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Dredge Bucket Comparison Demonstration at Boston Harbor

by Tim Welp, Don Hayes, Mike Tubman, Scott McDowell, Tom Fredette, James Clausner, and Carl Albro

PURPOSE: Sediment resuspension and loading characteristics of a Conventional (open-faced) clamshell bucket, an Enclosed clamshell bucket, and a CableArm® clamshell bucket were studied under similar operating and environmental conditions in Boston Harbor during August 1999. Monitoring was conducted to characterize each bucket's near and far field sediment resuspension characteristics. Bucket-loading characteristics were investigated with regard to water-to-solids ratios dredged by the different buckets. Documentation of sediment resuspension in the water column and loading characteristics with conventional and enclosed clamshell buckets (a bucket type that includes both the contractor-built Enclosed and the CableArm buckets) will assist U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Districts in making bucket selection decisions and provide data for the fate of dredged material numerical model verification.

BACKGROUND: The Boston Harbor Navigation Improvement Project (BHNIP) deepened tributaries to the inner harbor and associated berthing areas. Extensive coordination with resource agencies and other interests resulted in the decision to use in-channel confined aquatic disposal (CAD) cells for placement of contaminated sediments dredged with an Enclosed clamshell bucket. To determine the effectiveness of this new contaminated sediment management option, the U.S. Army Engineer District, New England, the Massachusetts Port Authority and dredging contractor conducted extensive monitoring. The USACE Monitoring Completed Navigation Projects (MCNP) program contributed to the monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of in-channel CAD cells at Boston Harbor. One study area of the MCNP investigation is the investigation of relative amounts of sediment resuspension associated with different bucket types. Because a significant fraction of the sediments dredged on the BHNIP had elevated levels of some contaminants, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Environmental Protection required that an enclosed bucket be used to reduce sediment resuspension and the potential for water quality impacts. However, the contractor performed dredging in a normal fashion, attempting to dredge as efficiently as possible to keep production high and costs low. Tests performed by the water-quality measurement contractor showed no exceedances of the water criteria with either of the approved buckets, the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock (GLDD) Enclosed bucket or the CableArm navigation bucket. However, the New England District expressed concern that the Enclosed buckets were adding additional water to the already soft and weak sediments, possibly causing a further reduction of the bearing capacity of the sediments. This reduction of bearing capacity would, in turn, make the capping operation even more difficult.

When contaminated sediments are present, even if constituent concentrations are only slightly elevated, some regulatory agencies require the use of an Enclosed bucket to reduce water quality impacts. Previous data have shown that Enclosed buckets do reduce resuspension compared to Conventional open buckets. However the amount of data is limited, particularly for comparisons

under identical conditions. Because of variations in hydrodynamics, sediment characteristics and operating conditions, it is difficult to compare resuspension data from different sites.

This research on sediment resuspension by different buckets was conducted to compare different buckets under as identical conditions as practical, so that other Corps Districts and resource agencies can make informed decisions on benefits of an enclosed bucket for a given dredging project, particularly when contaminated sediments are involved. The issue that additional water was added by the closed buckets is also addressed in this study.

DREDGING SITE, EQUIPMENT, AND OPERATIONS: GLDD personnel provided excellent support that facilitated the accomplishment of a successful study. The dredging operations took place under similar physical and environmental conditions with the primary difference being the bucket type used. GLDD Dredge 54 was used for dredging operations during all comparisons and operated as the dredge captain thought represented the best production for each bucket.

