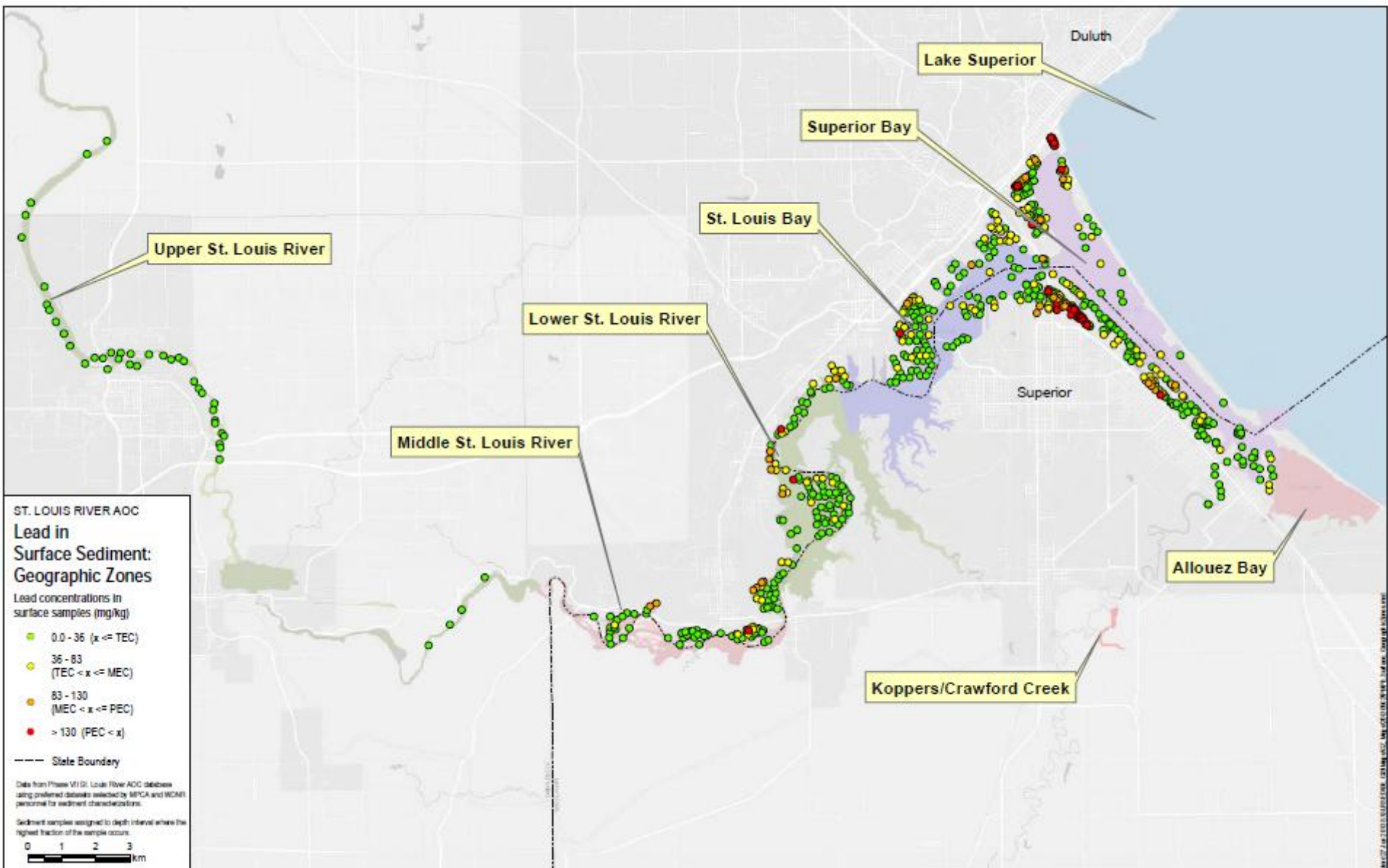
AOC Location

Bay East of WLSSD

North Channel; Intersate

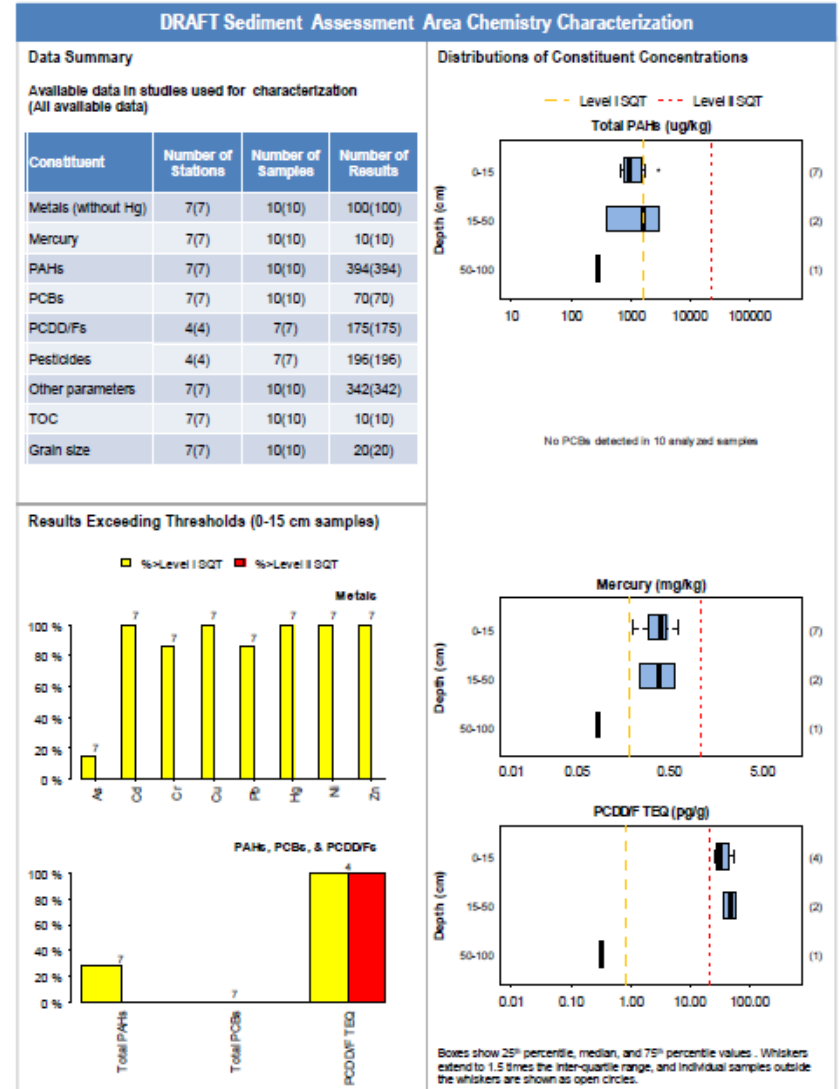
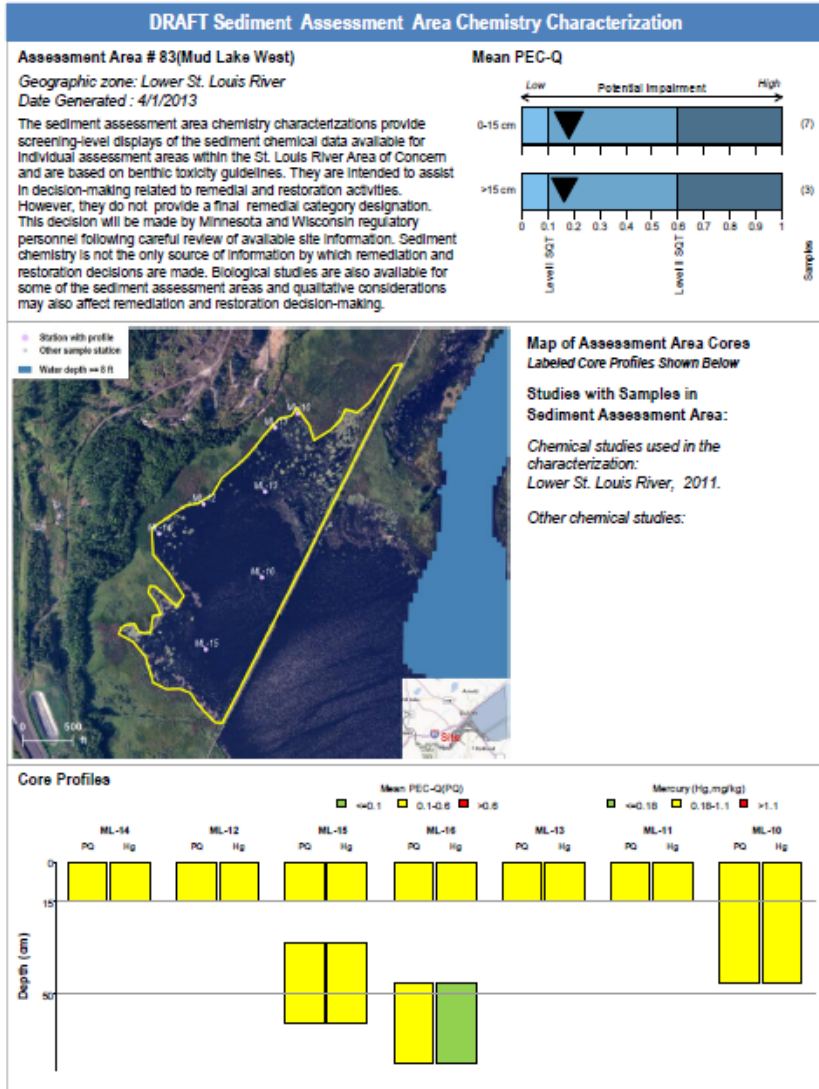
Core Chemistry Compared to SQGs (sorted by longitude, W to E)







# Dashboard Example



# AOC Remedial Assessment Categories



- Remedial Program Lead
- Moderate to major remedial issues
- More information needed to make an assessment
- Remedial Investigation & Feasibility Study Track



- Ready for Strategic Restoration
  - Minor to moderate contamination issues
  - No remedial cleanup warranted if left undisturbed
  - Recommended Management Practices (RMPs)

