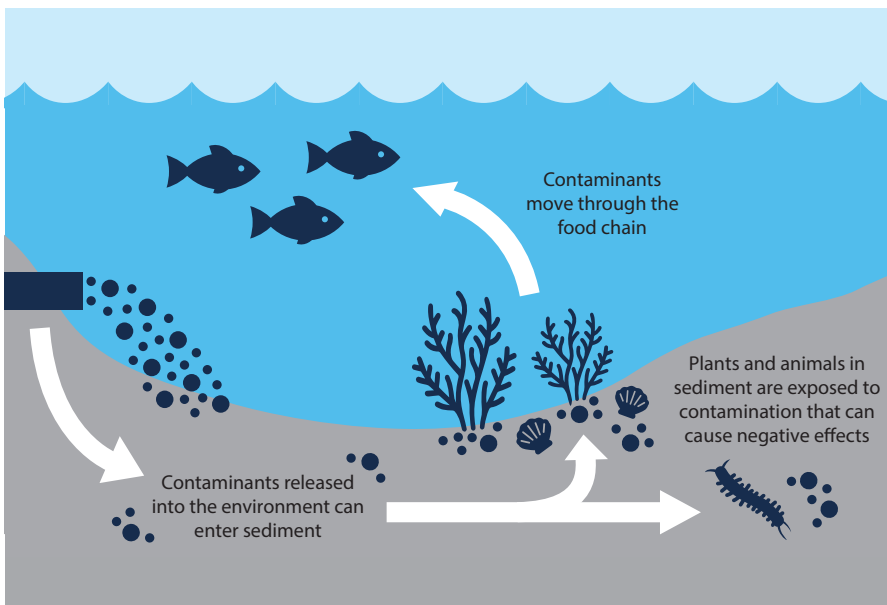


GOWANUS CANAL

Natural Resource Injury Assessment Sediment Sampling

Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, New York supports industrial, municipal, and public activities. It plays a vital role in the economy and culture of the surrounding communities. However, decades of contamination have negatively impacted the Gowanus Canal natural environment. To compensate the public for these impacts, the Gowanus Canal Natural Resource Trustees are conducting natural resource damage assessment and restoration (NRDAR) activities for the site.



IS THE SEDIMENT INJURED?

For the Gowanus Canal NRDAR, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) as represented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (the Trustees) are studying sediment contamination and how it affects natural resources, like plants and animals, in and around the canal.

As described in the [Draft Assessment Plan](#), and building on existing information, the Trustees may conduct studies on:

- Concentrations of contaminants in sediment
- Toxic effects of contaminated sediment on plants, invertebrates, or fish
- Bioaccumulation of contaminants from sediment to plants and/or animals

WHY IS SEDIMENT IMPORTANT?

Sediment is the material (rocks, minerals, organic matter) at the bottom of the Gowanus Canal. A key natural resource, sediment provides:

- A surface on which aquatic plants can grow
- Material for aquatic animals to live on or burrow into for feeding, hiding, or resting
- A source of nutrients and minerals

Sediment can also store hazardous substances, oil, and other contaminants that have been released into the aquatic ecosystem, exposing plants and animals to contamination that can cause negative effects.

GOWANUS CANAL

Natural Resource Injury Assessment Sediment Sampling

WHY COLLECT SEDIMENT NOW?

The Trustees identified a need to collect additional sediment samples in case future NRDAR studies of natural resource injury from pre-remedial sediment contamination are conducted. Timing is important because remedial (cleanup) actions overseen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and New York State are ongoing. Cleanup actions are focused on removal and isolation of contaminated sediment. Sediment cleanup is nearly complete for the upstream portion of the Canal (RTA1) and is planned for the middle and lower sections of the Canal (RTA2 and RTA3; see [USEPA website](https://www.epa.gov/gowanus-canal)).

Therefore, prior to remedial actions in RTA2 and RTA3, the Trustees plan to sample sediment in Summer 2024 at 24 locations in Gowanus Canal and Gowanus Bay, including locations previously sampled for the Remedial Investigation (Figure 1). These samples will provide current data on sediment characteristics, including contamination, and will be stored for possible future NRDAR studies.

