

River cleaner at former gas plant

Tires. Lots of tires. An engine block. Railroad ties. Even a sunken bridge. These are some of the items KeySpan recently dredged from the contaminated sediments of the Merrimack River in Manchester as part of its remedial plan for the former manufactured gas plant (MGP) where gas was produced primarily from coal and oil. The main waste product of this type of gas production was coal tar, which contains various contaminants harmful to the environment and public health. As is typical, this coal tar ended up in river sediment.

KeySpan began dredging in May 2007 after completion of ex-

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Approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sediment are expected to be removed from the Merrimack River in Manchester by the time the project is completed at the end of this year.

River Dredging

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tensive investigations within the river, which involved drilling from barges, an ecological risk assessment, a mussel survey and deployment of scuba divers to mark and cut debris. The investigations identified an area of approximately 59,000 square feet of contaminated sediment for removal and approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sediment are expected to be removed by the time the project is completed in December 2007. Dredged sediment is off-loaded and processed at the former Jac Pac Foods property nearby and subsequently shipped off site for treatment at a thermal desorption facility. Once dredging is finished, a multilayer stone cap will be placed over the area, enabling full use of the river once again.

DES project manager Mike McCluskey stated that "DES considers the completion of the dredging work an important phase of the remedial action plan. The success of the project has in large measure been due the combined efforts of many parties working together."

Planning for the project required months of communication and coordination with numerous and diverse stakeholders, including: the City of Manchester, adjacent property owners, NH Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee and several programs at DES. The project was designed around fish spawning, eagle habitat, pedestrian access to the adjacent river walk, concurrent construction of the Hands Across

the Merrimack Bridge above the dredge area, and recreational users of the river.

"It took a lot of patience, negotiation and compromise to get all stakeholders on board with the project. But in the end, we went

from permitting to construction in less than six months and I think everyone recognized that the short term inconvenience was worth the longer term environmental benefits, both to the Merrimack River and the residents of Manchester," said KeySpan project manager Tricia Haederle. ■



What's on your plate?

Support conservation by purchasing a moose plate for your vehicles. The proceeds benefit natural resource programs in the state, including LCHIP, wildlife programs, state parks, and the State Conservation Committee's conservation grants program. The State Conservation Committee is a state agency made up of representatives of the ten county conservation districts and state natural resource agencies, including DES. ■