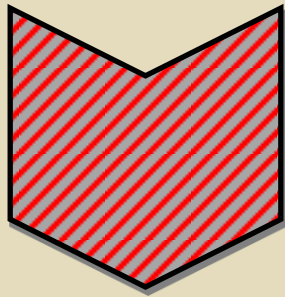


- Ready for Restoration
  - No or very minor remedial issues

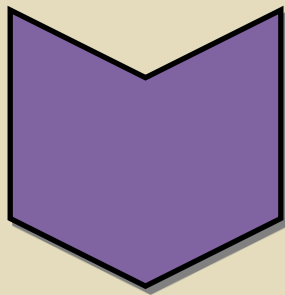


# AOC Remedial Assessment Categories

## Additional remedial area categories:



**Red Gray:** Not enough data to make a remedial determination



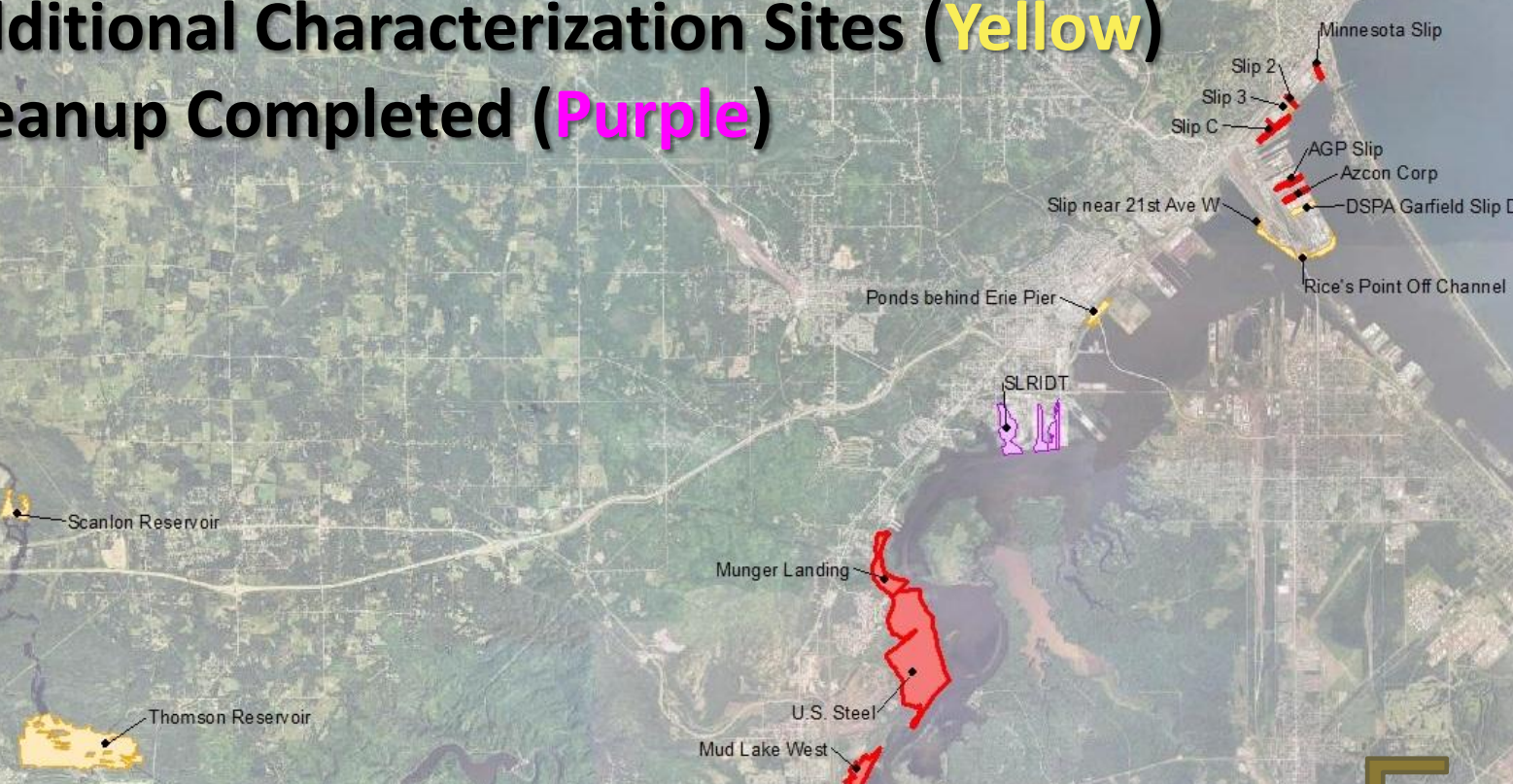
**Purple:** Cleanup completed – May be in LTM or O&M

# Minnesota Remedial Program Lead Sites

8 RI/FS Sites (**Red**)

7 Additional Characterization Sites (**Yellow**)

1 Cleanup Completed (**Purple**)





# Additional Characterization Sites

Assessment Area	Core Locations	Analytical Samples	Remedial Determination [Red or Yellow] *
Slip 3	9	26	Pending
DSPA Garfield Slip D	0	0	Removed from assessment
Rice's Point Off Channel	14	29	Pending
Slip near 21 <sup>st</sup> Ave West	7	30	Likely Red
Ponds Behind Erie Pier	12	24	Likely Red
Thomson Reservoir	24	53	Pending
Scanlon Reservoir	22	14	Pending
<i>Total</i>	88	176	

*\* Remedial determinations will be Finalized by Spring 2015*

*Note: GLLA Budget \$350,000*

# Remedial Investigation Sites

Assessment Area	Core Locations	Analytical Samples	Remedial Program Status *
Minnesota Slip	9	18	Feasibility Study Complete
Slip 2	18	44	VIC RAP Approved, RA 2015
Slip C	27	53	RI Rpt. Pending
AGP Northland Slip	21	49	RI Rpt. Pending
Azcon Slip	23	54	RI Rpt. Pending
Munger Landing	35	77	RI Rpt. Pending
US Steel	USS RI	USS RI	FS Final Dec. – RD/RA 2015
Mud Lake West	---	---	Voluntary RP Lead (USS)
<i>Total</i>	133	295	

\* Remedial Investigations and Feasibility Studies will be Finalized by Spring 2016

Note: GLLA Budget \$1,500,000

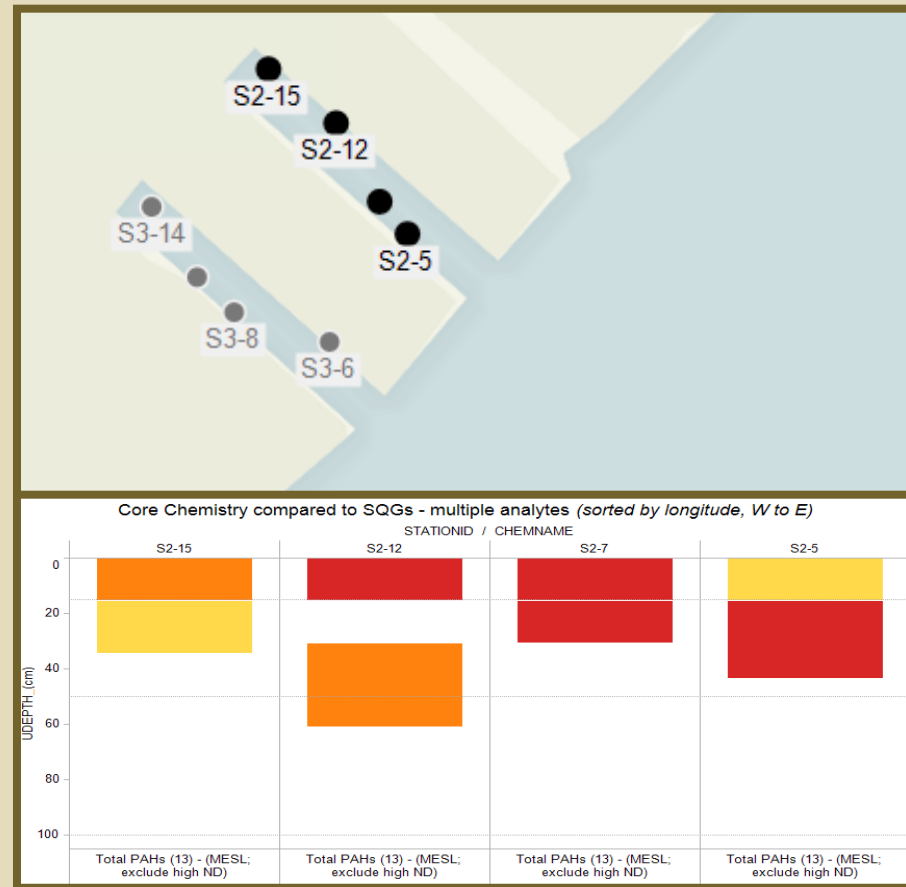
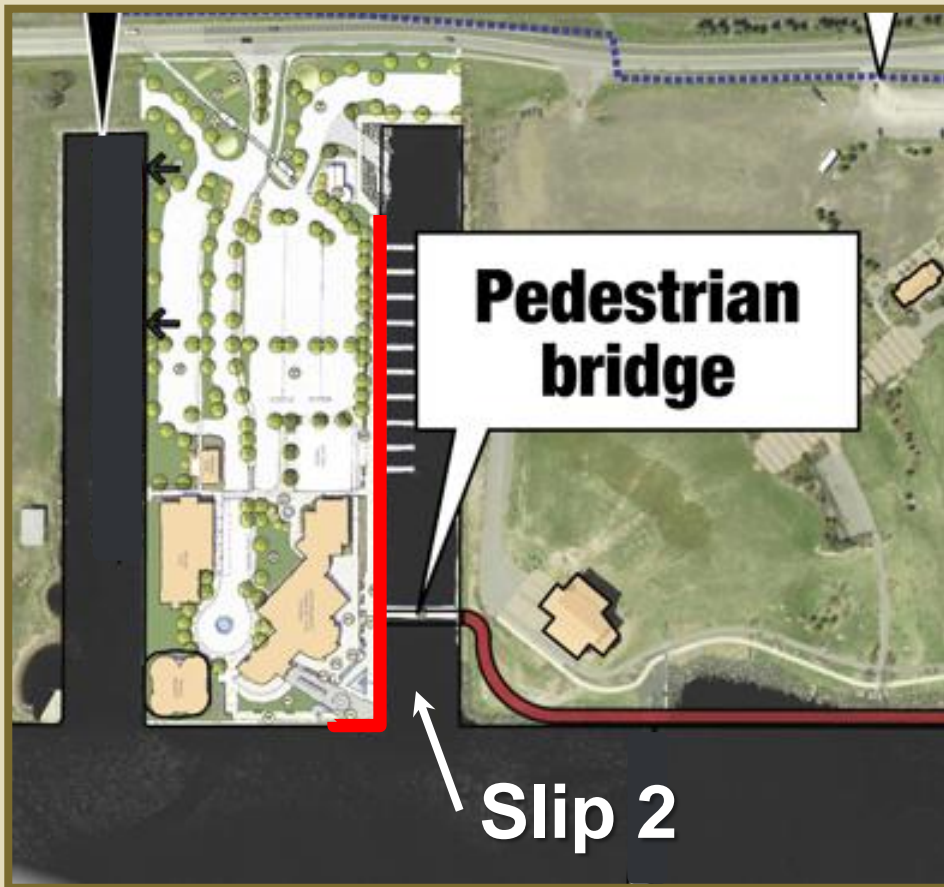






# Voluntary Site - Slip 2 Development Plan

- Land Parcel is currently in Voluntary Program (VIC)
- Marina development is compatible with remedial goals
- MPCA will provide chemical sampling and laboratory costs
- Voluntary party plans to complete construction in 2015

