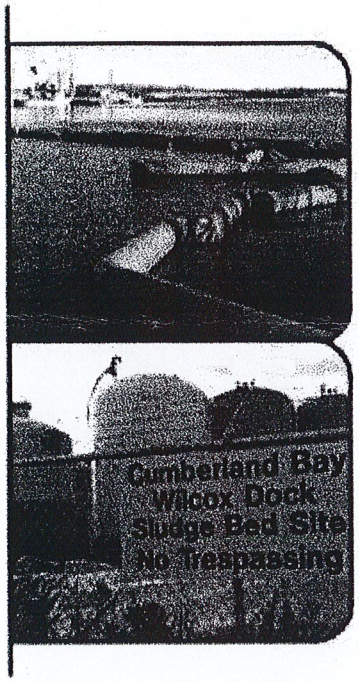
L. Dolata

Attached is a script and background information from the Channel 5 and Lake Champlain Basin Program website on the recent news coverage of the Cumberland Bay PCB cleanup project.

Jim C.

CHAMPLAIN 2000



Lake Champlain Basin Program

In tonight's Champlain 2000 -- a follow-up -- on the largest cleanup of hazardous waste in Lake Champlain's history. A cleanup to remove dangerous PCBs from Cumberland bay -- is turning out to be -- an even bigger -- and more expensive project than first thought. Divers usually scour the bottom of lake Champlain in search of shipwrecks -- not hazardous waste. But this diver -- is being paid thousands of dollars a day -- to find globs of sludge -- and suck them up -- with an underwater hose.

Tom higginbotham, "just like this, and it's just like vacuuming and just suck the sludge in."

Tom higginbotham -- with the new York d-e-c -- is overseeing the largest cleanup in the lake's history -- here in Cumberland bay -- around Wilcox dock -- where millions of pounds of sludge -- contaminated with toxic PCBs -- have been scraped up -- and trucked away.

Lori fisher / lake Champlain committee, "it's turning out there's more hazardous waste than originally anticipated."

Tom higginbotham, "we probably doubled the hazardous waste that we removed out of here."

And in higher concentrations. In some spots -- up to 60 times what the government says is safe.

"very high concentrations of PCBs there."

A contractor hired by the state -- is dredging around the clock. The water's being squeezed out at this temporary treatment plant -- and the sludge -- hauled away to special landfills -- more than 4-thousand truckloads so far. By working 24 hours -- the cleanup -- expected to take 2 years -- may be nearly finished -- as soon as next week.

Tom higginbotham, "it was a big effort made by sevenson, our contractor here, you know, to do it and get it done in one year."

Which -- fearing the effect a hazardous waste cleanup could have on businesses & tourism -- is -exactly- what many in the community wanted. Garry Douglas is with the chamber of commerce.

Garry Douglas / chamber of commerce, "the goal was get it done quickly , get it done sympathetically and it was."

Still -- samples are being taken -- to make sure -- the cleanup has been thorough.

Tom higginbotham, "and we're sending them to the lab to see if there's any PCBs left in there."

Lori fisher -- is with the watchdog group -- lake Champlain

committee -- which has been pushing for this cleanup -- for years.

Lori fisher, "their greater responsibility is not to finish in 1 year but to finish effectively and successfully removing all the PCBs... The only safe way in our eyes to deal with PCBs is to remove them."

But with more hazardous waste found than expected -- the final cost to cleanup the PCBs -- and restore these wetlands -- will be much higher than first thought. And some question if this -- was really necessary.

Garry Douglas, "I think a lot of us in the north country, will still always question, even after the fact, was this such a priority in the great scheme of all the needs in the north country that if we had 30 million dollars to spend, is that what we would have chosen to spend it on? And I think most people would say no, probably not."

30 million is what some believe this project may end up costing. The state says it won't be that much -- but since they've removed -double- the amount of hazardous waste -- it will cost more than the 23-million dollars first thought. The lake Champlain committee says it's worth it -- to once & for all get rid of the PCBs. They are -not- in the air. PCBs -- which are suspected of causing cancer -- are man-made chemicals that attach themselves to fatty materials -- like fish. So the danger comes from eating contaminated fish. For years there have been health advisories -- about eating fish from Cumberland bay. But after the cleanup they say those warnings should be lifted within a few years. The state believes the PCBs -- banned in the 70's -- were used & discharged into the bay by paper companies. Georgia-pacific -- which bought the mill in the 60's -- denies using -- or discharging PCBs -- but did agree to pay 9 million dollars toward the cleanup -- a spokeswoman says they settled with the state -- to avoid a long -- drawn out -- legal battle.

And when the cleanup's done -- the state plans to help the city build a boat launch -- that many hope -- may someday -- become the centerpiece of Plattsburgh harbor.

