Port of Portland

Portland Harbor Superfund Site

October 6, 2026

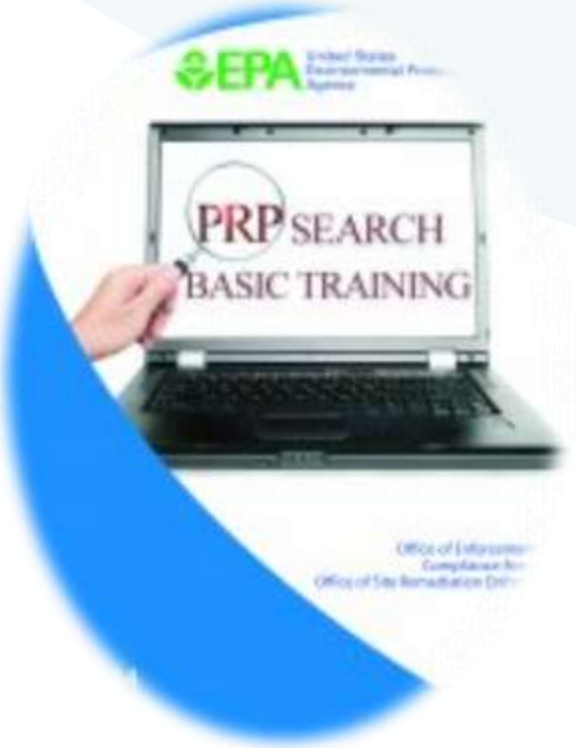
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) "Superfund"

- Cleanup legacy contamination
- Respond to environmental emergencies
- "Polluter Pay" principle
- Liability structure
- Community involvement
- Return to productive reuse

Valley of the Drums, Internet

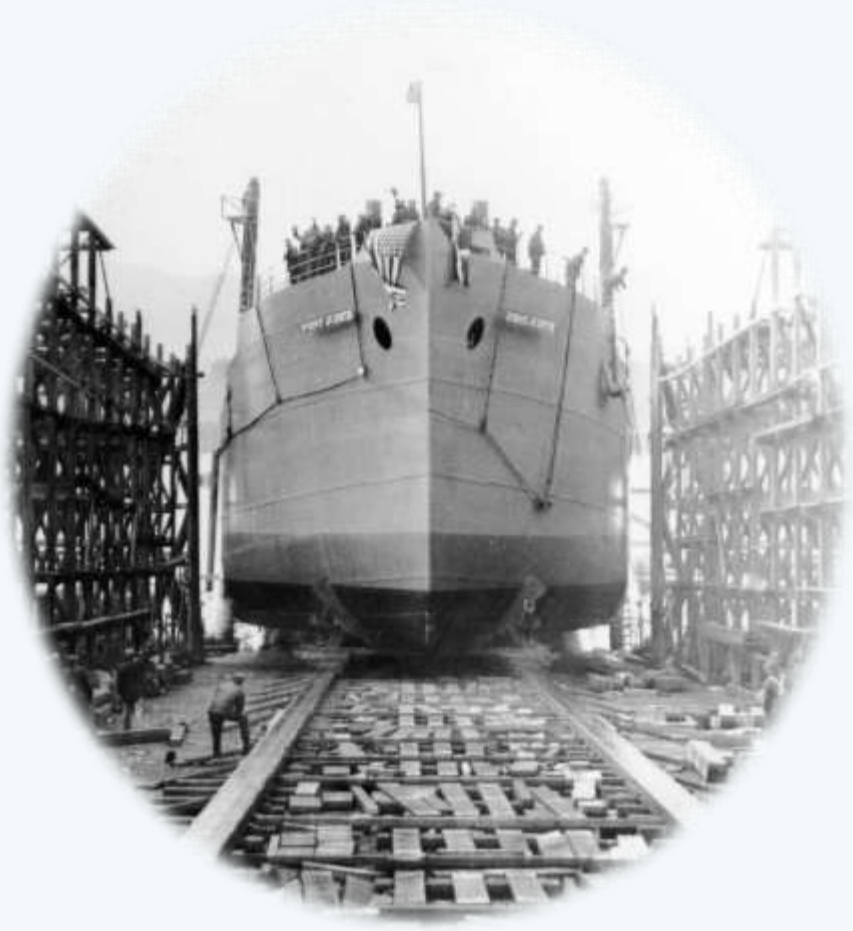
Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

