

4. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITION

4.1 General

The channel limits identified as the Upper Saginaw River Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) study are from a point 4.7 miles upstream from the entrance of the Saginaw River to 22 miles upstream from the entrance of the Saginaw River. Sediment testing of samples from the Federal Navigation channel occurred in 1999. Based on the sample results, the material is classified as 50% clay and 50% sand. The dredged material, when placed, drains fairly well because of the presence of sand.

The dredged material has low levels of metals and non-detectable levels of PCB's. Dioxins levels average about 200 ppt (toxic equivalents) for the Upper Saginaw River. The material will require a deed restriction.

4.2 Birds

Waterfowl use of the Saginaw Valley area is increasing as a direct result of State and Federal programs in the Saginaw area. Land acquisition and habitat development was initiated in the area in the early 1950's. State and Federal Wildlife areas located immediately south of Saginaw, Michigan and along the bay shore, provide habitat for waterfowl species such as Canada goose, mallard, blue winged teal, black duck, and wood duck. These areas also provide habitat for herring gulls, common terns, marsh hawk and many other bird species.

4.3 Recreation

Area recreation in Saginaw and Bay Counties is provided in the Tobico Marsh State Game Area, Bay City State Park, Quanicassee Wildlife Area, the Crow Island State Game Area and the Shiawassee River State Game Area. Saginaw Bay, a western arm of Lake Huron, is a popular recreational watercraft destination. The channel supports a great opportunity for recreational boating as evidenced by the many marinas along the riverfront.

4.4 Archaeological

Archaeological resources of the Saginaw are significant. The area was used by a number of Great Lakes Indian tribes including the Huron, Ottawa, and diverse Ojibwa Chippewa groups. The first European settlement in the Saginaw Valley occurred around 1816, to engage in fur trading. Many archaeological and historic sites are known to be in the region, particularly along the waterways.