Hurdles cleared for Port of Green Bay dredging; work to begin in late May, early June

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Dredging in the Port of Green Bay navigational channel and turn basins will resume in late May or early June.

Officials of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have settled the differences that threatened to stop the dredging, a move that would have had a major financial impact on the area shipping business.

In a letter to U.S. Rep. Steve Kagen, D-Appleton, officials indicated that the dredging contract would be put out for bids by April 15, with the contractor hired a month later.

"Depending on the contractor's schedule, the Corps estimates that dredging could begin as soon as late May or early June," wrote Corps Lt. General R.L. Van Antwerp and EPA Deputy Administrator Robert Perciasepe.

"The issue has been in dispute since August when the U.S. Department of Justice, representing the EPA and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, ordered the dredging stopped because it said it was interfering with the Fox River PCB cleanup project. The EPA and DNR claimed the dredging of the channel and turn basins at Georgia-Pacific and the East River were stirring up PCB sediment containing biphenyls, a chemical used in the production of carbonless copy paper by paper mills, with the waste dumped into the river."

River cleanup schedule

The second season of dredging in the Fox River Cleanup Project is scheduled to begin Monday. Sediment will be piped to the dewatering facility near Georgia-Pacific's Broadway plant, then trucked to a landfill in Calumet County. All dredging south of the De Pere dam is expected to be completed this year, with the entire $790 million project targeted for completion by 2018.

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Written by
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The corps hires contractors that use mechanical dredging, while the Fox River Project uses hydraulic dredging. While mechanical dredging requires heavy equipment to lift sediment from the river, hydraulic dredging funnels it through a pipeline. A state DNR official has said hydraulic dredging reduces the possibility of releasing PCB-contaminated soil into the river.
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Written by Tony Walter
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In a letter to U.S. Rep Steve Kagen

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