- Who is responsible?
  - Past owner and operator at the time of contamination
  - Generator, arranger, or transporter of contamination
  - Current owner and operator
- Liability
  - Strict, joint, and several
  - Retroactive
- Limited defenses

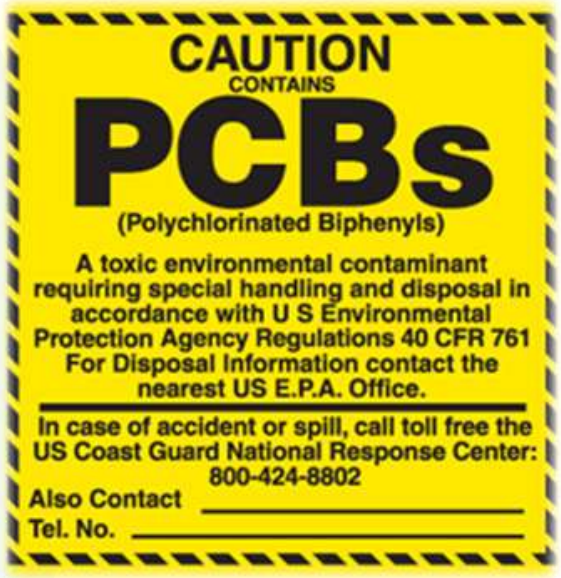


Portland Harbor Superfund Location

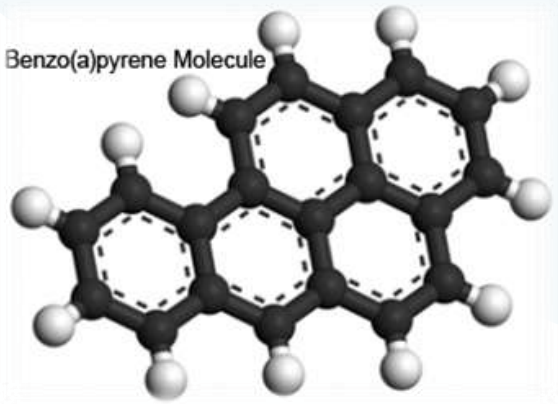
What are the Pollution Issues?



