

Excellent Progress in Cleaning Up Sites

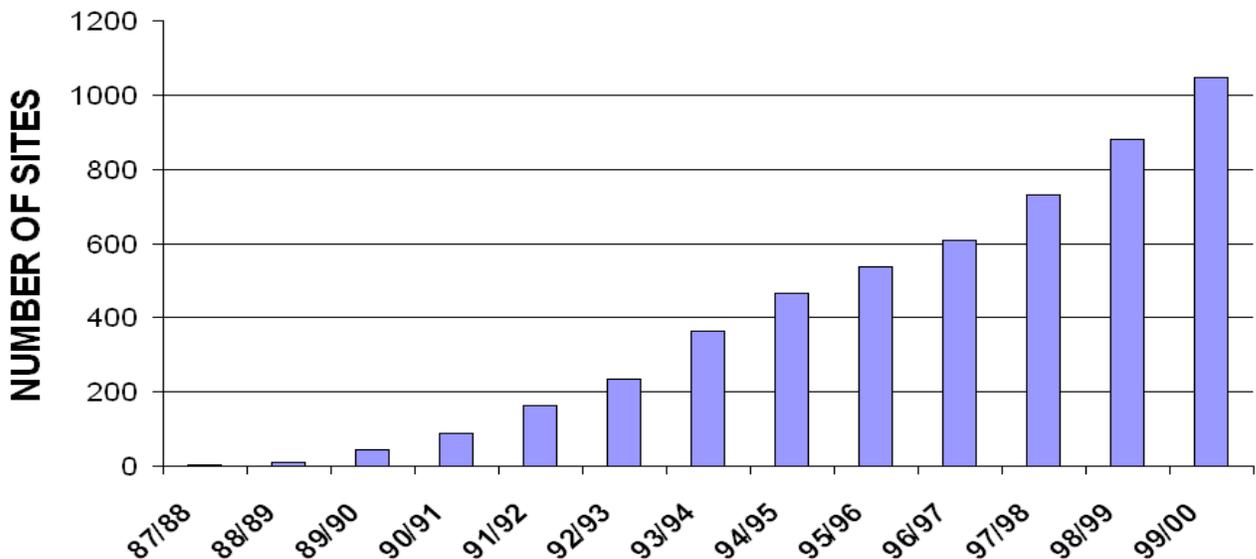
February 15, 2001

More Than a Thousand Sites Cleaned Up

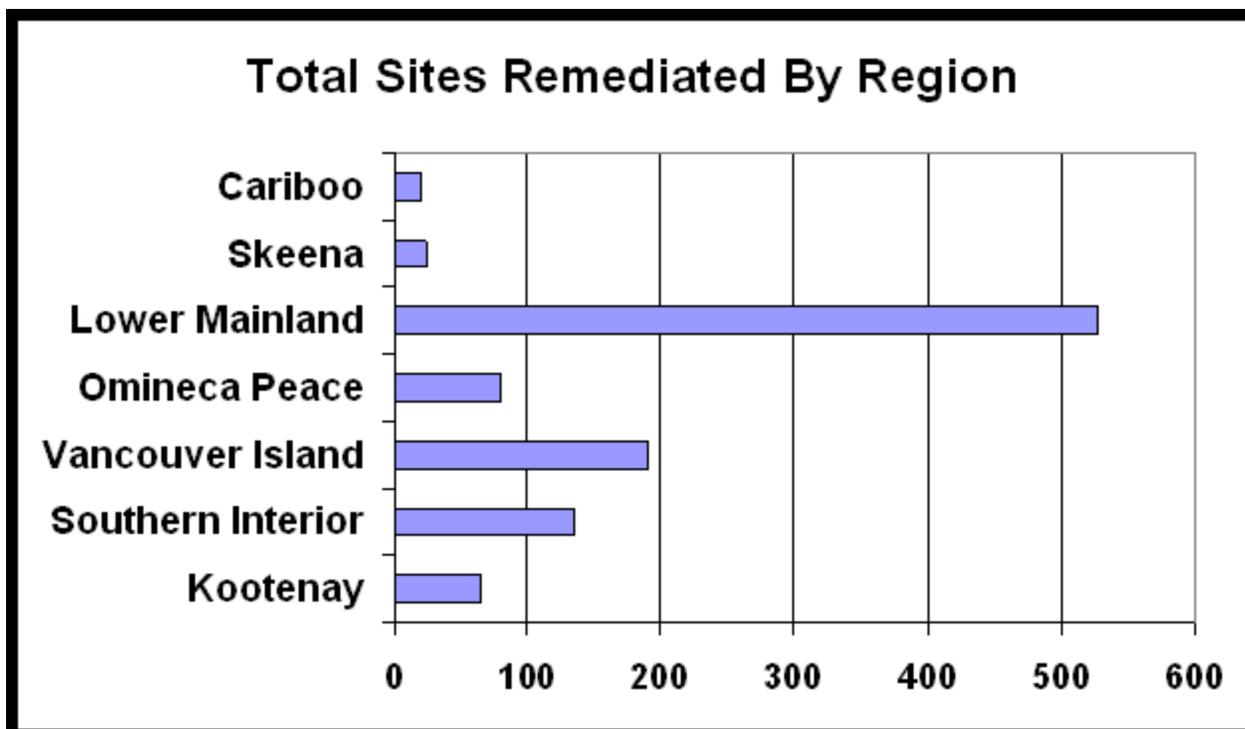
The ministry has seen significant progress in cleaning up contaminated sites since it first developed standards to deal with the Expo '86 property in Vancouver.