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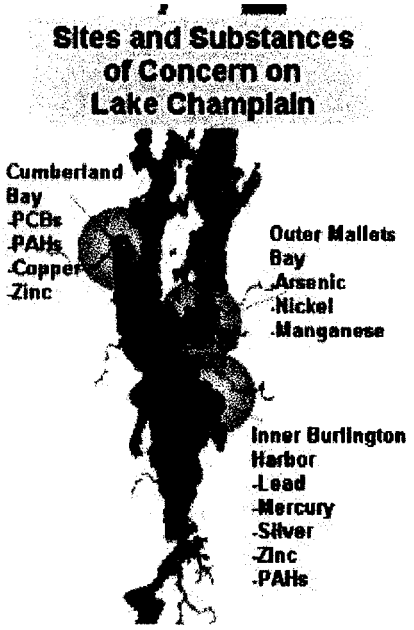
"Toxins in the Bay"

November 15, 1999, WPTZ NEWS CHANNEL 5

Work continues on the removal of PCB's from Cumberland Bay, one of three sites with significant toxic contamination of bottom sediments in Lake Champlain. Inner Burlington Harbor and Outer Malletts Bay are the other sites.



Of the three sites, Cumberland Bay is of the greatest concern because of extremely high levels of PCBs (polychlorinaed biphenyls) in the sediments near Wilcox Dock. In the plan for Lake Champlain, *Opportunities for Action*, removing the PCBs from Cumberland Bay and restoring this area of the lake is one of the highest priority actions of the Lake Champlain Basin Program. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is overseeing the clean-up of Cumberland Bay, which began last spring. The Cumberland Bay clean-up is the largest in Lake Champlain's history.

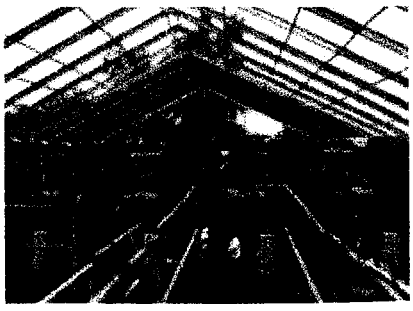
More About About Cumberland Bay's Clean-up

For decades, Cumberland Bay received waste from local industries, resulting in a PCB contaminated sludge bed of about 34 acres near the Wilcox Dock. Site work to remove this sludge bed will cost nearly $24-million. Georgia Pacific agreed to contribute $9-million to the clean-up as part of their settlement with the New York State. The work will be done by Sevenson Environmental Services Inc., which is under contract with the NYSDEC.

The main elements of the cleanup include:

What are PCBs?

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are a group of manufactured chemicals, including about 70 different but closely related compounds made up of carbon, hydrogen and chlorine, used in transformers and capacitors for insulating purposes. If released into the environment, PCBs do not break down for long periods of time and can biomagnify in in food chains. PCBs are suspected of causing cancer in humans and other animals. PCBs are currently heavily regulated in the U.S.



More Weekly Segments

- Removal of the sludge bed by hydraulic dredging; excavation of shoreline contamination; operation a temporary de-watering and wastewater treatment facility; off-site disposal of dewatered contaminated material; wetlands restoration; fish monitoring and beach clean-up as needed.
- The contracter's operations will be performed in accordance with a Health and Safety Plan which has been developed for this project. Part of this plan addresses community protection and includes measures such as air and water quality monitoring during the remedial construction.
- NYSDEC has retained Earth Tech Inc. to inspect the work throughout the contract time. The on-site will be supplemented by a full-time NYSDEC inspector. The work is scheduled for completion by early 2001.

Inside the on-site water treatment plant. (NYSDEC photo)

For more information:

The Site Cleanup Program:
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Albany, NY 12233-7010
(518) 457-9285 or (800) 342-9396

Field Representative (on-site):
Tom Higginbotham
(518) 561-0793

Health-Related Concerns:
Richard Fedigan/ Nina Knapp
NYSDOH, 2 University Place
Albany, NY 12203-3313
(518) 458-6306 or (800) 458-1158

Lake Champlain Basin Program Technical Reports of Interest:

- *Cumberland Bay PCB Study.* Cliff Callihan, NYSDEC, Lyn McIlroy, and Robert Fuller, SUNY Plattsburgh. October 1998. Technical Report No. 27.
- *Lake Champlain Sediment Toxics Assessment Program. An Assessment of Sediment -Associated Contaminants in Lake Champlain - Phase 1.* Alan McIntosh, Editor, UVM School of Natural Resources. February 1994. Technical Report No. 4.
- *Lake Champlain Sediment Toxics Assessment Program. An Assessment of Sediment - Associated Contaminants in Lake Champlain - Phase 1. Executive Summary.* Alan McIntosh, Editor, UVM School of Natural Resources. February 1994. Technical Report No. 4a.

These reports are available at LCBP's Resource Room at the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center, and the SUNY Plattsburgh, University of Vermont, and Johnson State College Librairies. You may also order them by calling the LCBP at (802) 655-6382.

Additional Contacts

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PLEASE NOTE: The views expressed on WPTZ NEWS CHANNEL 5's series "Champlain 2000" do not necessarily reflect the position of the Lake Champlain Basin Program or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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