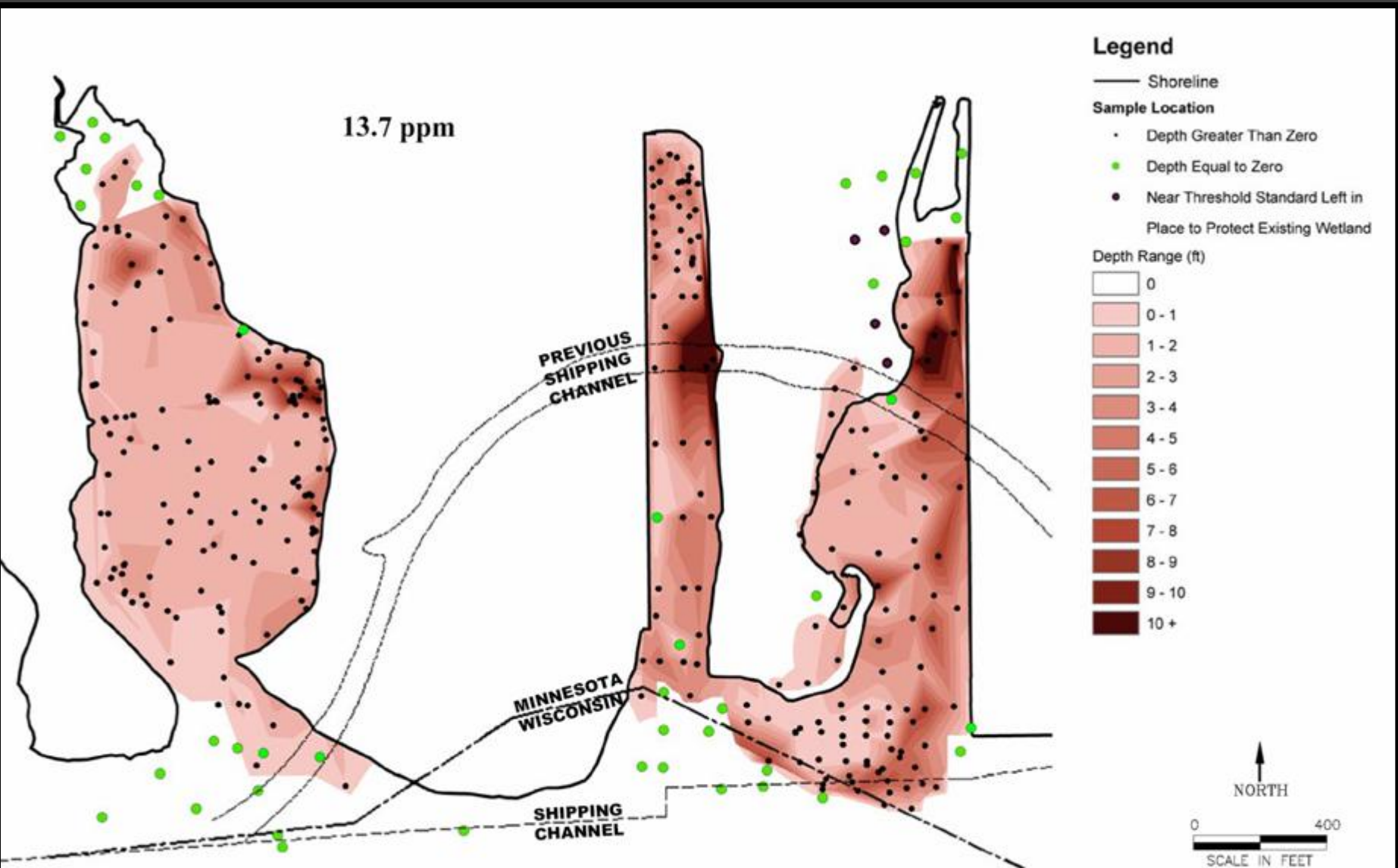




# St. Louis River/Interlake/Duluth Tar Site (SLRIDT)

## Remedy Construction Activities

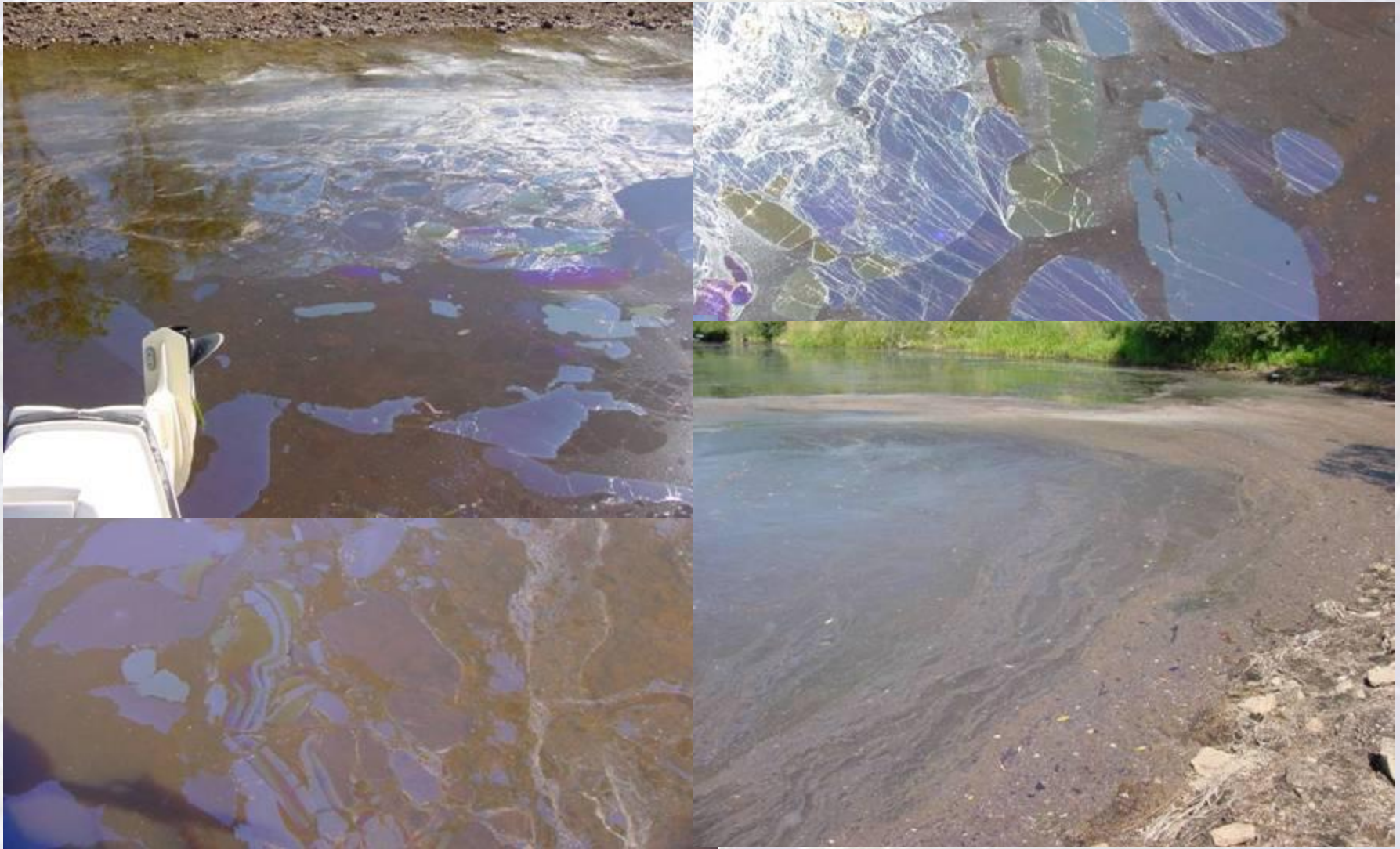




# Extent of Contaminated Sediment



# Stryker Bay Oil Blooms



# Construction of the Dredge/Cap Hybrid Remedy

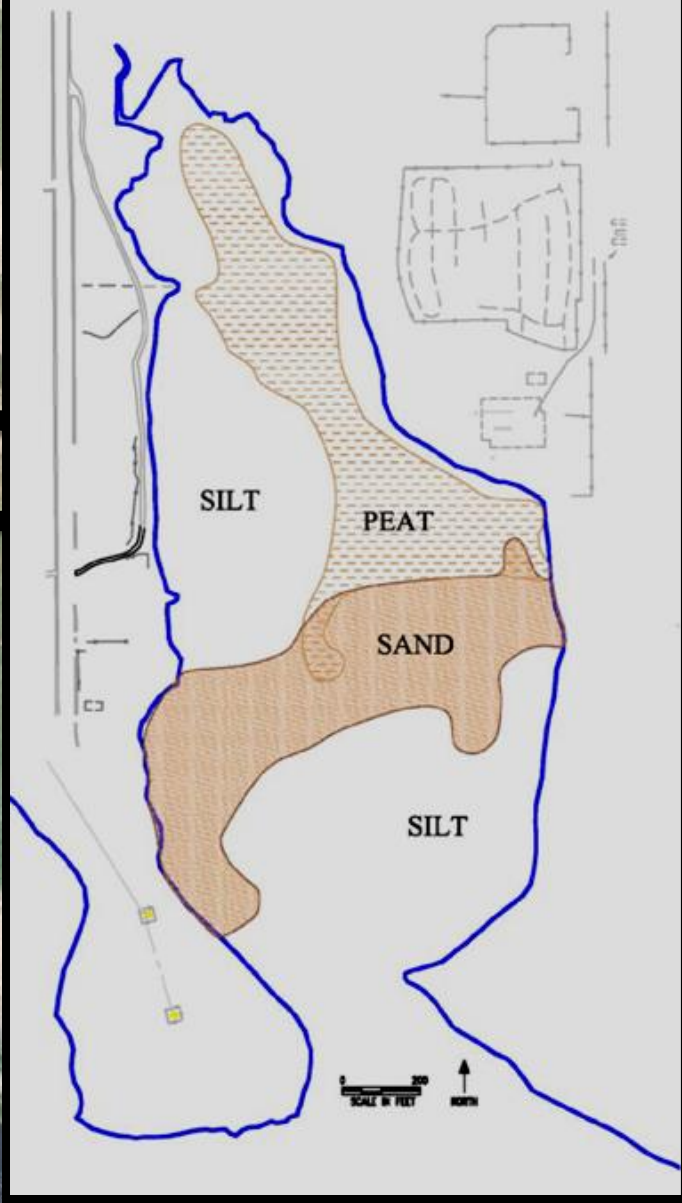




2006



C



Bay  
rcharge  
action

MN  
WI







# Sheet Pile Wall Installation







# Capping with Spreader Barge





0 100 200  
SCALE IN FEET

Page Origin X = 2,885,852.6 Y = 499,890



# Spreader Barge Movement Trace

**Lift 1 Summary – 8/21/2006  
Sub-Aqueous Cap Core Samples  
Stryker Bay - Duluth, MN**



**First Lift of Cap Sand**





geotextile