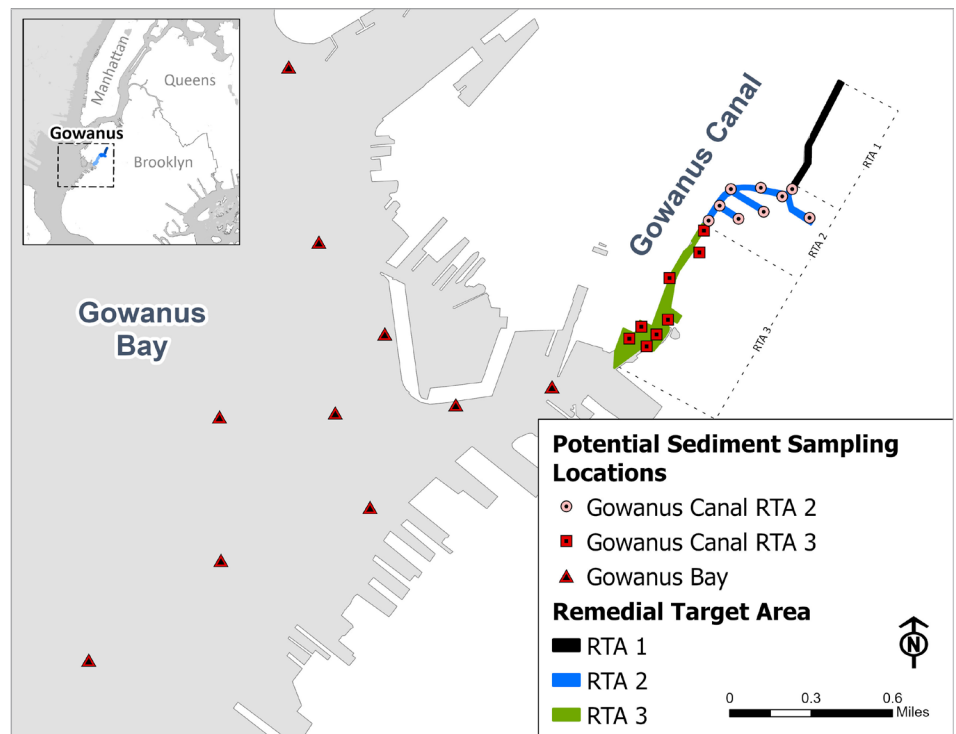


Figure 1. Potential Sediment Sampling Locations

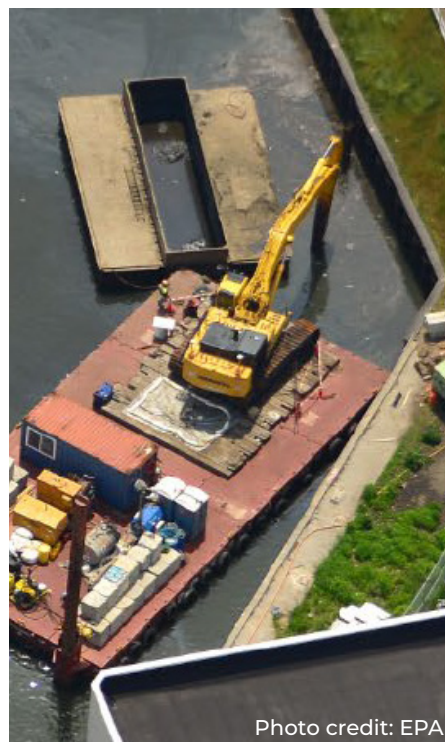


Photo credit: EPA

MORE INFORMATION

Find out more at:

<https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/nrd/major-ongoing-nrd-assessments>

<https://darrp.noaa.gov/hazardous-waste/gowanus-canal>

www.fws.gov/media/gowanus-canal-nrda

Or contact the Trustees at:

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