

# Bay cleanup costs run deep

**BY ERIC MCGUINNESS**

Governments and industry poured \$41 million a year into improving Hamilton Harbour over the last five years – twice the spending rate of the previous 10 years.

And cleanup co-ordinator John Hall says they can't slow down if the job is to be finished by 2015.

That's when the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan aims to improve things enough for the harbour to be taken off the International Joint Commission's list of 40 Great Lakes pollution hot spots.

A report being done by Hall's office and set for release at the end of the year will show \$205 million – or \$20.5 million a year – was spent restoring the harbour from 1990 to 2000. Another \$205 million was spent in the period 2001-2006 at a rate of \$41 million a year.

Hall says, "This is the pace we need to maintain in order to complete all RAP initiatives by 2015."

That works out to \$369 million more, for a total of almost \$780 million

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over 25 years.

The biggest remaining challenge is removing or containing sediment laced with toxic coal tar around Randle Reef, just offshore from Stelco's Hilton Works, and at several other spots in the east harbour.

Another megadollar project involves upgrading Hamilton's big Woodward Avenue sewage treatment plant and building tanks or tunnels to hold back the flow of combined storm and sanitary sewers during heavy rains.

The need for combined sewer overflow systems was seen last Friday when millions of litres of untreated sewage was diverted into the harbour and

water swamped a neighbourhood off Greenhill Avenue.

Hamilton is making progress, but work is lagging in many of the other 40 places labelled Areas of Concern by the International Joint Commission.

There are also basin-wide issues of beach closings, invasive species, inadequate sewage treatment and toxic chemical pollution. The possible effects of climate change are yet to be addressed.

[emcguinness@thespec.com](mailto:emcguinness@thespec.com)

905-526-4650

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