Nonwoven fabric filled with reactive material

geotextile

# Activated Carbon Mat deployed with Roller Barge

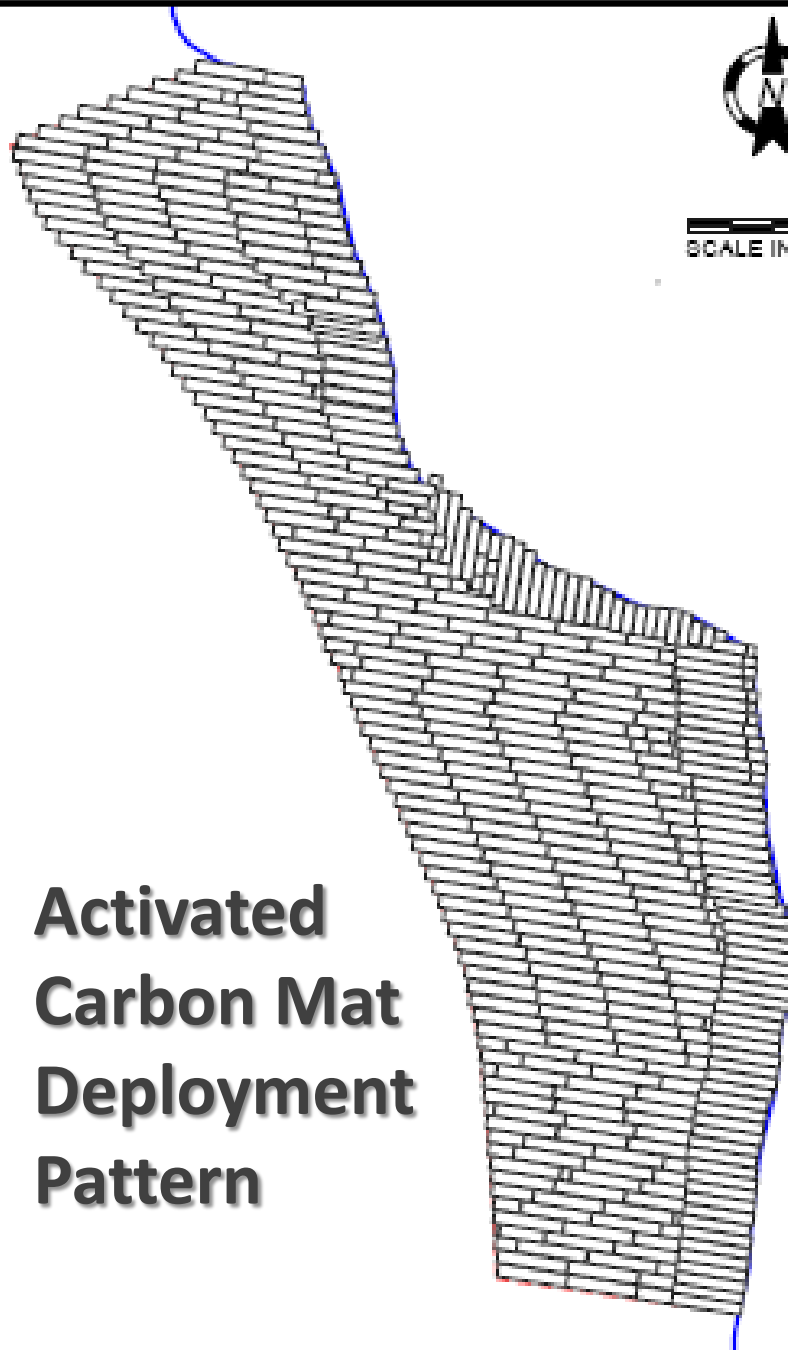








SCALE IN FEET



# Activated Carbon Mat Deployment Pattern







# Placing Cap & Surcharge Material



10/14/20





**Installing Sheet Pile Wall Tie-backs**

# Cap and Surcharge Area







CAD



# CAD End Dike Construction





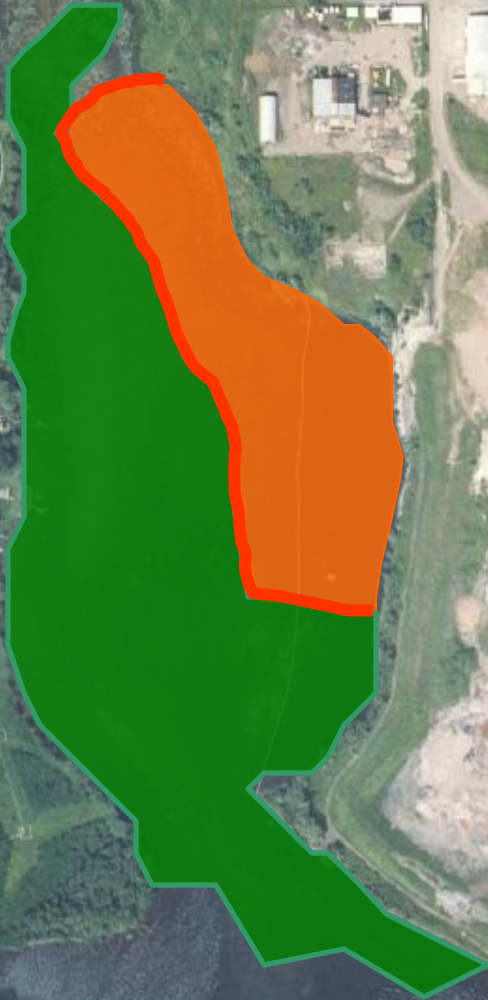






**Clay Mat & Ballast  
Installation**

2007



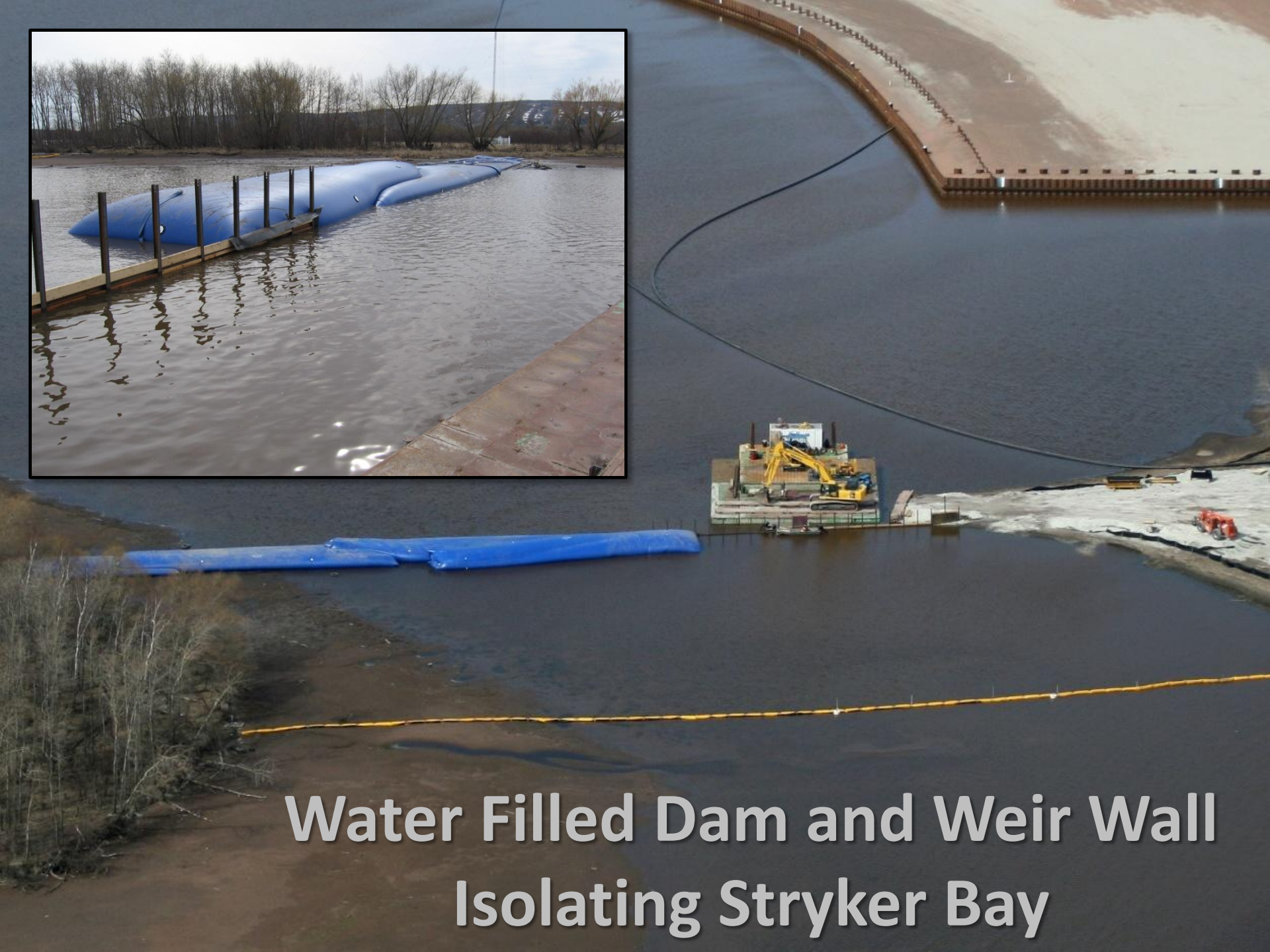
CAD

# Stryker Bay Dredging

MN  
WI







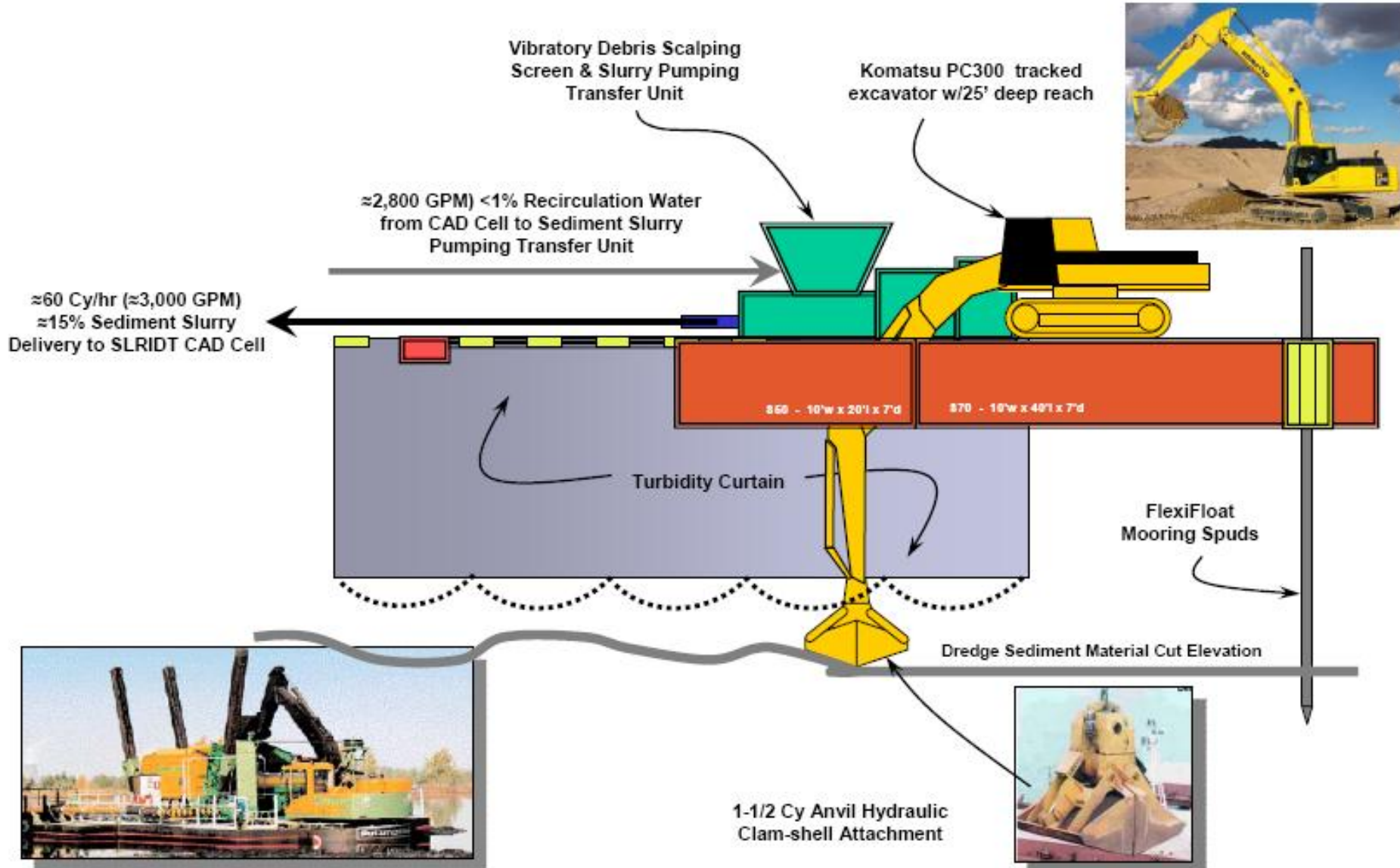
**Water Filled Dam and Weir Wall  
Isolating Stryker Bay**