In the twelve years since then, according to our records, 1,040 sites have been remediated and another 1,278 cleanups are in progress. The following chart shows a steadily increasing number of sites being cleaned up in BC.

TOTAL NUMBER OF SITES REMEDIATED IN BC



Most of the cleanup work has taken place in areas of the province where industrial and commercial activity has been greatest. The chart below gives a breakdown of all sites cleaned up, classified by ministry administrative region.



Major Successes

Some sites have required technically difficult and time-consuming cleanup procedures, including the Expo site itself, which had previously been used for industrial activities such as wood treatment, metal fabricating and coal gasification.

A summary of the important work being done at some of the most contaminated and high profile sites in BC is shown below.

At **9250 Oak Street** in Vancouver, just below the Oak Street bridge, several thousand litres of coal tar and creosote have been collected and removed from the site. As well, a pump and treat system has been in place since the spring of 1999. It prevents the discharge of contaminated groundwater into the Fraser River.

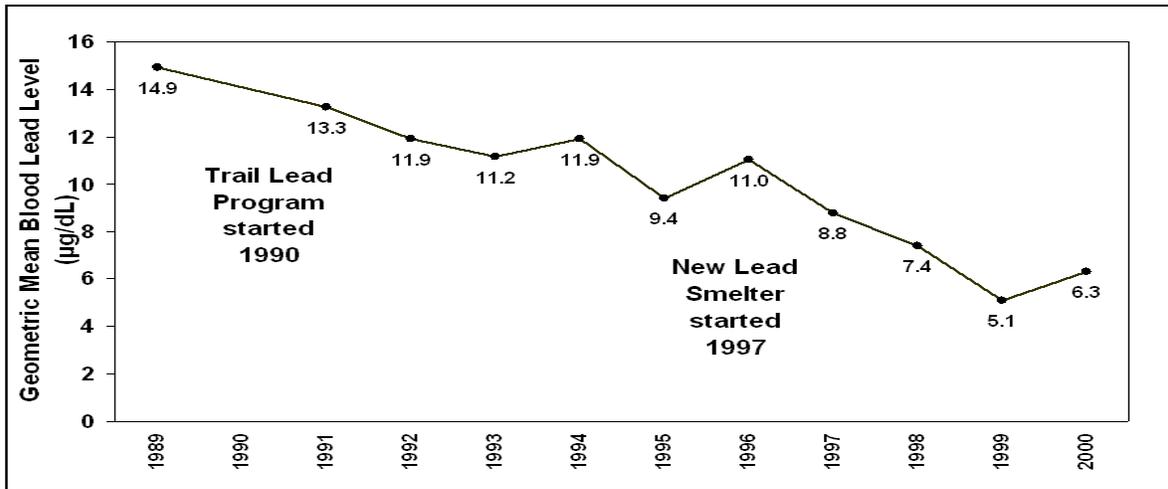
At the **Canadian Occidental Petroleum (COPL)** site at Squamish, the Old Lagoon containing 15,000 cubic metres of mercury contaminated sludge was removed last summer, marking an important milestone in that project. An intensive groundwater investigation is now underway and a pump and treat system is in place.

The **Domtar** property in Coquitlam is another site where a groundwater pump and treat system has been working effectively to remove contaminants. This site has posed particular challenges because the wood preservation plant is still in operation, making it difficult to access the worst

contamination. Nevertheless, the site has been under a *Waste Management Act Remediation Order* for a number of years, and work is progressing.

One of the longest running and most successful remediation efforts in the province has been in **Trail**. From 1989 until it disbanded in early 2001, the Trail Community Lead Task Force worked to lower blood lead levels in children.

Trail has been the site of a major lead/zinc smelting facility since the turn of the century. The graph below shows the dramatic decline in blood lead levels in children since the problem was first identified in 1975.



At the old **Britannia** mine site near Howe Sound, some progress is being made. Revisions to a Remediation Order are being considered and the ministry has contacted companies and authorities once connected with the mine to advise them that they may be responsible for paying for the cleanup.

Site Registry Growing

In addition to the increasing number of sites being cleaned up, progress can be measured by the tremendous growth in information on the provincial government's Site Registry.

This database, which was created in 1997, now contains information on almost six thousand sites across the province. It records information on the environmental condition of land. (Consult fact sheet 20 for details.)

The Site Registry has become an important part of the process in which contaminated sites are being identified and remediated. It is used hundreds of times every week by lawyers, environmental consultants, and others.

Cooperation and Partnership

Updating and improving government legislation and regulations continues. The ministry has a close and excellent working relationship with its stakeholders, which ensures that the environment will be protected and restored in cooperation with our partners.

The Process is Working

While improvements are still being made, BC's Contaminated Sites Program is working well.

- Sites are being identified and cleaned up.
- Comprehensive legislation is in place to ensure the environment is protected and restored.
- The regulations are being amended on a regular basis to ensure that requirements are current.
- Government and stakeholders are working together for the benefit of all BC.