



STAFF REPORT

Date: December 17, 2015
To: Restoration Council, BQRAP
RE: Approval of BUI #7 Restrictions on Dredging Activities redesignation report and recommendation that the report be submitted to the governments of Canada and Ontario to formally change the beneficial use status from 'impaired' to 'not impaired'.

Background

In the original IJC listing of Beneficial Uses, BUI #7 - "Restrictions on Dredging Activities" - was identified as impaired primarily for economic reasons. While dredged sediments considered to be "clean" could be disposed of in open water, contaminated sediments would require containment in a confined disposal facility (CDF) or at upland disposal sites, at often substantial cost, which was considered to be a negative economic consequence of sediment contamination at these sites regardless of whether dredging activities would be undertaken at that location.

The Bay of Quinte RAP Stage 1 Report (1990) identified BUI #7 – "Restrictions on Dredging Activities" as impaired due to: "...some heavy metal levels (which) exceed dredge spoil disposal guidelines for open waters." The extent of the problem was not well known, and further studies were recommended.

By 1993 when the Bay of Quinte RAP Stage 2 Report was released, the impaired status of this beneficial use was maintained but no further studies on the levels of toxicity or the extent of the issue had been pursued.

In 1993 the Province of Ontario released the newly developed Lakefill Guidelines. Since then, most new dredging projects have required that dredged sediments be tested prior to removal, their suitability for open water disposal assessed against the procedure included in the guidance document.

Golder Associates was hired by Environment Canada in 2011 to assess the status of the BUI "Restrictions on Dredging Activities" in the Bay of Quinte AOC by reviewing existing sediment and benthic conditions in the bay and determining the applicability of this BUI to current regulatory approaches.

The review of recent sediment studies undertaken in the Bay of Quinte show that aside from localized areas in the Belleville and Trenton waterfronts, sediment contaminants in the bay are low, and typically are due to metals and some organic compounds that are present at concentrations slightly above the MOE Provincial Sediment Quality Guidelines Lowest Effect Levels (still suitable for open water disposal). Biological assessment studies note the absence

of biological impacts in most areas of the bay, with localized impacts reported only in isolated pockets in the urban industrial areas of Belleville and Trenton. The Trenton contaminant areas are protected from disturbance by the Trent River Administrative Controls Protocol.

Because sediment contaminant concentrations are low in the bay, they would not restrict open-water disposal of sediments from these small localized projects that are typically approved. Rather, the smothering effects of disposal of dredged material on aquatic habitats is the main concern resulting in the requirement for upland disposal of dredged materials.

In the Bay of Quinte, dredging is an infrequent activity and when conducted is on a small scale, typically for private recreational properties. Where dredging is undertaken, the permitting agencies require upland disposal of the material; open water disposal is not practiced.

Therefore, dredging is not an activity that is expected to result in release of contaminants from sediments.

As a result of the information above, “Restrictions on Dredging Activities” does not appear to be a BUI that is relevant to the current conditions in the Bay of Quinte and should be considered as not impaired.

Staff Recommendation

That the BUI #7 Restrictions on Dredging Activities redesignation report be approved for public input.