# Herding Fish out of Work Areas





# Mechanical/Hydraulic Hybrid Dredge







# Mechanical Dredging with Hydraulic Transport







# Dredge Material Placement In CAD With Tremi Barge





# 24 Hour Dredge Operations



# Post Dredge Cover Application



11/19/2007



# 2008

## Dredge Wisconsin & Nav. Channel

CAD







07/28/2008





10/24/2008

# Land Based & Water Based Capping







09/21/2008  
Capping with Spreader Barge



08/19/2008



# Installing Root Barrier in Cap



09/27/2008



# Armor Material Placement





# Staging Armor Materials

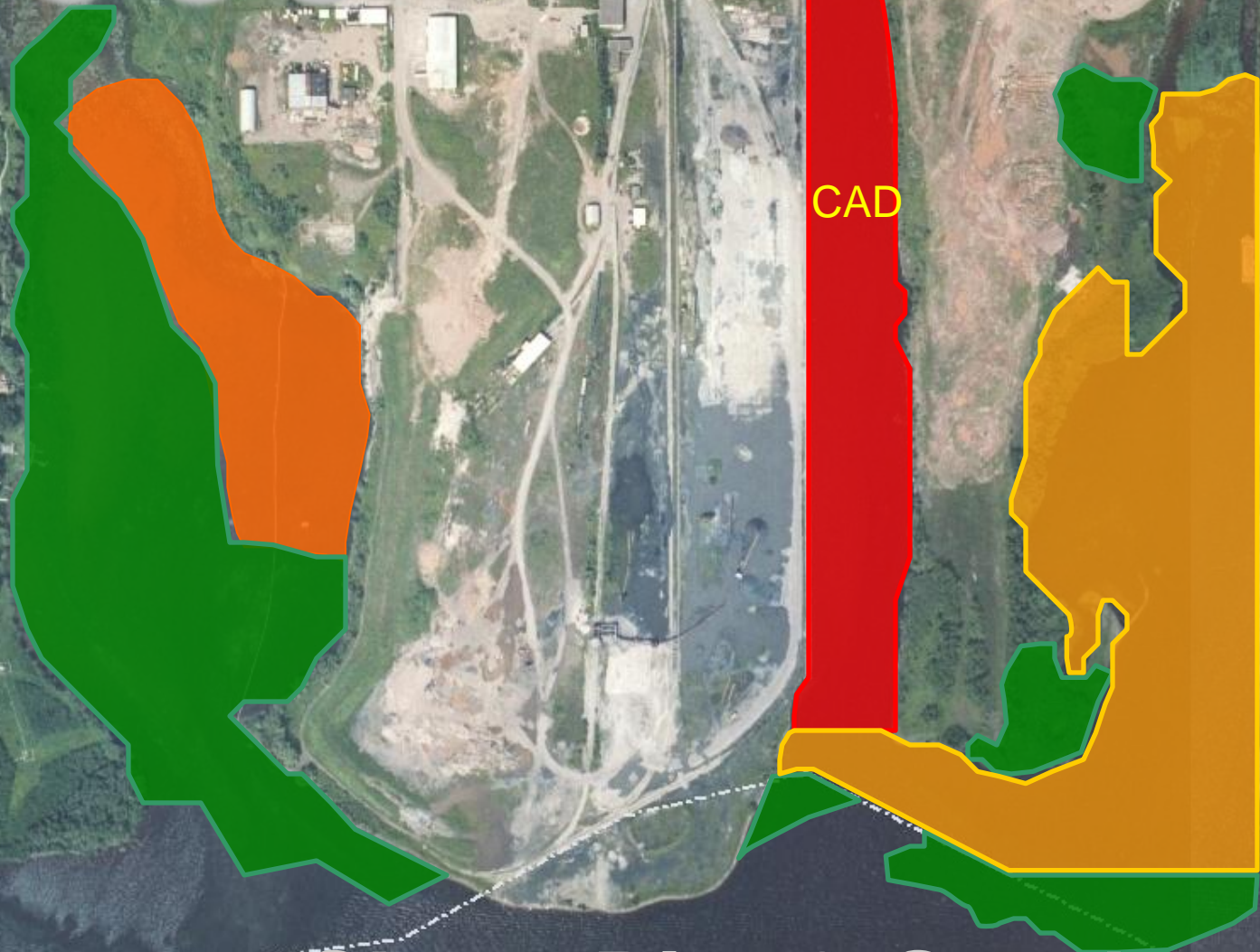








# 2009



CAD

## Remove Sheet Pile & Surcharge







**Sheet Pile & Surcharge  
to be Removed**





08/03/2009



08/04/2009





08/04/2009

**Cutting Sheet Pile Sections**

# Removing Sheet Pile sections



08/24/2009



# Capping Over Sheet Pile Cut



08/28/2009

# Surveying final Cap Elevation



09/08/2009



# Capped Area After Surcharge Removal



10/01/2009

# Complete Cap Construction and Armoring

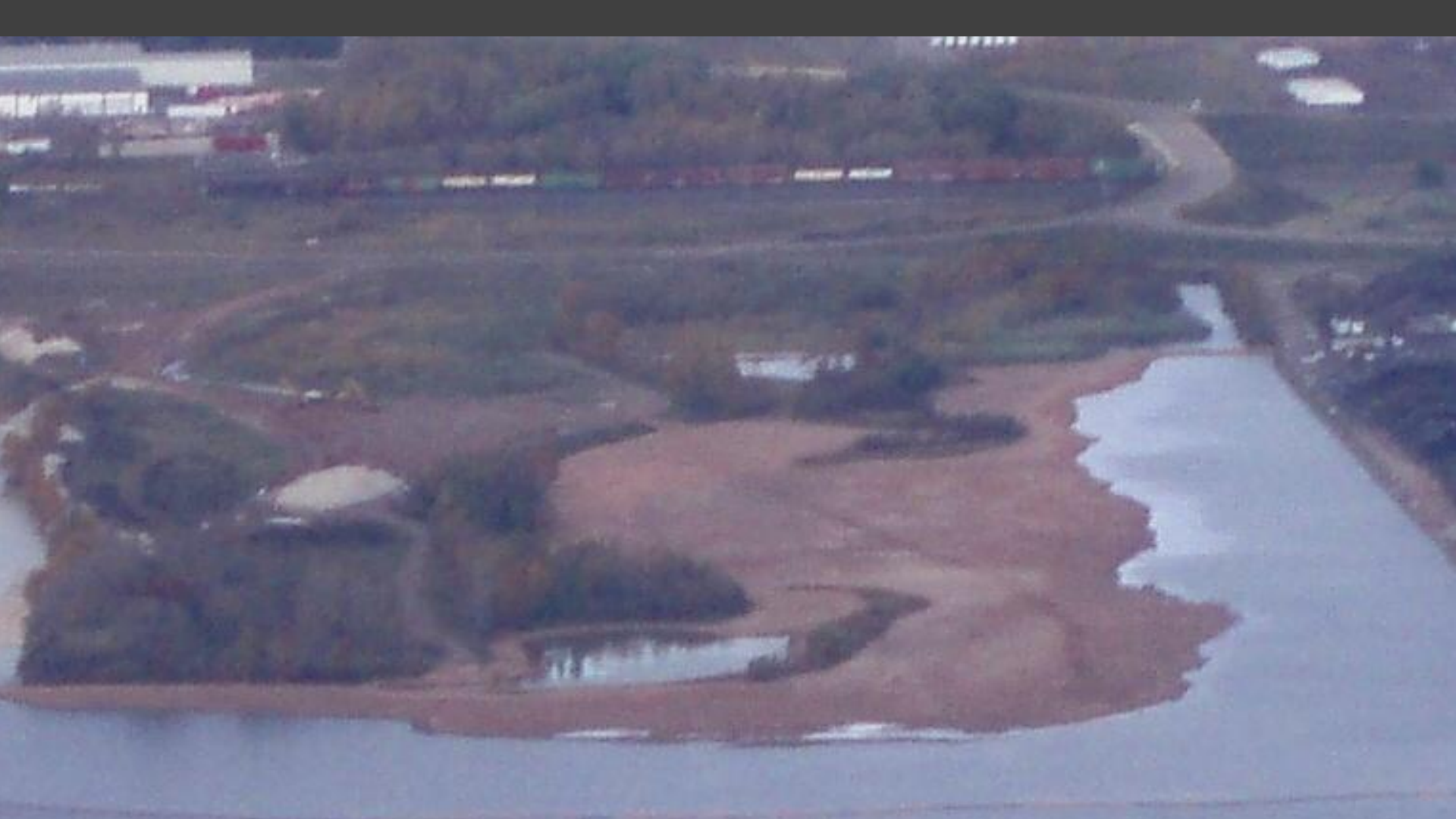






07/13/2009

# Cap Armor Along Shoreline



**Slip 7 flats with Final Cap**





# Wetland dredging & Capping





# Horizontal Auger Dredge in South Wetland



05/10/2009



# South Wetland



08/01/2009

