DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE

DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE (DMMO) ANNUAL REPORT

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(or click on the DMMO link on the spn.usace.army.mil homepage)

I. INTRODUCTION

The multi-agency Dredged Material Management Office (DMMO) was established to foster a comprehensive and consolidated approach to handling dredged material management issues to reduce redundancy and delays in the processing of dredging permit applications, while ensuring environmental protection. The DMMO, in part, grew out of the Long Term Management Strategy for the Placement of Dredged Material in the San Francisco Bay Region (LTMS), which was started in 1990.

In 1995, the LTMS agencies formed a pilot DMMO, under existing authorities and budgets. The DMMO member agencies are the US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX (EPA), the US Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District (USACE), the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the California State Lands Commission (SLC). The USACE acts as the "host" of the DMMO. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and NOAA Fisheries actively participate in the DMMO as commenting resource agencies.

The roles, responsibilities and jurisdictions of the DMMO agencies differ, depending primarily on the proposed dredged material disposal or reuse site. As a result, member agencies may play only an advisory role in certain aspects of the permitting process. Decisions made by the DMMO do not in any way supersede the primary roles of the permitting agencies, which remain free to accept or reject recommendations, including those of the DMMO staff. In practice, however, the discussions at the DMMO meetings help inform the permitting agencies of specific concerns and issues of the member agencies, often before finalization of project documents. This encourages and facilitates necessary project modifications at an early stage in project planning when such changes are more easily and economically accomplished.

The DMMO facilitates the processing of dredging permit applications within existing laws, regulations and policies. It was specifically designed to provide a mechanism for consistent review of permit applications through coordinated efforts by DMMO member agencies. It also provides a mechanism to allow the involvement and participation of permit applicants and interested parties during the application process. No new regulatory statutes were initiated in the formation of the pilot DMMO. All applicable regulatory authority and processes of the member agencies remain in full force and effect. The DMMO meetings are typically held twice monthly at the USACE offices in San Francisco and are open to the public.

The USACE posts meeting schedules and agendas on the DMMO Web site and sends electronic copies of these items to members of all pertinent resource agencies (e.g., CDFG, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

The geographic area of the DMMO generally includes the San Francisco Bay Estuary up to Sherman Island, its major tributaries to the point where navigation is no longer feasible, upland areas surrounding the estuary, and the ocean disposal site designated by the EPA (the San Francisco Deep Ocean Disposal Site, or SF-DODS)[1].

The DMMO has been meeting since 1996. Procedures for its operation are documented in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the DMMO agencies and in formal General Operating Principles (available on the DMMO Web site). These procedures include publication of annual progress reports and annual public meetings. This report covers the period from January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003. The annual meeting to discuss activities of the DMMO during 2003 is scheduled for April 23, 2004.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During 2003, the DMMO continued to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth in the 1995 General Operating Principles. The DMMO continued review of dredging project proposals, prepared guidance documents, maintained the DMMO Web site, participated in a number of working groups relevant to the DMMO efforts, and continued staff education activities. These efforts are described below.

A. PROJECT REVIEW

The DMMO discussed about 57 projects during the year (see Appendix A for details). Of those, the DMMO made final recommendations on 38XX projects proposing a total of approximately 3.7XX million cubic yards of dredging. Table 1 provides summary of the projects for which the DMMO completed review in calendar year 2003.

[1] Please note that the jurisdictions of the member agencies differ. The geographic area defined here represents an inclusive description of these jurisdictions.

Table 1. Project volumes proposed for dredging for which DMMO made final recommendations during calendar year 2003.

