

First Legacy Act Cleanup Completed

Black Lagoon
Trenton, Michigan

November 2005

About the Great Lakes Legacy Act

Although discharges of toxic substances into the Great Lakes have been reduced over the last 20 years, high concentrations of pollution remain in the bottom of some rivers and harbors. That poses a potential risk to people and wildlife. The tributaries and harbors identified as having pollution problems are known as areas of concern, or AOCs. There are 43 AOCs on the Great Lakes – 26 on the American side, 12 in Canada and five shared between the two countries. Black Lagoon is part of the Detroit River AOC.

Congress passed and the President signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 to address the problem of contaminated sediment in the American AOCs. The Legacy Act authorizes \$270 million in funding over five years for cleanups. Fiscal year 2004 was the first in which Legacy Act funds were available for projects, and Congress appropriated \$9.9 million. In fiscal year 2005, Congress appropriated \$22.3 million and for the current fiscal year, Congress appropriated \$30 million for the Legacy Act. Other Legacy Act cleanup projects are the Hog Island inlet on the St. Louis River in Superior, Wis., and Ruddiman Creek in Muskegon, Mich.

More than 470,000 pounds of contaminants were removed over the past 13 months from the Black Lagoon inlet on the Detroit River, completing the first cleanup project made possible by the Great Lakes Legacy Act. The Black Lagoon was for many years a trap area for contaminated sediment (mud) moving downstream from Detroit-area industrial activity.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality coordinated the removal of 115,000 cubic yards of polluted sludge from the small bay during the \$9.3 million project. The Black Lagoon project is the first cleanup project to be funded by the Great Lakes Legacy Act, a special initiative designed to clean up contaminated Great Lakes sediment hot spots (see full explanation of GLLA below).

Dredging of the polluted mud began in October 2004 and took thirteen months. The sediment was dredged out of the lagoon and the sludge was solidified before being transferred by truck or barge to the Pointe Mouille Confined Disposal Facility. After the dredging phase was completed, the bottom of the lagoon was covered with 6 inches of sand and 3 inches of stone to protect fish and wildlife from any remaining contamination in the river

A breakdown of the contaminants removed from the Black Lagoon:

Contaminant	Amount removed (in pounds)
PCBs	160
Mercury	360
Oil and grease	300,000
Lead	38,000
Zinc	140,000

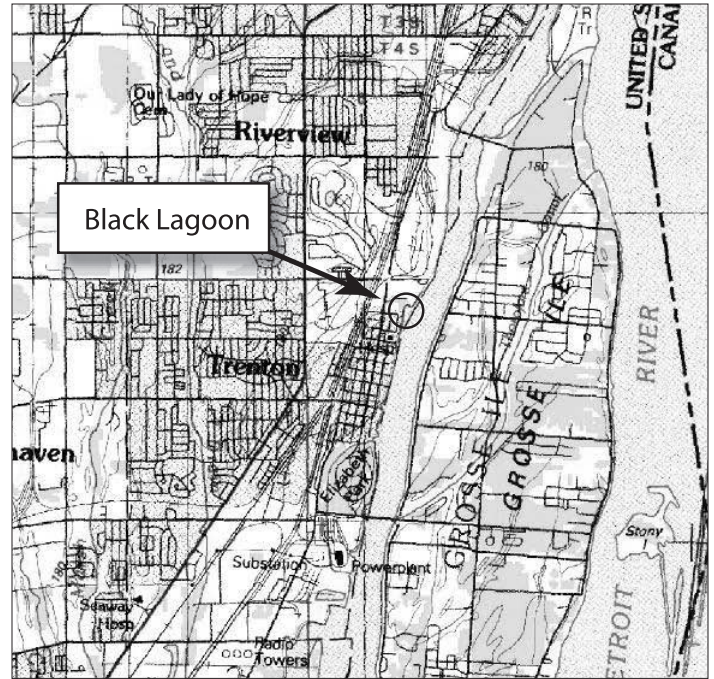


EPA's Mudpuppy was used to collect sediment samples from the Black Lagoon.

mud. The lagoon sediment will be rechecked in one year to further ensure the site remains clean.

Trenton's Meyer-Ellias Memorial Park on Helen Avenue served as a staging area for the project but is now being returned to its original condition as construction roads and fencing are removed. Trenton recently received a \$113,000 grant to restore a natural shoreline on the Black Lagoon. This shoreline will reduce erosion and provide fish and wildlife habitat. Future plans by the city also include construction of a marina at the park.

The \$9.3 million project cost was shared between EPA (65 percent) and Michigan DEQ's Clean Michigan Initiative funds (35 percent). The Black Lagoon lies within the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the first international refuge in North America.



This photo shows the silt curtain that was constructed around the Black Lagoon to keep resuspended sediment from entering the river.