# 2010



CAD

# Complete Final CAD Cap





# Placing Activated Carbon Mat from Roller Barge



04/27/2010

# Final CAD Capping



10/15/2009





**Cad End Dike Removal**

# CAD End Dike Removal



11/02/2010



# Environmental Media Placement







Environmental Media Pumped from  
Tallas Island Project to Stryker Bay

08/09/2010

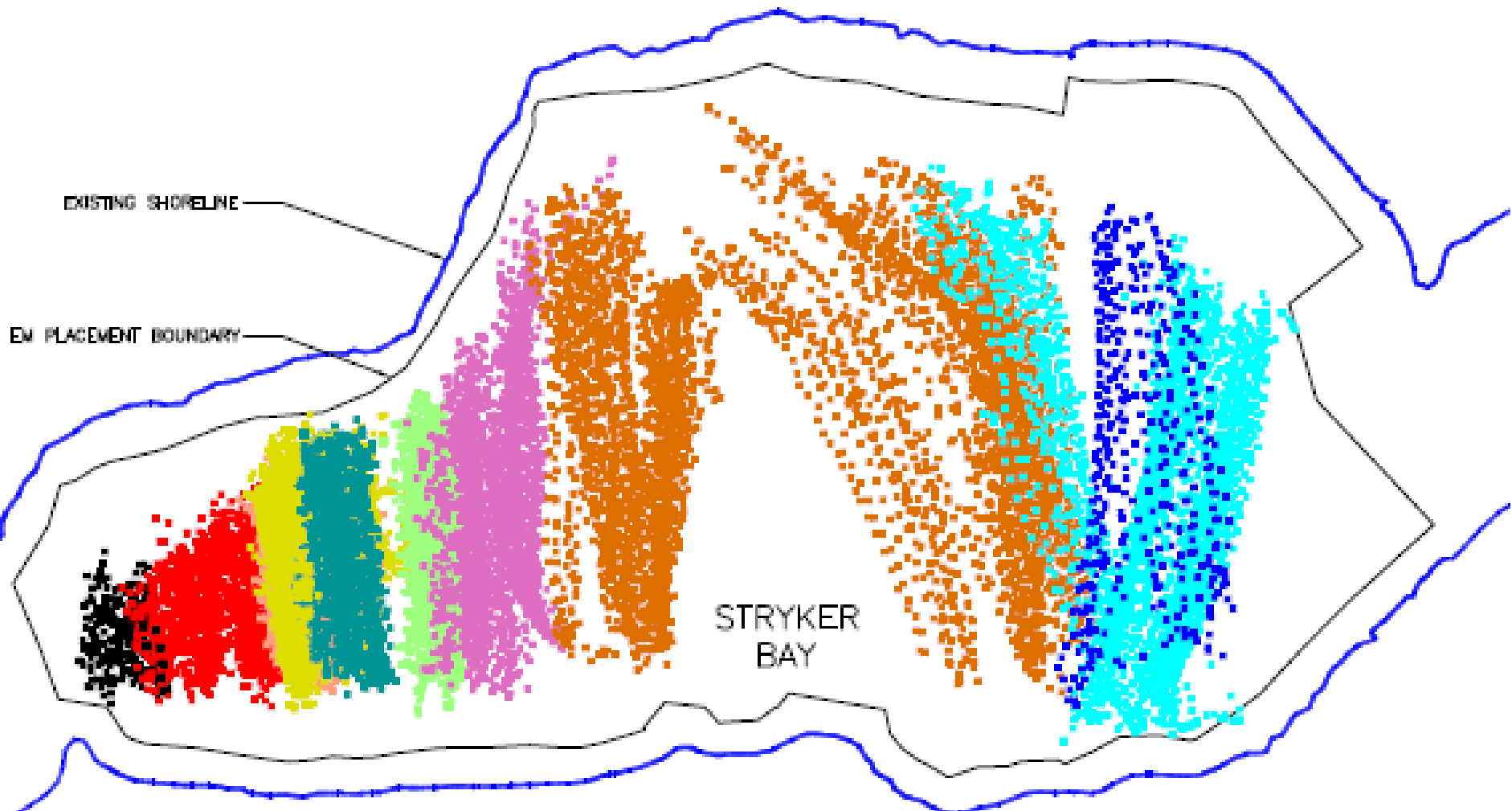




09/16/2010

- 8/3 THROUGH 8/6
- 8/9 THROUGH 8/13
- 8/16 THROUGH 8/20
- 8/24 THROUGH 8/27
- 8/30 THROUGH 9/3 (9/3 DATA CORRUPT)
- 9/6 THROUGH 9/10
- 9/13 THROUGH 9/18 (9/17-9/18 DATA CORRUPT)
- 9/20 am THROUGH 9/25 am
- 9/27 am THROUGH 10/1 am
- 10/1 am THROUGH 10/2 am

# Environmental Media Placement Plot







# St. Louis River/Interlake/Duluth Tar Site (SLRIDT)



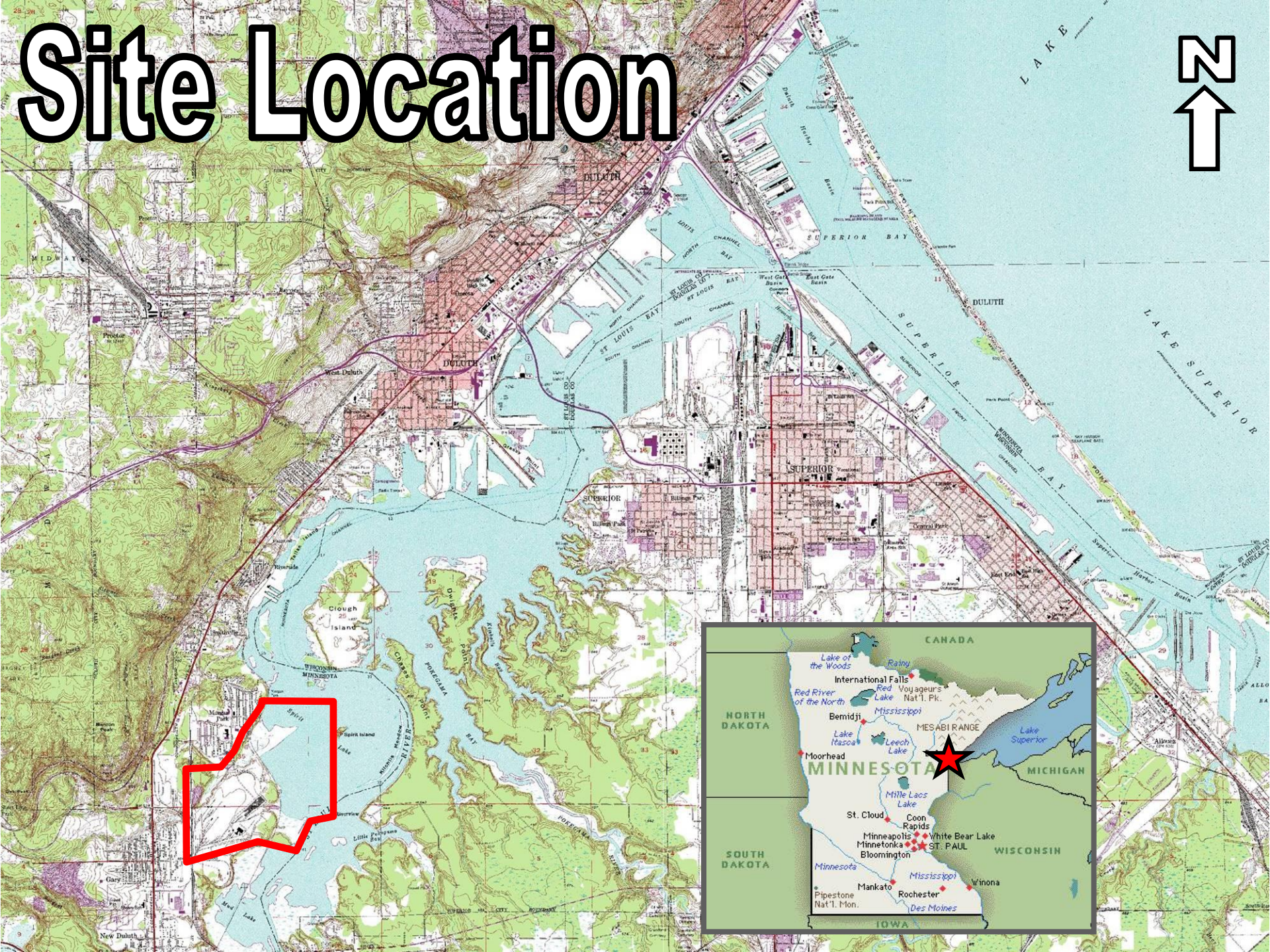
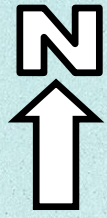


# US Steel Superfund Site Overview

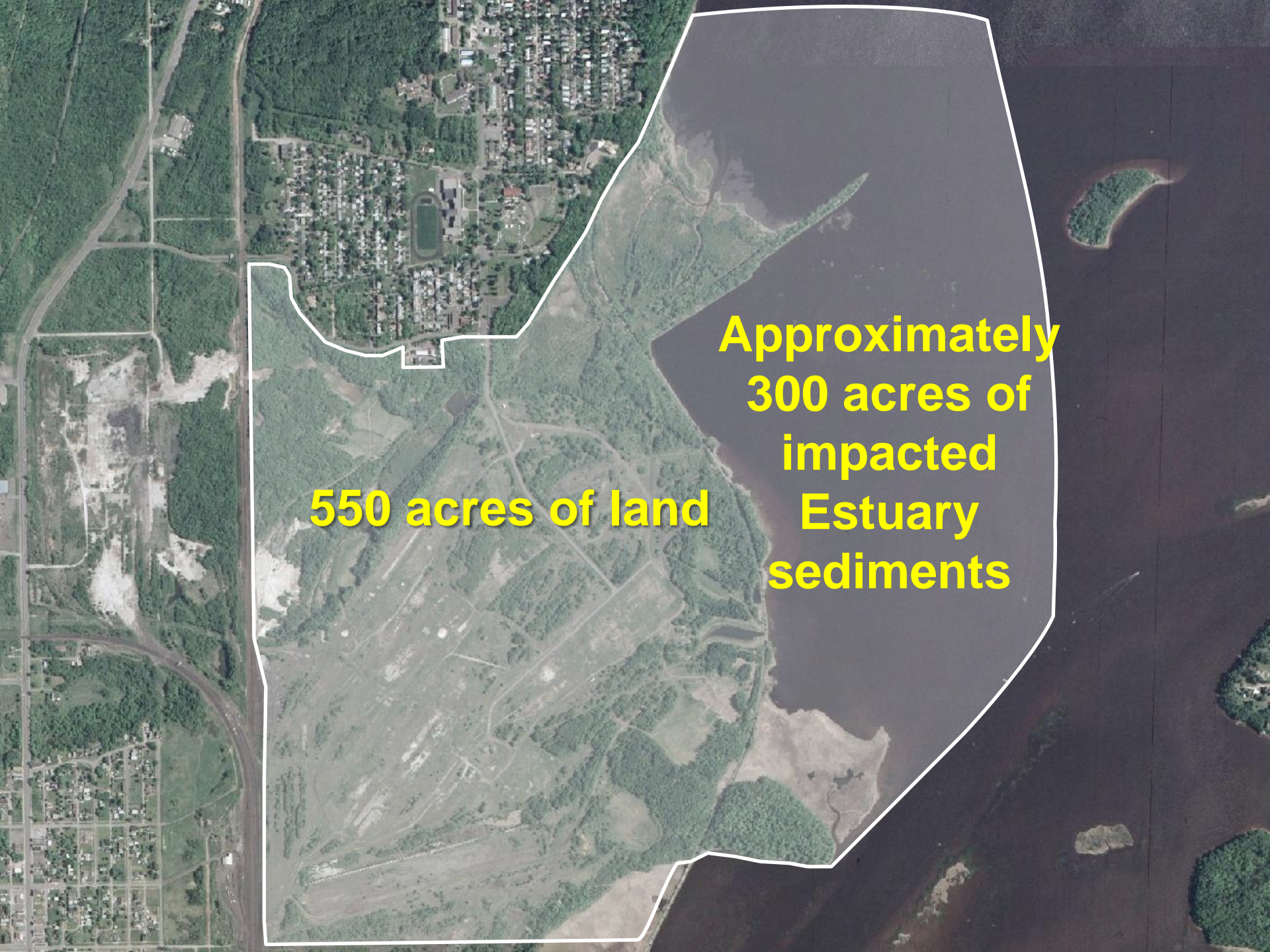




# Site Location







**550 acres of land**

**Approximately  
300 acres of  
impacted  
Estuary  
sediments**



# USS Site History

- Operated from 1915-1979
- Steel and coke production with disposal to the St. Louis River
- Site listed on NPL SF list in 1983
- Contaminants: PAH's (coal tar) and heavy metals in soil, sediment, surface water and shallow groundwater





