



The Masonville Placement Site

www.mpasafepassage.org

Finding locations to place sediment cleared from Port of Baltimore shipping channels is a growing challenge. Finding a placement site within the Baltimore Harbor itself—while earning both government approval and community support—is even more difficult. But Masonville, one of the Maryland Port Administration's newest dredged material placement sites, has achieved this rare success.

The Importance of Masonville

For years, most material dredged from the Baltimore Harbor has been placed at the Hart-Miller Island Dredged Material Containment Facility. But Hart-Miller Island stopped receiving dredged material in 2009, creating a shortfall for placing the 1.5 million cubic yards of sediment that are extracted from the harbor each year.

The Maryland Port Administration is working on several long-term options to meet its dredged material placement needs. In the meantime, the Masonville placement site is critical for ensuring the safe passage of ships through the harbor.

Named for a now-extinct railroad town on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Masonville is part of an old industrial area along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River, one mile downstream of the Hanover Street Bridge. The site is small compared to Hart-Miller Island, but it will support dredging needs in the harbor for nearly twenty years. It will also provide benefits that extend beyond safe shipping channels—including significant environmental improvements to the local watershed and future terminal space for the Port.



The Masonville dredged material placement site makes use of old industrial land along the Patapsco River. As part of the project, tons of industrial waste have been cleaned up and projects are underway to improve wildlife habitat in Masonville Cove.

Operations at Masonville

The Masonville site will begin receiving dredged material in 2010. Managers estimate that approximately 500,000 cubic yards of dredged material will be placed at Masonville each year, with a total site capacity of 15 million cubic yards.

The Masonville site covers 141 acres, including land and water. The land area falls within the Baltimore City limits and abuts 55-acres of protected shoreline habitat known as Masonville Cove.

A dike will enclose 127 acres of open water that will be filled with dredged material. Over time, the enclosed area will be dried and compacted into solid land. The new land will have a temporary height of 42 feet above water level and settle into a final height of 36 feet. When Masonville is eventually closed to dredged material, the land within the dike will become a marine

terminal with space for some of the Port's most valuable incoming cargo: automobiles.

Removing Debris and Improving Habitat

Environmental improvements play a large role at Masonville. The Maryland Port Administration has cleaned up mountains of debris left from past industrial activity. Concrete, timber, cables, unexploded ordinance, tires, and abandoned ships were among the remains, along with equipment containing PCBs, mercury, and asbestos.

The neighboring area of Masonville Cove is included in the clean-up effort, as part of the mitigation work required by state and federal permits. Masonville Cove is an area of protected shoreline habitat. However, the presence of abandoned industrial waste has prevented the Cove from reaching its potential and providing any larger benefits to the community. Now, the Masonville project has triggered the removal or recycling of more than 60,000 tons of debris, some of which is said to have originated from the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904.

Additional projects will transform Masonville Cove into a local environmental centerpiece and educational resource. Wetlands and reef areas will be enhanced for shoreline habitat, and stream restoration work will improve habitat in upstream areas.

Walking trails and an observation tower will surround the new Masonville Cove Environ-



Before the clean-up, piles of waste from past industrial activity dominated the scene at Masonville.



Underwater debris at Masonville Cove will be removed and replaced with shoreline plants that attract and shelter wildlife.

mental Education Center, a \$750,000 green building that opened in 2009. The center serves local schools and community members, and hosts environment education programs by the National Aquarium and Living Classrooms Foundation.

In 2007, the Maryland Port Administration received the Mayor's Business Recognition Award from the Greater Baltimore Committee for the clean-up of Masonville.

Community Outreach & Support

The Maryland Port Administration worked closely with community members and organizations while designing the Masonville placement site. Improvements at Masonville Cove have been guided by their requests, and the overall project moved forward with unusually strong support. The Port has also helped to create the Masonville Citizens Advisory Committee, which will provide ongoing guidance on enhancements in the Cove as well as citizen oversight of the placement project itself.

In 2004, the Port received the American Association of Port Authorities' Community and Public Involvement Award, a national award in recognition of the public outreach process that led to creation of the Masonville placement site. ■