		Volume proposed for disposal
	cubic yards	*% of total volume*
By Proposed Disposal Location		
In-Bay (SF-9, SF-10, SF-11 and SF-16)	2,289,349	62
Beneficial Reuse	452,770	16
Ocean (SF-8 and SF-DODS)	586,543	12
Other (Tier I not approved – testing required)	260,000	7
Total	3,680,771	
By Suitability Determination		
Suitable for unconfined aquatic disposal	3,068,662	90
Unsuitable for unconfined aquatic disposal	92,109	3
Other (Tier I not approved – needs test)	260,000	7

Over half of the material estimated for reviewed projects was proposed for in-Bay disposal. Less than one-quarter of the material was proposed for ocean disposal and represents two USACE projects: maintenance dredging of Oakland Harbor and maintenance dredging of Richmond Inner Harbor. The remaining material, 16%, was proposed for beneficial reuse at various locations, including drying ponds (with later reuse as construction fill or for levee maintenance), landfills (for daily cover) and Winter Island (for levee maintenance). This pattern is similar to that for projects reviewed during 2001.

In 2002, the proportion of material recommended as unsuitable for unconfined aquatic disposal was similar to the average for previous years. This year, 3% of material fell into this category; historically this value has been below 5%. The unsuitable material was all from maintenance dredging projects, most of it from projects (the Ports of San Francisco and Oakland and Glen Cove Marina) that proponents decided it was more expeditious to dispose of the material out of the Bay rather than undertake additional testing that may have modified the suitability recommendations for in-Bay disposal. The DMMO did not approve Tier I determinations for the City of Emeryville Marina or Greenbrae Marina. Material from these projects will require testing before DMMO can make suitability determinations.

The volumes in Table 1 are proposed only; the actual amounts and timing of dredging depended on several factors. The DMMO process is just a portion of the permitting process for dredging proponents. After obtaining a suitability recommendation on sediment quality from the DMMO, project proponents must obtain authorizations from the appropriate regulatory agencies, secure funding, and arrange for a dredging contractor to perform the work. These additional steps can take weeks to years. Therefore, the numbers disclosed in this report cannot be used to predict, for example, in-Bay disposal in 2004. For some of the projects in Table 1, dredging was completed in 2003. For other projects, dredging may not occur for some time.

B. DREDGING AND DISPOSAL VOLUMES FOR 2003

The USACE tracks actual dredging and disposal volumes, and provides quarterly reports of these volumes to the other DMMO agencies. The complete annual report of disposal volumes is available from USACE. Table 2 summarizes the actual dredging and disposal volumes for calendar year 2003 (Appendix B and Appendix C contain more detailed information). Approximately 3.7XX million cubic yards of material were disposed during the year. Of this volume, 52%XX went to in-Bay disposal, 30%XX was disposed at the deep ocean disposal site (SF-DODS), and 18%XX was reused beneficially. The beneficial reuse numbers included the Port of Oakland's Berths 55-58 deepening project; as part of this new work project, about 166,000 cubic yards of material were used to provide fill material for reconfiguration of the Port's Middle Harbor area. Bay Bridge. Other new work included retrofit and construction projects on three bridges in the Bay area that, together, employed all three disposal options. The LTMS policies encouraging that alternatives to in-Bay disposal be found for new work and USACE projects appear to be succeeding in diverting material from in-Bay disposal. The total amount of in-Bay disposal in 2003 was below the LTMS target of 2.3 million cubic yards per year during the first transition phase. The next transition target will be about 2.0 million cubic yards for the period from 2004-2007.

Table 2. Dredged material disposal during calendar year 2003

	All Dredging		Maintenance Dredging		New Work	
Disposal Type	*cubic yards*	*%*	*cubic yards*	*%*	*Cubic yards*	*%*
In-Bay	1,887,555	52	1,875,795	60	11,760	2
Ocean	1,113,814	30	841,478	27	272,336	50
Beneficial reuse	649,803	18	389,439	13	260,364	48
Total	3,651,172		3,106,712		544,460	

C. CHANGES IN PERSONNEL FOR 2003

During 2003 funding and personnel changes and retirements were key factors in how business was conducted.

The USACE group started out with one group leader, one regulator and two support personnel. After many requests from the regulated dredgers, a second regulator was hired in June. In September both of the support personnel retired with only one of these positions backfilled by another USACE employee from another section. These changes left the group leader with many challenges including: a search for another replacement; training of the new employees about dredging; along with trying to keep up with the regular workload.

