

**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Watershed Management Section**

Waterbody Inspection and Monitoring Report

Waterbody / Watershed: Shoemaker Bay adjacent to the Wrangell Alaska Pulp Corporation (APC) Sawmill Site. **Waterbody is on the 1996 303d list.**

Inspector: Eric Decker

Weather: Partly cloudy Oct. 25, temp. mid-40's.
Drizzly overcast Oct. 26, temp. mid-40's.

Date of inspection: October 25, 1996 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.
October 26, 1996 7:30 am to 10:30 am

Segment Inspected: that portion of Shoemaker Bay immediately adjacent to the APC site and the intertidal beach area just north of the APC site and adjacent to the "Mt. Seley" woodwaste disposal site. (Note: the intertidal beach area adjacent to the Mt. Seley disposal site was the subject of an October 1993 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service study that resulted in the listing of Shoemaker Bay on both the 1994 and 1996 Section 303d list).

Parameters of Concern: Logs, log debris, solid waste debris, petroleum products, habitat modification and woodwaste leachate.

Purpose of Inspection: 1) meet on-site with APC representative Mr. Tom Hanna and discuss how the pending APC Wrangell Sawmill Environmental Inspections Report may qualify as a waterbody assessment report; 2) inspect the perimeter of the APC sawmill site at or near low tide to visually document sources of pollutants and determine if any pollutants may be negatively affecting the water quality of Shoemaker Bay or adversely affecting beneficial uses of the intertidal beach area adjacent to Mt. Seley; and 3) determine the next step to address any remediation necessary for Shoemaker Bay to meet water quality standards which, in turn, would remove Shoemaker Bay from the 303d list.

Visual Observations:

October 25. After an initial discussion of inspection objectives and other information, Mr. Hanna gave me a general overview of the APC site. Contractor personnel were working on-site to address potential pollution liability concerns raised by Sealaska Corporation (potential buyer of the APC site). Remediation and clean-up activity included solid waste and general debris clean-up and disposal, stormwater tank oil removal, PCB spill delineation and cleanup, oil/chemical barrel disposal, and a variety of other activities that will be detailed in the APC environmental inspections report.

Mr. Hanna and I then walked the intertidal beach area (primarily a mudflat substrate) adjacent to Mt. Seley. Almost all of the “grounded” logs present at the time of the US Fish and Wildlife Service study in 1993 have been removed. A few “boom” logs were still on site with removal anticipated within 30 days. A few decayed partial logs were imbedded in the substrate. It was agreed that it would be best to leave the imbedded log materials within the mud flat substrate rather than significantly disturbing the area to remove them.

Mr. Hanna pointed out a small hole in the southern half of the intertidal beach substrate to show me where a soil sample had been taken the previous day for analysis. A layer of dark material approximately 2-3 inches thick was visible in the holes’ vertical profile. This dark material was probably the result of log bark deposition when the area was utilized as a log storage area. The material had a characteristic hydrogen sulfide smell (characteristic of wood fibre decomposition in a substrate environment), and was overlaid by approximately 2-3 inches of newly deposited sediment.

We walked along the lower western edge of Mt. Seley (adjacent to the intertidal beach area facing Shoemaker Bay) where Mr. Hanna pointed out drainage streams that used to transport woodwaste leachate to the intertidal beach area and into Shoemaker Bay. No evidence of leachate was observed during the inspection period. Mr. Hanna went on to explain how Mt. Seley was capped with an impermeable layer of clay and shotrock in 1990-1991. This “capping” event was a significant factor in reducing the amount of woodwaste leachate from the Mt. Seley woodwaste pile that apparently is now minimal or non-existent today.

October 26 Most of the morning was spent inspecting the APC site where it meets Shoemaker Bay to visually determine if there are any potential pollutant sources entering Shoemaker Bay or other evidence of past or present pollution that may be negatively affecting Shoemaker Bay’s beneficial uses. No evidence of any pollution or debris was observed with the exception of an occasional wire cable or concrete block adjacent to the seawall of the APC site. Observed blue mussels, barnacles and seaweed on or adjacent to the APC site seawall appeared healthy. One source of sediment was observed along approximately 200 feet of unstable shoreline adjacent to the “beaver slide” on the north side of the APC site. This shoreline area should be stabilized with riprap material to prevent further erosion of the bank during wind events at high tide. Chuck Oliver (APC construction superintendent in Wrangell), will supervise stabilization of this area with on-site rip rap material.

Preliminary findings: Shoemaker Bay appears to be a healthy waterbody with no significant, if any, source of pollutants from the APC sawmill site. The intertidal beach area is recovering naturally from past woodwaste leachate from the Mt. Seley woodwaste pile and the decomposing wood fibre in the substrate.

Current situation with the intertidal beach area: The intertidal beach area in question has been permitted by the Department of the Army that authorized construction of a 9.8 acre intertidal fill (file number 2-880483, Zimovia Strait 87) and permitted by State tidelands Lease ADL-102848 for use as an intertidal log storage area. The authorized fill of the area did not occur because of the closure of the sawmill in 1994. The time limit for completing the work authorized in the permit expires on April 30, 1997. An extension of the permit time-frame by the U.S. Corps of Engineers will depend on whether the sawmill resumes operation and if the original need for on-land log storage still exists. If the permitted fill project is constructed in the intertidal area, any unused portion will not be used again for log storage.

Recommended actions to be taken: Mr. Hanna is currently preparing a report entitled, Wrangell Sawmill Environmental Inspections, September & October 1996 that will be submitted to ADEC for review. Since this report will address the water quality concerns raised by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in their October 1993 intertidal beach study, the report may qualify as a "waterbody assessment" as it relates to the Section 303(d) listing (Tier 1 designation requires a waterbody assessment), of Shoemaker Bay.

The Wrangell sawmill assessment report will be reviewed and a response prepared and submitted to Mr. Hanna by ADEC water quality protection staff to: 1) address whether the sawmill report qualifies as a waterbody assessment; and 2) determine (if the report does qualify as an assessment), if the present "Tier I" listing of the Shoemaker Bay waterbody needs to be changed to another tier category to reflect the water quality information provided in the report.

Rob Danner, ADEC Ketchikan SPS District Manager will be provided with a copy of this inspection report. Other ADEC staff in other programs may be notified of specific information in the Wrangell sawmill report if it affects their programs.

The City of Wrangell will again be kept informed of the status of water quality remediation activities at the sawmill site. Carol Rushmore (Economic Development Coordinator) is the City of Wrangell contact (874-2381).