



## **PCB CONTAMINATION IN THE SOUTH BASIN AND YOSEMITE SLOUGH**

### **Is there PCB contamination in the South Basin?**

Yes, sediments in parts of Yosemite Slough and the South Basin are known to be contaminated with PCBs. There are still sources of PCBs on the Hunters Point Shipyard that continue to pollute the North Shore and the Basin.

### **What are PCBs?**

PCB stands for **p**olychlorinated **b**iphenyls, which are actually a family of over 200 chemical compounds.

There are no known natural sources of PCBs. Originally believed to be safe, PCBs were used widely in electrical equipment, paints, plastics, pesticides, and many other products. U.S. production of PCBs stopped in 1977 because of concerns about the potential health effects and the buildup of PCBs in the environment.

### **What are the health effects of PCBs?**

There is a debate about the effects of PCBs on human health. However, possible health effects may include:

- Skin problems (from direct contact)
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Liver disease
- Disruption of reproductive functions
- Neurobehavioral and developmental deficits in babies and children

Health effects may vary depending on how someone is exposed to PCBs, how much they are exposed to, how long they are exposed for, the specific PCB mixtures involved, and the current health of the person. Children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers are believed to be most affected by PCBs.

### **How serious is the contamination?**

We don't know. Results of sediment sampling in some areas of the South Basin have found levels of PCBs at more than five times the proposed cleanup level. However, the entire southern half of the South Basin has not yet been sampled. We can neither confirm nor deny that levels of PCBs in the South Basin are hazardous to public health and the environment.

### **How might I come in contact with the contamination?**

- People who eat fish caught in the area may be increasing their exposure to PCBs.
- People playing in the area could be exposed to PCBs.

### **How did the PCBs get there?**

PCBs are believed to have gotten into the Basin from Hunters Point Shipyard, the Bay Area Drum Site, and the City and County of San Francisco's combined sewer overflow system. Other possible sources are also being investigated.

### **What is being done about the PCBs?**

The U.S. Navy will be conducting additional sampling in the South Basin to help determine where clean up actions should be focused. The Navy also acknowledges the need to address remaining sources of PCB contamination on the Hunters Point Shipyard, but no work plan is currently in place.

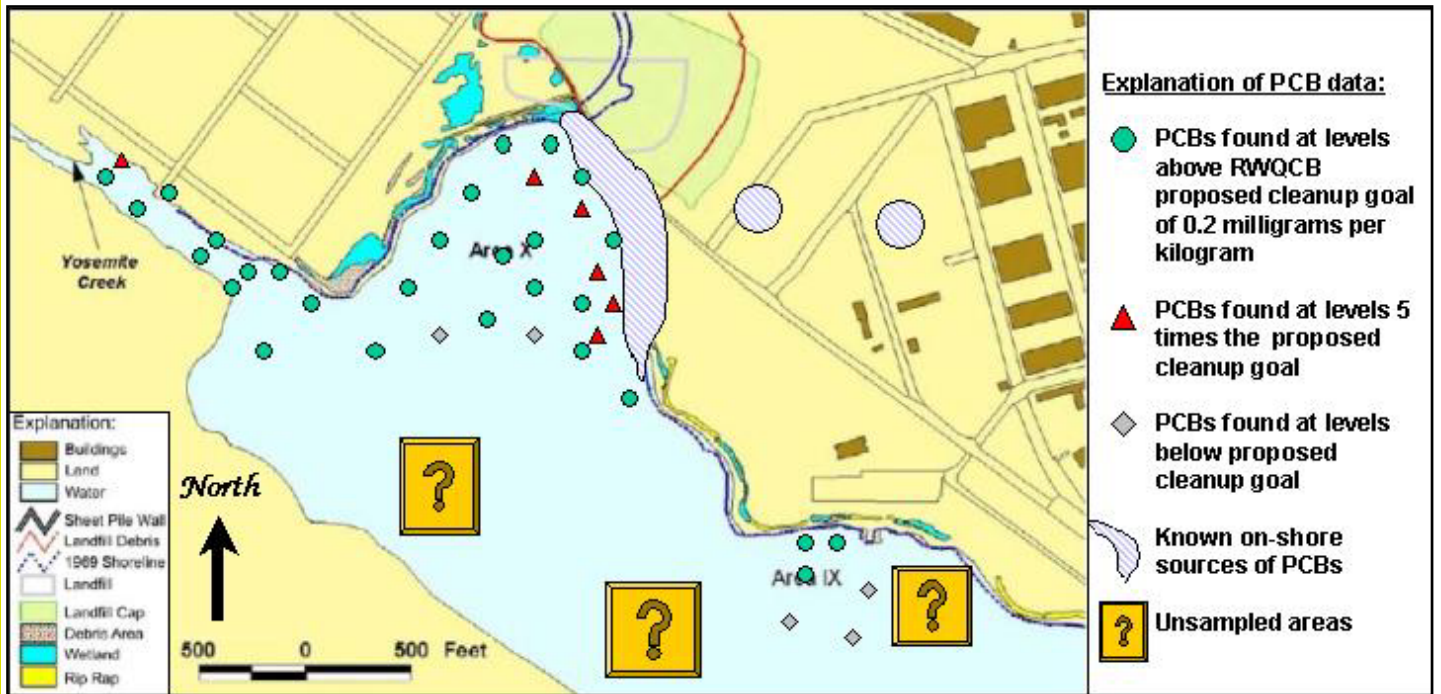
More data are needed, and a plan to protect community health must be created and implemented.