The RWQCB group started with two full time DMMO members and, due to funding cuts, lost one of them in August. Also in August, the supervisor for these two members retired and was not replaced, leaving only one person to fill all of the gaps.

The BCDC group started with two full time DMMO members and, due to funding cuts, lost one of them at the end of July, leaving only one person to fill all of the gaps.

The EPA DMMO member transferred out of the state about the middle of the year, but EPA was fortunate to be able to fill the spot with a well qualified previous member of DMMO.

The SLC DMMO member was new to the group at the beginning of the year and was increasingly involved throughout the year.

The CDFG resource agency member, who had been a regular for some years at the biweekly meetings, was promoted and the position was filled by another employee from the Monterey area. At the end of the year, this new employee transferred to another job and yet another CDFG person was started in their dredging education.

The other resource agencies, NOAA Fisheries and FWS, were ever increasingly involved with the fish windows and consultations and, fortunately for the DMMO, they remained constant for the year.

In summary, the biweekly DMMO meetings were attended in January by about 10 regulars and occasionally a few resource people. By the end of September, there were only 4 regular seasoned DMMO members and one seasoned replacement with three members that were new to dredging. These major personnel changes caused many of the planned improvements for the DMMO to be put on a much slower pace for completion (see sections below).

D. UPDATE OF MOU FOR THE DMMO

DMMO staff was working to update the implementing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reflect the change from a pilot program to a permanent office. We expected management to sign a new MOU documenting this change in status, as well as expanding the role of the DMMO (e.g., as the initial point of contact for all dredging project, regardless of their proposed disposal/reuse location) in the LTMS sometime in calendar year 2003. A draft was written and circulated late in 2002 but no final action was completed by the end of 2003.

E. DMMO WEB SITE

The USACE initiated the DMMO Web site (www.spn.usace.army.mil/conops/dmmo.htm) in June 1998, and continued to maintain and update it. The Web site continued to provide access to:

- DMMO meeting schedules and agendas (regular updates)
- DMMO Newsletters (posted- March 2000, January 2003)
- Dredging Permit Consolidated Application Form and Instructions (updated 9/26/03)

Other items posted but not regularly updated:

- DMMO MOU and Operating Principles
- DMMO Annual Reports
- Local and federal guidance for sediment testing and dredged material management
- Links to the LTMS EIS/EIR and Management Plan
- Meeting schedules and agendas for LTMS public workshops and workgroup meetings
- Links to DMMO member agency Web sites

F. LTMS PARTICIPATION

DMMO members played an active role in developing, preparing for and participating in all the LTMS workgroups. Some DMMO staff also participated in the LTMS Program Managers' policy group and assisted in preparing for and participation in LTMS Management Committee meetings.

DMMO staff were instrumental in arranging the January 2003 LTMS Listening Session that involved stakeholders and the status of the LTMS. Topics discussed included:

- Sediment Suitability Determinations; Documentation and reasoning
- Sediment Management; Using dredging units, overdepth and advance maintenance
- Database Maintained by DMMO; More details needed, including sediment test results
- Standardized Permit Conditions; Agreement between agencies and start using
- Alternatives Analyses; LTMS/DMMO should look into programmatically
- Staffing and Training; More hands on and site visits needed
- LTMS Ground Rules; Conduct in meetings to remain professional
- Data Reporting; Statistics cannot be tracked if not reported by dredgers

G. OTHER PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Other local efforts some DMMO members were involved in during 2003 include:

- Participation in the Harbor Safety Committee
- Involvement in the Water Transit Authority meetings and review of various documents related to expanding ferry service in S.F. Bay
- Membership in the Marine Transportation Committee, including the Environmental Subcommittee
- Membership on the Regional Monitoring Program Technical Review Committee
- Involvement in the Delta Dredging Program, including review and comment on a number of drafts of program documents and input at Delta Dredging Program meetings
- Participation in CALFED Levee and Habitat Subcommittees, coordinating potential future beneficial reuse of dredged material at Delta islands.