# On-Site Stream, Basin & Wetland Sediments

Unnamed Creek  
Corridor  
OUs I, L, M,  
Inbetween I/J

Unnamed  
Pond

OUA  
Tar  
Pits

OUP and  
OUQ





# Coke Plant Settling Management Area



















# Wire Mill Settling Basin Management Area







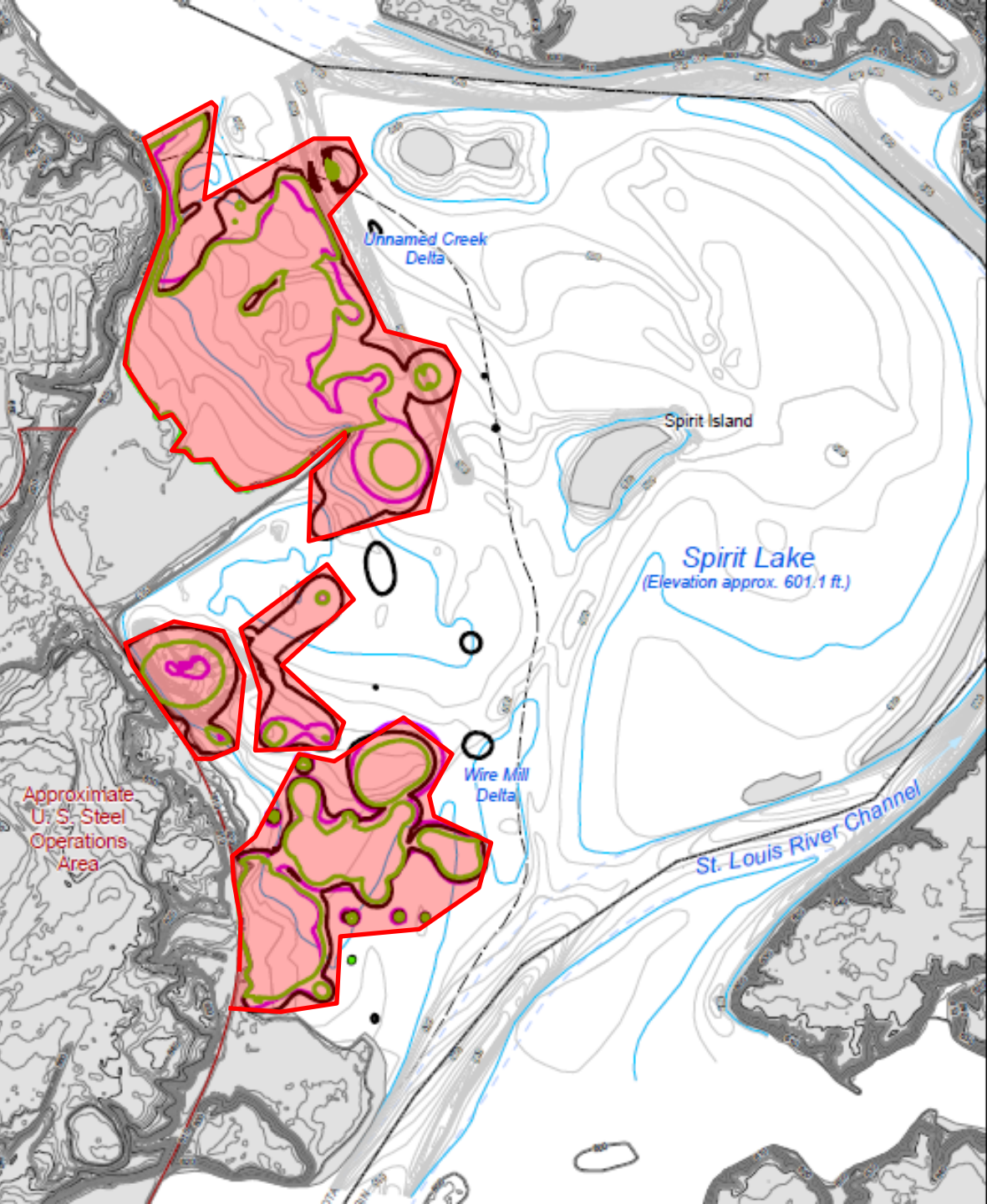


# St. Louis River Estuary Sediments

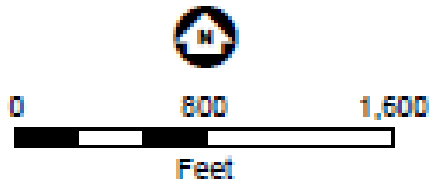








- Level 2 SQT Extent
- PRG Footprint (Total PAH(13), Lead, Zinc, Copper)
- Mean PEC-Q > 0.6
- 2011 Upland Elevation Contours (10-Foot) \*
- 2011 Upland Elevation Contours (2-Foot) \*
- 2012 Bathymetry Contours (5-Foot)
- 2012 Bathymetry Contours (1-Foot)
- 3 Foot Water Depth
- Approximate Outer Study Area Limit
- Approximate Location of St. Louis River Channel, Based on Orthophoto Interpretation
- Approximate U. S. Steel Operations Area (URS, 2008)
- State Boundary



**PRG FOOTPRINT**  
 Spirit Lake Sediment Site -  
 Former U. S. Steel Duluth Works  
 Saint Louis River  
 Duluth, Minnesota

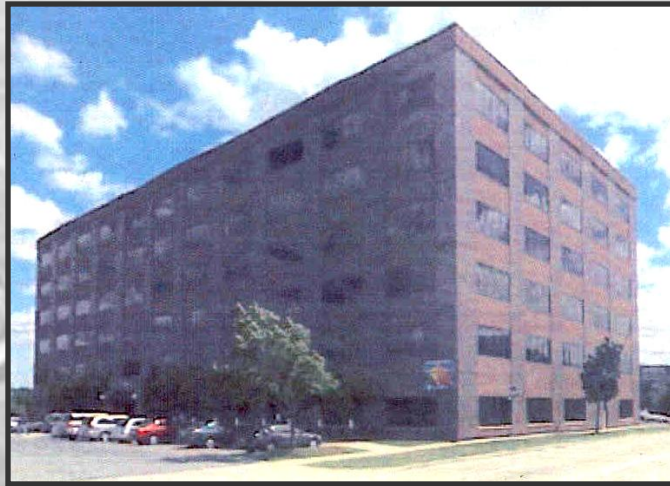






# 1,700,000 yd<sup>3</sup> PAH contaminated sediment

That volume  
would fill all 6  
floors of the  
MPCA building



Not just once...

It would fill it  
30 times!





# USS and St. Louis River AOC

- USS contaminated sediments are the **largest point source** of contaminated sediment related BUI Impairments in the St. Louis River AOC
  - **>650,000** yd<sup>3</sup> of estuary contaminated sediments
- Partnerships:
  - 2011 EPA GLNPO has partnered with USS
  - 2010 MPCA partnered with USACE for Spirit Lake characterization



# Estimated Schedule

<b>Feasibility Study:</b>	<b>Nov/Dec 2014</b>
<b>Proposed Plan:</b>	<b>Dec/Jan 2014/15</b>
<b>Public Comment:</b>	<b>January 2015</b>
<b>Design/Permits:</b>	<b>Dec - June 2015</b>
<b>Construction:</b>	<b>Summer 2015-2017</b>





# Implementation Framework: Roadmap to Delisting

## Remedial Action Plan Update

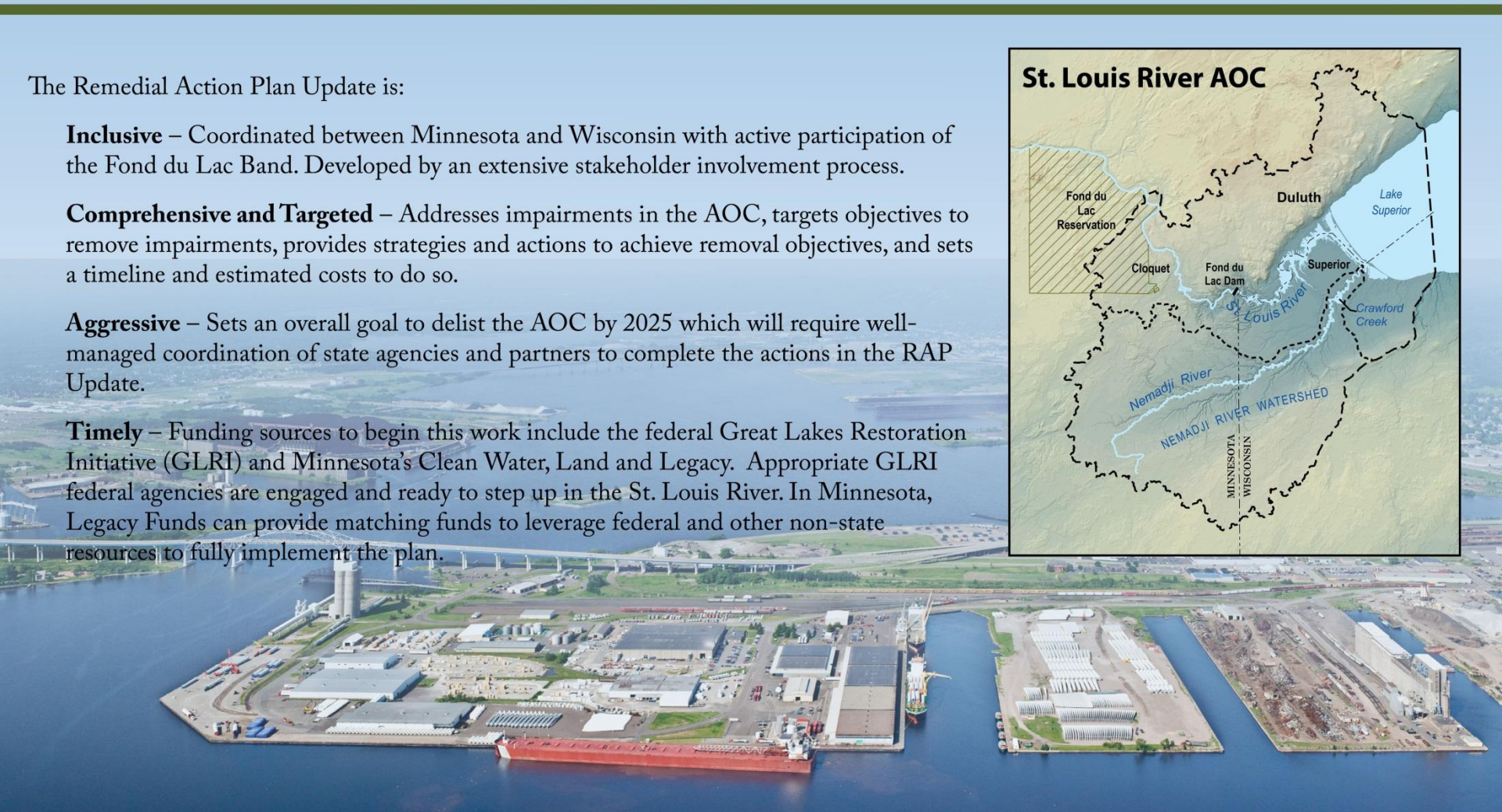
The Remedial Action Plan Update is:

**Inclusive** – Coordinated between Minnesota and Wisconsin with active participation of the Fond du Lac Band. Developed by an extensive stakeholder involvement process.

