

ISSUE PAPER ON MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF DISPOSAL AND REUSE SITES

Question. Monitoring is intended to ensure that impacts associated with use of sites for disposal of dredged material are minimized to the extent possible and are kept within acceptable limits. What is the status of existing monitoring efforts for disposal and reuse sites and how will monitoring be changed as a result of the LTMS Management Plan implementation?

Background. Site monitoring at SF-DODS is an integral part of management of the site and as such is codified in the Site Management and Monitoring Plan. Monitoring includes physical (e.g., sediment profiling camera), chemical, and biological (at SF-DODS and in transit to the site) measurements and analyses. Results of these studies have resulted in modifications and clarifications to mandatory permit conditions to further reduce the risk of adverse effects of disposal at SF-DODS on the marine environment.

Historically, monitoring at in-Bay sites has been minimal, limited almost exclusively to physical monitoring by the Corps. The rationale for the lack of monitoring in San Francisco Bay has been based primarily on the dispersive nature of the in-Bay sites. Material disposed at the Alcatraz, San Pablo Bay, and the Carquinez Strait sites was assumed to disperse in the water column, both during disposal, and following initial deposition through resuspension. Consequently, impacts at the site were assumed to be minimal thus required monitoring was also minimal.

However, bathymetric surveys of the Alcatraz site in the mid-1980's, indicated that a large mound had been deposited at the site, disproving the original assumption that the site is 100 percent dispersive. In addition, recent sampling of the site and measurements of the Alcatraz Environs reference site have revealed high levels of PAHs and other contaminants. Both of these facts suggest that monitoring of all three in-Bay sites may be needed to ensure both environmental protection and navigational safety in the Bay.

Monitoring and management of Upland/Wetland Reuse (UWR) projects will be site-specific. For example, oversight and monitoring requirements of wetland restoration projects will depend on the quality of dredged material that is used, the amount of exposure of the dredged material to surface waters and aquatic organisms and the risk of future changes to the wetland configuration. These factors, in turn, will be affected by the location, design and construction of the restoration project. Through the LTMS, a model-monitoring program was prepared for UWR projects. The Regional Board is currently developing recommendations for monitoring of wetland restoration projects.

Proposed Next Step. At the August 11, 1999 workshop, the LTMS agencies will briefly update the interested parties about monitoring efforts and initiate a working group to identify goals and priorities for disposal and reuse site monitoring and to evaluate the types of monitoring that may be appropriate for all environments. The work group focus will initially be on in-bay sites since monitoring for the ocean is already well established and requirements for UWR sites will be site specific.