H. 2002 ANNUAL MEETING

The DMMO held its 2002 Annual Meeting on May 9, 2003, where copies of the 2002 Annual Report were provided and the report was discussed.

New In-Bay Disposal Volume Limits for 2004 –2006 and LTMS Implementation
Dredging Tracking System with GIS Technology
Beneficial Reuse Sites (Montezuma, Hamilton, Winter Island, Sherman Island, Port Sonoma, Mare Island & SF-8)

New Guidance

Alternatives/Feasibility Analyses Guidance

Testing and Test Results Toxicity Study Update

Database Development
Summing Non Detects
Environmental Windows Update by Work Group
Short Term Work Group
Science and Data Gaps Work Group
Operations and Technology Work Group
Confounding Factors Work Group
Funding Work Group
NOAA Green Ports Pilot Project and NOAA Fisheries GIS System

The DMMO continued the important and timely process of assisting dredgers, large and small, to coordinate their projects to make the best use of available equipment, to initiate informal consultation with the resource agencies, and to ensure that all projects can be dredged in an environmentally- and economically-sensitive fashion.

I. KNOCKDOWNS

DMMO members realized the efficiency of the judicious use of "knockdowns" (i.e., operations wherein high spots are smoothed into deeper adjacent areas within the permitted dredging footprint). In 2003 knockdown events were authorized in at least four large projects: Valero Refinery, the Port of San Francisco, the Port of Oakland and the USACE maintenance in Oakland Harbor. With the use of knockdowns, when a later full dredging operation is anticipated, this material is then characterized in the usual fashion and removed. This procedure has proven to be more efficient for the project proponents, while still ensuring that adequate information is provided in advance of disposal.

J. ENVIRONMENTAL WINDOWS WORKGROUP

In response to input at the DMMO 2002 Annual Meeting, the Environmental Windows Work Group was initiated formally as part if the LTMS to address concerns of the dredging community regarding the programmatic biological opinions for dredging and disposal in San Francisco Bay that were included in the LTMS Management Plan. These meetings continued throughout 2003. The Environmental Work Window Work Groups included regulatory and resource agencies, such as USACE, EPA, BCDC, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and the CDFG, as well as stakeholders, such as small marinas, the Ports of San Francisco and Oakland, the Bay Planning Coalition, the Dredging Action Committee, and members of the dredging industry. In 2003, these multi-stakeholder groups continued to hold Short Term Solutions meetings and Long Term Solutions meetings. The four new work groups that were formed in 2002 to focus on specific issues: Science and Data Gaps, Technology and Operations, Confounding Factors and Funding also continued to meet.

K. SEDIMENT QUALITY GUIDELINES

The DMMO has recognized that it would benefit the region to develop numeric sediment screening guidelines (SSGs) based on regional toxicity testing results to ensure appropriate environmental protection and minimize testing costs. In November 2002, the DMMO hosted a

public informational workshop on a project funded by the California Coastal Conservancy to evaluate existing SSGs for wetland creation/beneficial reuse and revise the existing guidelines based on the results of the evaluation and input from stakeholders. Project tasks completed in 2002 included design of a database structure for sediment chemistry, toxicity, and bioaccumulation data, populating the database with regional monitoring and dredging data, and performing quality assurance checks of the database.

Only one task was completed in 2003 1) evaluating the accuracy of existing numeric SSGs at predicting acute amphipod toxicity. The other planned tasks were put on hold due to funding and personnel challenges; 2) deriving regional SSGs if current guidelines are not adequately predictive; 3) preparing draft and final reports with revised SSGs; and 4) developing procedures for the DMMO to update the SSGs as more regional data become available.