Kaiser Shipyard on Swan Island - 1941

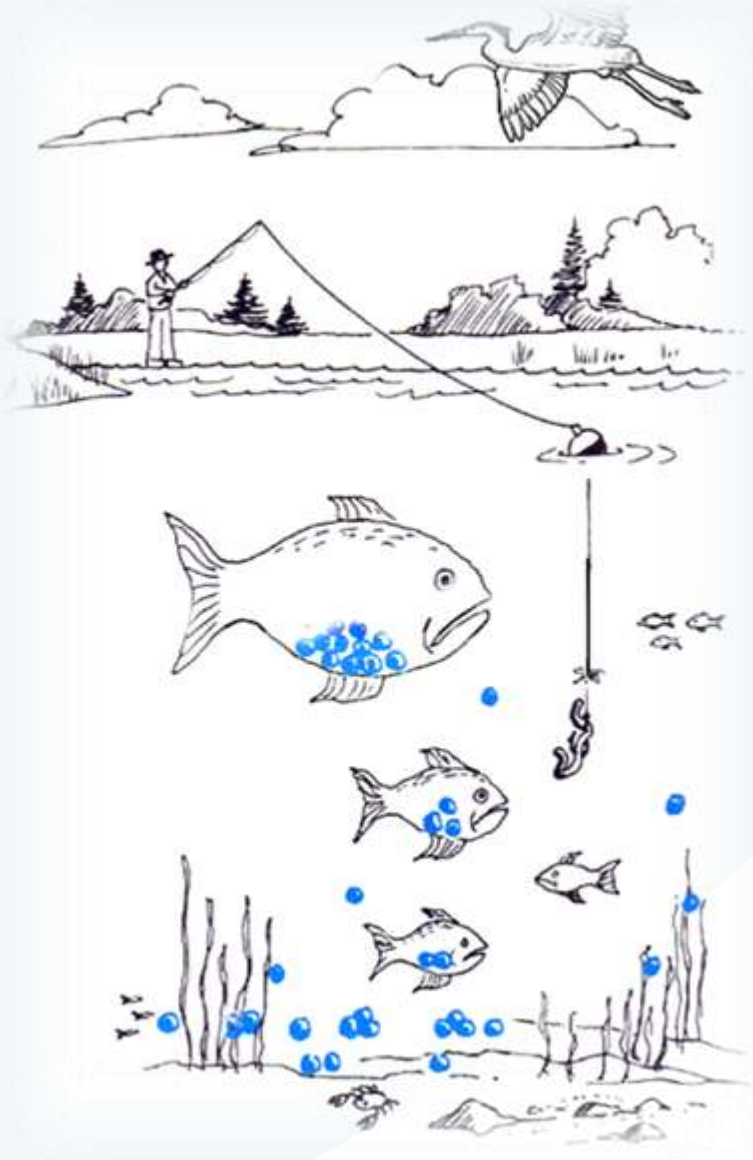


Dioxin/Furans



Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

What are the Risks?



Lower Willamette River Fish Advisory

Through public health assessments in 2002 and 2004, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) identified contaminated fish as the main way people can come into contact with contaminants in the Portland Harbor Superfund site. In 2004, OHA issued a fish advisory that included meal recommendations for fish caught in the Portland Harbor area. Since 2004, new data have been collected and an updated advisory with new meal recommendations has been released. The updated advisory applies to the area circled in orange on the map.

Figure 1. The fish advisory boundary covers a portion of the Lower Willamette River from the Sellwood Bridge to its confluence with the Columbia River. It also includes Multnomah Channel from its confluence with the Willamette River, to the Sauvie Island Bridge.

Oregon health officials recommend limiting the amount of resident fish species eaten from the Lower Willamette River. Resident fish stay within a defined territory on the river and do not migrate out to the ocean.

Recommended maximum meals*, per month, for resident fish:

Black Crappie (for 4 meals, if fillet only) | Carp | Brown Bullhead | Bass

Recommended maximum meals*, per month, for shellfish:

Crayfish | Mussels | Clams

Note: Harvesting freshwater clams and mussels in the Willamette River is ILLEGAL.

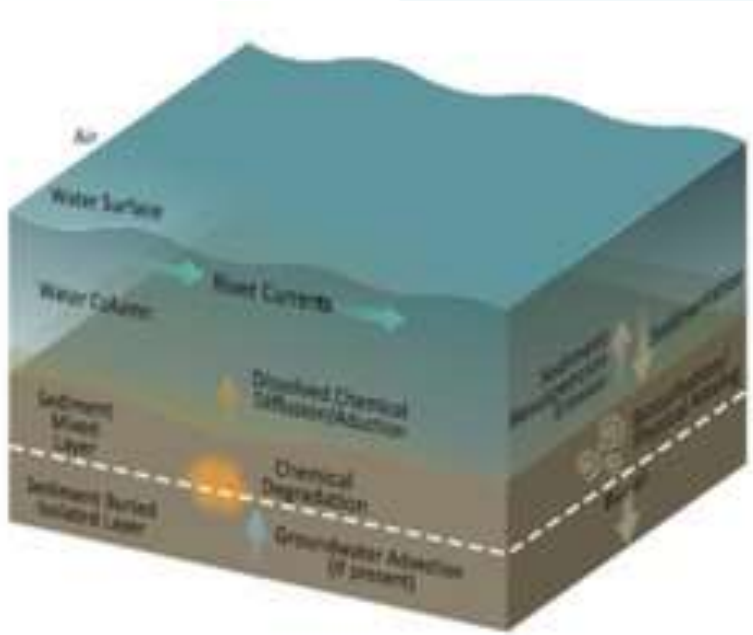
*All recommended meals will be 0 (zero) when Superfund clean-up activities (for example, dredging) begin and soils are disturbed.

