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EPA Completes Initial Phase of Dredging in Upper Gowanus Canal Main Channel

Brooklyn, New York

Community Update #2

July 2021

Site Update

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed the initial phase of dredging in the main channel of the Gowanus Canal north of the 3rd Street Bridge. An excavator mounted on a platform barge removed approximately 35,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the bottom of the canal.

The dredged material was loaded onto small barges and transported down the canal to a staging area at Smith and Huntington Streets. At the staging area, water was removed from the sediment, treated, and pumped back into the canal. The dewatered sediment was then transferred onto a larger barge and transported to an off-site facility. Most of the sediment was processed so that it can be used beneficially as landfill cover. Portions of the sediment that contained high levels of contamination were thermally treated, followed by processing to allow for beneficial use.



Excavator removing sediment from Gowanus Canal between Carroll and 3rd Street bridges

Next Phase of Work

Contractors began installing pipe pile bulkheads in late May in the main channel at the former 1st St turning basin and the Carroll Street and Union Street bridges (see figure below). The pipe pile bulkheads will provide additional structural support for the bridge abutments and the existing bulkheads during future phases of dredging and create dredging support at the mouth of the basin

Starting in early fall, contractors will begin solidifying portions of the original bottom (or native soil) of the northern stretch of the canal using process called in-situ stabilization (ISS). While most of the overlying layer of contaminated soft sediment (sediments that have accumulated above the native sediments) were dredged during the recently completed initial dredging phase, a layer of soft sediment was left in place. This soft sediment will be dredged after the ISS has been completed, just prior to capping. The solidified portions of the native sediment, along with a protective layer or cap, will act as a barrier to prevent further migration of contamination from the native sediment and groundwater into the canal. The ISS, dredging, and capping of this first segment of the canal will continue through early-2024. The other two segments of the canal will be addressed after.



3rd St. Bridge opened for passage of construction equipment

Bridge and Road Closures

Work in the canal will require frequent bridge closings as they open to allow passage of work vessels. Temporary traffic disruptions will occur at 3rd St, Carroll St, Union St, and 9th St during the bridge openings. Extended closures of the bridges will occur during periods of heavy construction activity.

Huntington Street east of Smith Street will be closed through September 2021, with additional closures possible depending on the needs and work progress. Bridge and street closures are being coordinated through the New York City Department of Transportation.

Environmental Monitoring

During the cleanup activities, air quality, noise, vibration, movement, and water quality are being monitored.

Environmental monitoring data is available online at:

www.gowanussuperfund.com

www.epa.gov/superfund/gowanus-canal

Pipe pile installation and ISS in the Gowanus Canal



Auger mixing cement into contaminated native sediment during pilot ISS in 7th Street Turning Basin (conducted in 2015)



Pipe pile bulkhead at former 1st Street Turning Basin

Community Hotline

A hotline has been established that people can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During hours when work is being conducted at the site, complaints and concerns will be relayed to a supervisor at the site and to EPA.

The hotline number is 718-403-2451.

For more information about the site, please contact:

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