L. DMMO STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

During 2003, the DMMO agencies continued to include education and training, both internal and external, as a primary objective. Education and training include informal internal workshops regarding the roles, regulations and responsibilities of the member agencies; site visits; and participation in regional and national meetings and workshops relating to dredging and dredged material management. "Internal" training, such as site visits, is imperative to agencies' understanding of a particular project or process (e.g., hopper dredging). Similarly, internal meetings, workshops and retreats, addressing coordination and communication, are necessary to ensure that DMMO members continue to work well as a team. Also important is "external" training, where DMMO members learn what other groups and entities dealing with dredging and dredged material management are doing, nationally and internationally.

During 2003, the DMMO accomplished a number of our training goals. These are summarized below.

Internal/Regional Training:

- DMMO coordination, policy and self-evaluation retreat in January
- CalFed science conference in Sacramento
- RMP Annual meeting in Berkeley
- Regional Board, Germano Associates presentation for Sediment Transport in July
- Regional Board PCB workshop in August
- Regional Board mercury TMDL workshop
- Information session on new positioning systems for dredgers

Site Visits to:

- Oyster Cove, Oyster Point, and Brisbane Marina
- Bel Marin Keys project site
- Port Sonoma dredging and upland disposal site
- Martinez Marina dredging project
- Schoonmaker and Marina Plaza Marinas
- San Rafael Canal Homeowners dredging sites

External Training:

- Regional Monitoring Program Annual Meeting

- Environmental Stability of Chemicals in Sediment in San Diego
- Contaminated Sediment Assessment Seminar in Denver
- Contaminated Sediment Assessment Seminar in Portland
- Silent Inspector training in Portland
- Silent Inspector training in San Francisco
- Regulatory I Prospect class
- NorCal SETAC Annual meeting

III. ON-GOING AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

As the agencies continue implementation of the LTMS, DMMO finds that our responsibilities continue to increase. We recognize that we form the first portal of entry for many project proponents, both experienced and those new to the LTMS process. We accept and appreciate this role, as for many dredgers, contractors and consultants; we constitute a well-known body, versed in both the various regulations of our member agencies, as well as in the LTMS principles and goals. It has been particularly rewarding to us to find that project applicants, even when dredging is a minor part of their proposed project, wish to bring the project to DMMO. It is our purpose and goal to ensure that DMMO continues as a body wherein applicants can expect to find consensus, clarification of the various regulations, and a united recommendation. On-going and proposed future activities of the DMMO are described below.

Coordinated review of project proposals: The DMMO will continue to coordinate review of dredging project permit applications. Based on our experience, we expect that the DMMO increasingly will be involved in review of projects proposing disposal of dredged material at the ocean disposal site and at beneficial reuse sites.

Environmental Work Windows: Again in 2003, we made great strides in the area of environmental windows (see above). We have every intention of continuing the work and expanding upon our successes.

Project tracking for LTMS planning: Included in Appendix B to this report are the monthly volumes dredged during 2003 listed by project. Section II of this report provides summary tables and discussion of these data. The DMMO will continue to track this information and make summaries available to the LTMS agencies for planning purposes. In addition, DMMO hosts, the USACE, maintains monthly project tracking of the in-Bay disposal sites to ensure that monthly disposal limits are not exceeded and that disposal at SF-11 minimizes the potential for dangerous mounding. The EPA tracks disposal at SF-DODS.

Regional Implementation Manual: When funding and personnel are available, the DMMOwill again consider development of a Regional Implementation Manual. We remain committed, however, to completion of a comprehensive manual compiling testing requirements for dredged sediment disposal at beneficial reuse, in-Bay and ocean sites based on Federal and State regulations and guidance.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The DMMO continues to improve review of dredging project proposals, encourage intra- and inter-agency consistency in the decision making process, while ensuring environmental protection. The DMMO continues to expand its role in dredging and dredged material management in the Bay area by increasing our review of projects proposing upland and ocean

disposal, by participating in the LTMS implementation process and other groups associated with dredged material management, and by furthering public participation in the process. Although we have made strides toward our goals this year, without additional funds, a fully functional database, more timely guidance, and truly applicable sediment quality guidelines, further improvement in the DMMO services to the Bay Area dredgers appears unlikely in the near future.