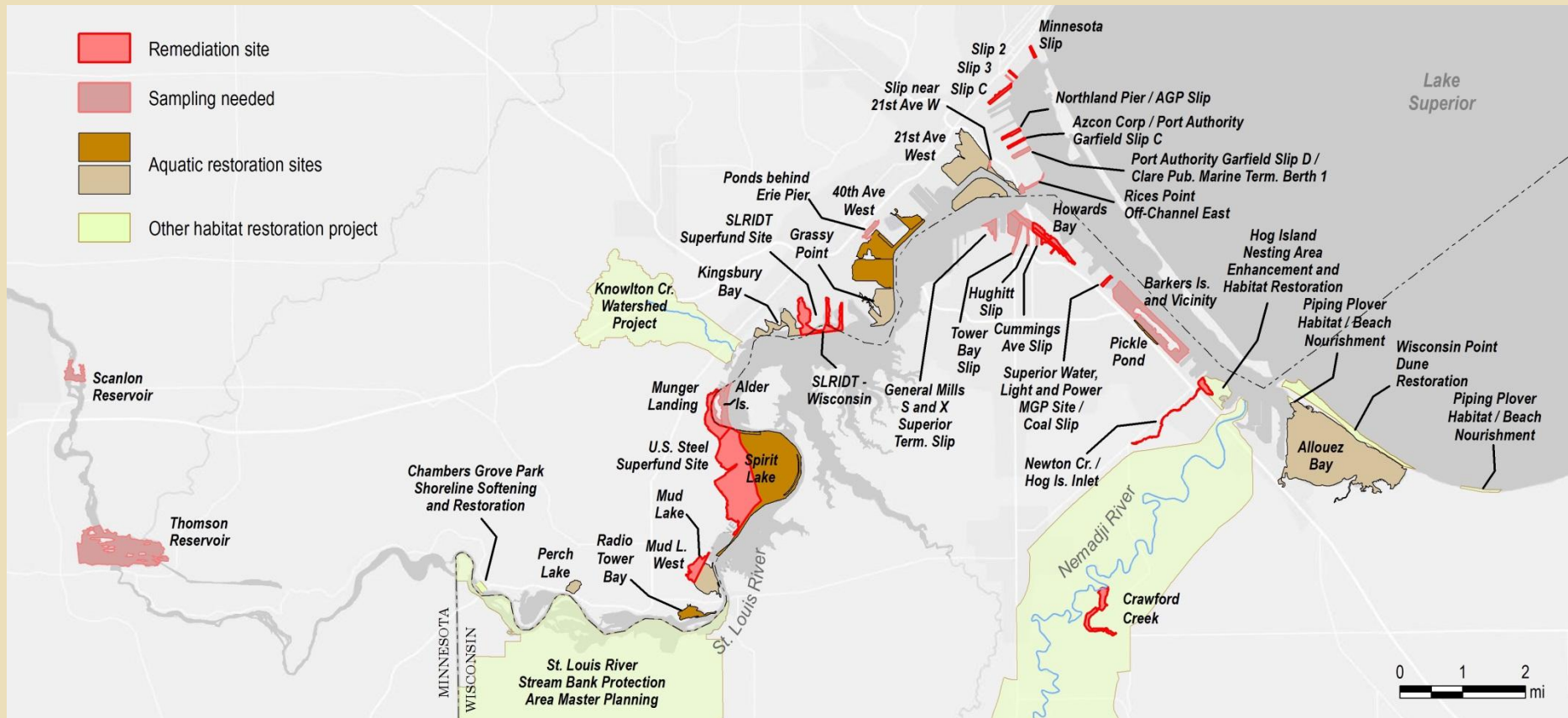
**Comprehensive and Targeted** – Addresses impairments in the AOC, targets objectives to remove impairments, provides strategies and actions to achieve removal objectives, and sets a timeline and estimated costs to do so.

**Aggressive** – Sets an overall goal to delist the AOC by 2025 which will require well-managed coordination of state agencies and partners to complete the actions in the RAP Update.

**Timely** – Funding sources to begin this work include the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy. Appropriate GLRI federal agencies are engaged and ready to step up in the St. Louis River. In Minnesota, Legacy Funds can provide matching funds to leverage federal and other non-state resources to fully implement the plan.



# St. Louis River Area of Concern Priority Remediation and Restoration Sites





5.00		<b>Restrictions on Dredging</b>						
5.01	Update Sediment Database-Data System Operations	Annual operating cost to maintain and assist. Includes uploading data sets into St. Louis River database from USACE (nav channel), EPA, NRRI, etc and helping with queries.	2018 (2025)	\$300,000	MPCA	Need to finalize with NOAA where this will be housed and start training with Limnotech	IP	
5.04	Minnesota Slip (SAA 20)	Remediate contaminated sediments	2017	\$7,000,000	MPCA	Updated FS complete; RPs invited to participate in clean up	IP	
5.05	Slip 2 (SAA 21)	Remediate contaminated sediments	2016	\$0	MPCA	Private developer will take on this effort.	IP	
5.06	Slip C (SAA 23)	Remediate contaminated sediments	2020	\$18,000,000	MPCA	RP search complete by 9/30/2014.	IP	
5.07	Northland Pier/ AGP Slip (SAA 27)	Remediate contaminated sediments	2020	\$11,000,000	MPCA	RP search complete by 9/30/2014.	IP	
5.08	Azcon Corp/ Duluth Seaway Port Authority Garfield Slip C (SAA 28)	Remediate contaminated sediments	2020	\$9,000,000	MPCA	RP search complete by 9/30/2014.	IP	
5.09	Munger Landing (SAA 75.2)	Remediate contaminated sediments ; restoration	2020	\$32,000,000	MPCA	RP search complete by 9/30/2014.	IP	
9.00		<b>Loss of Fish &amp; Wildlife Habitat</b>						
9.03	Radio Tower Bay (Worksheet 2-11; SAA 85)	Remove non-native material and restore optimum bathymetry	2016	\$3,500,000	MNDNR	Fully funded and in progress.	IP	
9.06	Kingsbury Bay Restoration (Worksheet 2-31; SAA 70, 71.2)	Restore wetland complex at the mouth of Kingsbury Creek to pre-1961 condition	2020	\$5,000,000	MNDNR	Funding for design work secured through USACE RAP PA	IP	
9.07	Knowlton Creek Watershed Project (Worksheet 8-1)	Reduce runoff and sediment transport within watershed and restore cold-water stream habitat	2016	\$6,000,000	MNDNR	In progress - USACE completing stream restoration design. Implementation funding secured.	IP	
9.09	Perch Lake (Worksheet 2-12; SAA 91)	Revitalize biological connection between estuary and Perch Lake and restore optimum bathymetry	2020	\$7,000,000	MNDNR	Funding for design work secured through USACE RAP PA	IP	
9.10	Chambers Grove Park	Soften and restore shoreline in City of Duluth park	2017	\$1,000,000	MNDNR	Design underway and funding for construction secured	IP	
9.20	Document actions taken to control invasive species	Document the appropriate area-specific plans relative to invasive species control in the AOC and incorporate it into an information tool to provide a joint MN/WI view of the ongoing invasive species control efforts. Distribute the information to help provide for efficient and expedited efforts in the AOC	2015	Operational support	MNDNR WIDNR	Draft list of area-specific plans is complete. Compilation of invasive species controls in wisconsin is underway and will be compiled with past restoration work and included on map of Wisconsin actions. Minnesota - ?	IP	
9.21	Wild Rice Plan and Associated Restoration Sites	Develop a plan that identifies the high priority restoration sites and provides a process for restoring those sites.	2019	\$510,000	MNDNR	Wild Rice Restoration Strategic Plan funded by Clean Water Fund through IAA Partnership Agreement with MPCA. MNDNR and MLT have secured restoration funding to implement the plan the tune of \$200,000 and \$160,000 respectively.	IP	
9.01	Spirit Lake (Worksheet 2-7; SAAs 76, 77, 78)	Remediate contaminated sediments and restore emergent wetlands	2018	To be determined; In discussion with RP	MPCA	USEPA and MPCA Two FS combined into one. FS expected by end of 2014. Goal is to include remediation and restoration priorities in final proposal and be implementing starting in 2015.	IP	
9.02	40th Avenue West R2R Project (Worksheet 2-9; SAAs 44, 45, 58, 59, 60)	Remediate contaminated sediments and restore habitat	2018-2020	\$20,000,000	MPCA		IP	
9.04	Grassy Point Restoration (Worksheet 2-27; SAA 63)	Remove non-native material and restore optimum bathymetry	2018-2020	\$10,000,000-\$20,000,000	MPCA		IP	
9.05	21st Avenue West R2R Project (Worksheet 2-28; 36, 38, 41)	Remediate contaminated sediments and restore habitat. Note: the USACE 21 <sup>st</sup> Ave W Pilot Project is a part of the larger planned site restoration listed here.	2018-2020	\$19,275,000	MPCA		IP	
9.08	Mud Lake (Worksheets 2-8 and 2-26; SAAs 82, 83)	Remediate contaminated sediments, establish more vital hydrologic connection and restore wetland habitat including wild rice; establish deep water	2020	\$20,000,000	MPCA	USS joined VRP program for land and sediment issues. Per DB on 10/21 this may not be true and the site may be modified to yellow.	IP	

# First Impairment Removed

Removed one year ahead of schedule!



BUI Removal Timeline	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BUI 8: Degradation of Aesthetics		● ← X											
BUI 3: Fish Tumors and Other Deformities				●									
BUI 6: Excessive Loading of Sediments and Nutrients					●								
BUI 2: Degraded Fish and Wildlife Population						●							
BUI 7: Beach Closings and Body Contact Restrictions						●							
BUI 4: Degradation of Benthos										●			
BUI 5: Restrictions on Dredging											●		
BUI 1: Fish Consumption Advisories													●
BUI 9: Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat													●







We are not just gonna sit here and watch the river flow -  
– we are going to get it delisted!



# QUESTIONS?