What are the Solutions?

Dredging

Capping

Monitored Natural Recovery



Status

- Cleanup Design Phase Now

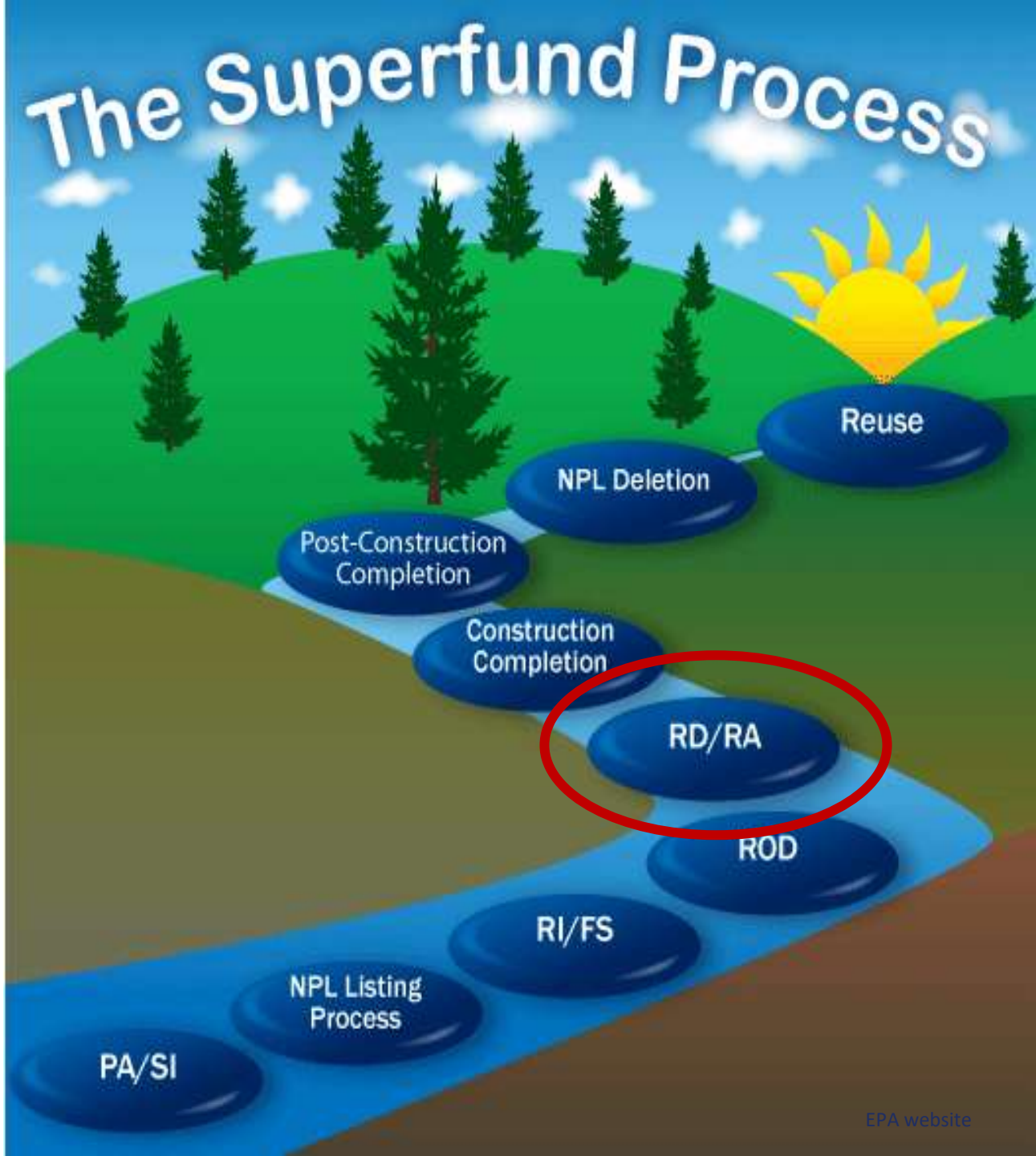
  Remedial Design

- 2017 Cleanup Plan Selected

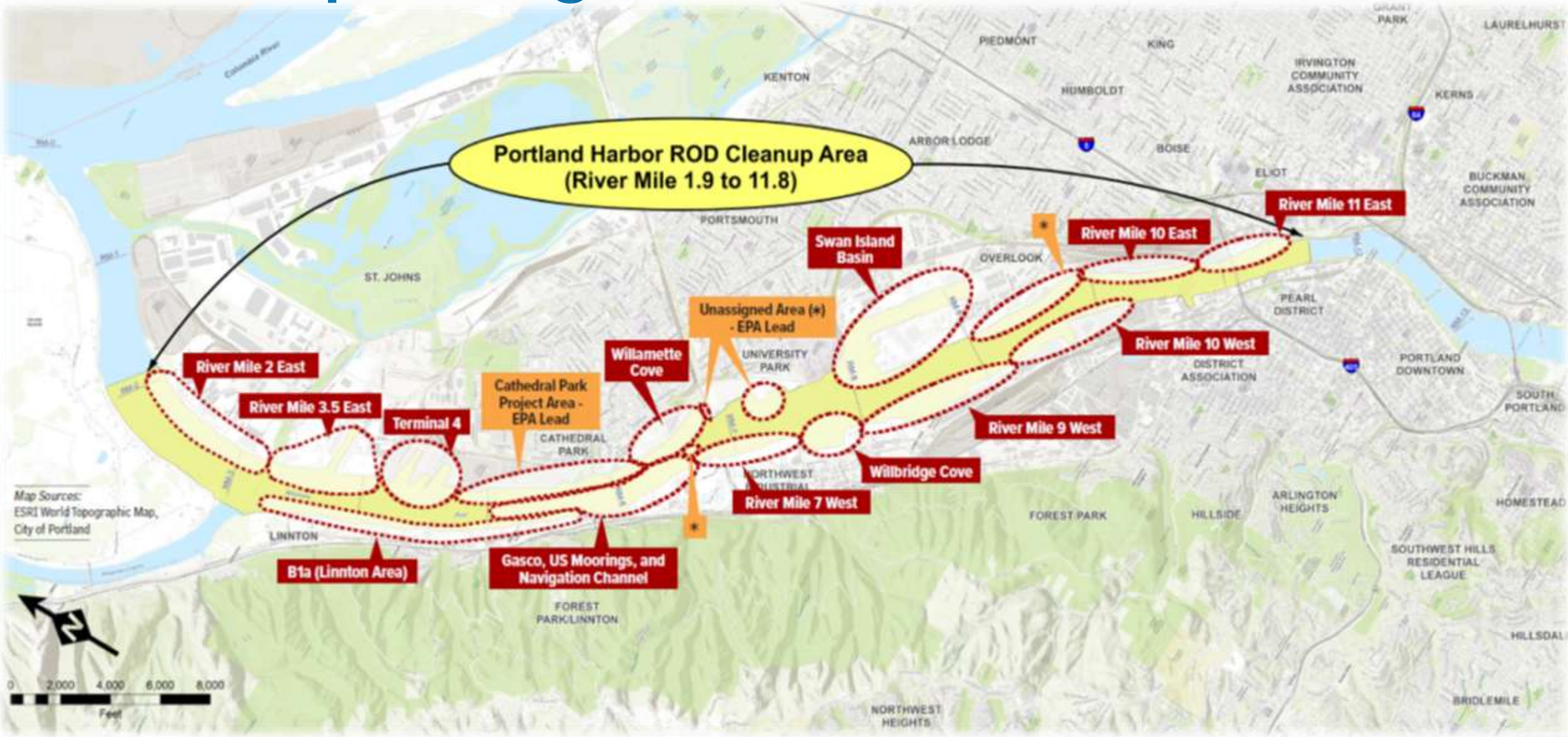
  Record of Decision

- Previous work = Sampling & Studies

- Continue to Cleanup Properties Adjacent to the River



Cleanup Design Locations



Final Thoughts

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FULL MENU
PORTLAND HARBOR SUPERFUND CLEANUP
Moving forward to a responsible, collaborative solution.
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Thank You