

PCB cleanup planned at sludge beds

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By JEFF MEYERS
Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH — Cumberland Bay will be the site of an extensive cleanup project starting this spring to remove harmful PCBs from a large sludge bed in the area.

The project, being conducted by the Department of Environmental Conservation, will concentrate on removing contaminated wood chips along the bay's eastern shoreline this spring, and then will move into the sludge bed itself, located about 75 feet offshore and north of Wilcox Dock.

According to DEC project engineer Robert Edwards, the cleanup of the sludge bed itself could begin as early as this summer and could be finished within the year, though he suspects it might be a two- or three-year project.

Originator must clean up

But a lot of the future plans depend on current investigations. The state is trying to find out where the PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyl compounds, came from. By law, anyone who is responsible for creating hazardous-waste sites is also responsible for cleaning the sites.

"Yes, the PCB levels are high, but we're seeing different types of PCBs," Edwards said. "PCBs are complicated compounds; there are different commercial blends."

For instance, there is some thought that the PCBs may have come from the old coal-tar site near Saranac Avenue. But levels of PCBs found near the mouth of the Saranac River do not match the much higher levels in the

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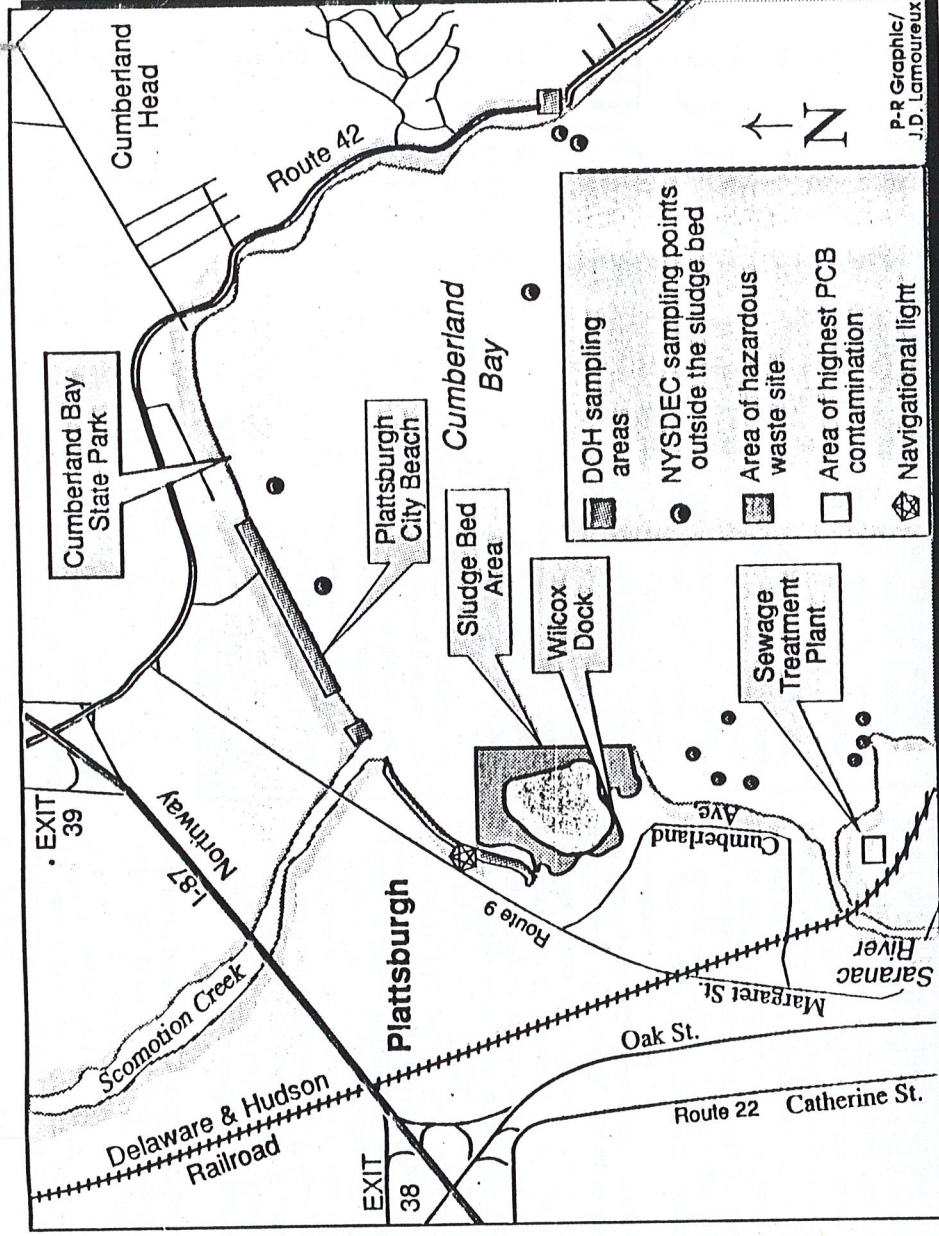
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PLATTSBURGH — Zebra mussels have invaded Lake Champlain and appear set on settling here.

"Basically, by the end of the season, we found zebra mussels pretty much throughout the entire length of the lake," said Michael Hauser of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Our monitoring programs did find high densities of veligers in August," Hauser said. "We've found about a month's lag time between identifying veligers and finding adults in the same vicinity."

Zebra mussels were first identified in Lake Champlain in early summer 1993 on a southern portion of the Vermont shore. That year, they were identified as far north as the Crown Point area (excluding the individual specimen found in Alburg). They probably came into the lake via the Cham-



This map of Cumberland Bay shows the location of the sludge bed and the contaminated site.

Zebra mussels migrate northward

AT A GLANCE

- Biological Impact**
- Zebra mussels in large numbers could:
 - Alter established food chains.
 - Harm or kill wildlife and fish.
 - Starve or suffocate native mussels.
- Economic Impact**
- Colonies of zebra mussels attach to submerged