### **How can I minimize my environmental exposure to PCBs in Yosemite Slough and South Basin?**

- The Bay Area Fish Advisory limits the eating of fish from the Bay to no more than two servings a month (even less for children and pregnant women). Keep in mind that this is an average for the Bay and not South Basin specific. Become familiar with the suggestions given on methods of preparing fish.
- If you come into contact with sediments from the area, wash your hands thoroughly to avoid getting any in your mouth.

### **How can I get more involved?**

Get involved and make your voice heard! Join a community group such as Literacy for Environmental Justice, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates, or the Community First Coalition. You can also become a stakeholder in the Yosemite Slough South Basin Restoration Project.



This map shows the known locations of sampling conducted to measure PCB levels around Yosemite Slough and South Basin adjacent to Hunters Point Shipyard, San Francisco, California. Circles and triangles on the map mark locations where PCB levels were higher than the preliminary cleanup goal currently being proposed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) – San Francisco Bay Region. (Map modified from Battelle and others, 2002; Data from Little, 1999; Battelle and others, 2003.)

### Where to Go for More Information

**Browse:** <http://www.communitywindowontheshipyard.org>

**Call:** Arc Ecology Staff Scientists: Lea Loizos or Cian Dawson  
(415) 643-1190 or (877) 946-3698 (877-WINDOW-8)

**Email:** [lealoizos@mindspring.com](mailto:lealoizos@mindspring.com) or [cian\\_dawson@mindspring.com](mailto:cian_dawson@mindspring.com)

**Visit:** The new Window office at 4634 Third Street, San Francisco

**Or contact:** Arc Ecology, 833 Market Street, Suite 1107, San Francisco, (415) 495-1786

### Information Sources

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), 2000, Toxicological profile for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp17.html> (last accessed 09/15/2003).

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Battelle, Neptune & Co., and Sea Engineering, Inc., 2003, "Draft Parcel F Feasibility Study Data Gaps Investigation Work Plan, Hunters Point Shipyard, San Francisco, California." August 21, 2003.

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Little, Arthur D., 1999, "Sediment Investigation at Yosemite Creek, Fall 1998, Draft Report to the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, SPARC." May 1999.

U.S. Public Health Service, The Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1999, Public Health Implications of Exposure to Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs). <http://www.epa.gov/ostwater/fish/pcb99.html> (last accessed 09/15/2003).