

Duluth News Tribune

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Published August 16 2010

Long road to rehab for Stryker Bay

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By: **News Tribune staff**, Duluth News Tribune

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The sediment in the bay, slips and part of the river channel was contaminated with mercury, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, lead and other toxins that continued to seep into the water, causing environmental and human health concerns.

Pollution Control Agency officials have been working on the project since 1979, and the site has been on the federal Superfund list since 1983 — one of the Great Lakes' most polluted "areas of concern." Some coal tar seeps and contaminated soil on land were cleaned up a decade ago. But cleanup of underwater contaminants proved more complicated, controversial and costly.

XIK Corp., formerly Interlake Corp., took the lead role among companies held responsible for the pollution — including footing the cleanup bill. Honeywell, formerly AlliedSignal, and Domtar and Beazer East also are considered responsible parties after buying businesses or property involved in the original pollution.

In 1999, PCA staff recommended the entire site be dredged and the contaminants removed and disposed of. But the responsible companies balked because of the huge cost, saying they would sue the PCA if the plan was enacted. To avoid lengthy Superfund litigation and to move the project forward, the PCA agreed to a compromise that includes part dredging and part capping, or covering up, the pollution in hopes it will stay in place and not leech into the river.

That work will end this fall at a total cost of more than \$62 million.

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