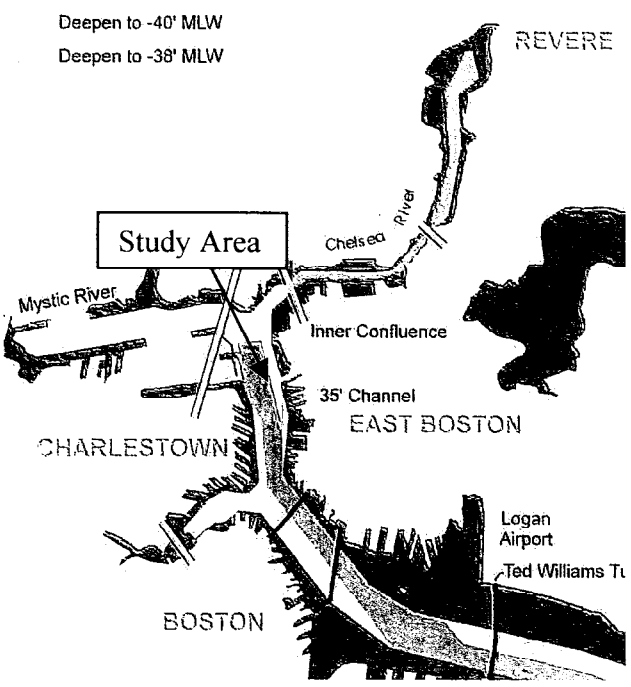


Figure 1. Location map

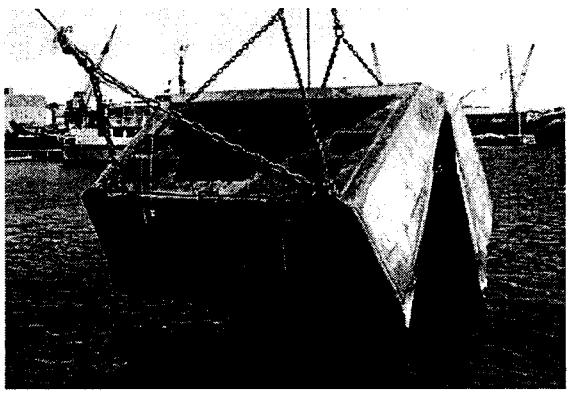
The dredging operations were conducted in Boston Harbor just below the confluence of the Chelsea and Mystic Rivers, often referred to as the Inner Confluence (Figure 1). The sediment being dredged consisted of a predominantly fine-grained (sandy silt) material. Mean low water (mlw) depth in the area was approximately 11.6 m (38 ft) with a tide range of approximately 3 m (10 ft). Sampling operations were conducted beginning near high tide each day and continued for 4 to 6 hr (time to fill 1 barge). The barges were not allowed to overflow.

The study objectives were accomplished by monitoring continuous dredging operations without significant interruptions and with as little variation in flow velocity and direction as possible. All sampling efforts were conducted during the ebb of the morning high tides.

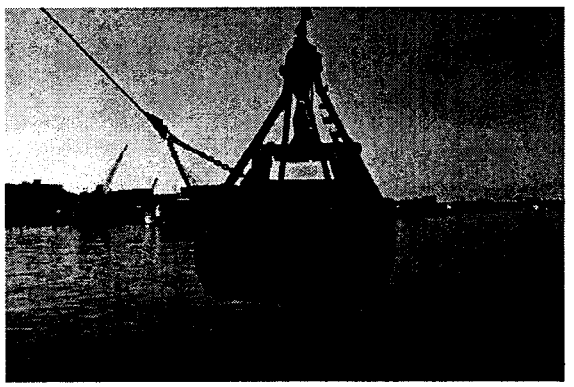
The buckets used by GLDD are listed in Table 1. Figure 2 shows photographs of each bucket. Leakage occurred from all of the buckets. The CableArm and Enclosed buckets leaked through the joints and ventilation grates in the upper part of the buckets. The Conventional bucket also leaked and loss of some of the exposed sediments appeared to contribute to turbidity.

Table 1
Physical Characteristics and Descriptions of Dredge Buckets Used in the Study

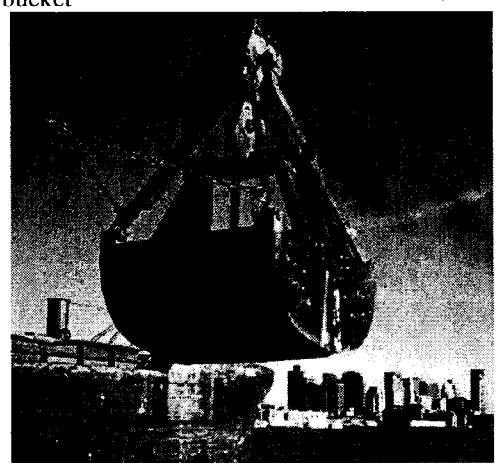
Date	Bucket	Size m^3 (yd^3)	Description
August 5, 1999	CableArm	29.81 (39)	CableArm navigational bucket (i.e., not their environmental bucket); with rubber side lip seals and vents (with intake seals) on either side near the top allow water to escape during descent and after the bucket is closed.
August 6, 1999	GLDD Enclosed	29.81 (39)	Conventional 19.87-m^3 (26-yd^3) bucket enclosed on the top and sides by welded steel plates; Vents with intake seals approximately 0.45 × 1.82 m (1.5 × 6 ft) on each side of the bucket near the top allow water to escape during descent and after the bucket is closed.
August 7, 1999	GLDD Conventional	19.87 (26)	Conventional bucket with completely open top.



a. CableArm bucket



b. Enclosed bucket



c. Conventional dredge bucket

Figure 2. Photographs of dredge buckets used during the study

A video camera was used to record the buckets' digging and dumping cycles to evaluate the difference in operation induced by the buckets. Average cycle times were fastest for the Conventional bucket (51.1 s), compared to the Enclosed bucket (55.5 s) and CableArm bucket (62.3 s), however, the variation was not excessive; the CableArm bucket was only 22 percent (11.2 s) slower than the Conventional bucket and 12 percent slower than the Enclosed bucket (Hayes, Borrowman, and Welp 2000).

SEDIMENT RESUSPENSION DATA COLLECTION METHODS: Sediment resuspension data consisted of suspended solids samples and turbidity measurements collected within 8 m (in the horizontal plane) of the bucket position (near field) and 25 to 400 m from the dredge (far field). Near field data included continuous turbidity measurements taken at four depths (1.5 m, 5.5 m, 8.0 m, and 10.5 m in a water depth of about 11.6 m) and discrete water samples analyzed for total suspended solids (TSS). Far field data included indirect turbidity observations using a Broad Band Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (BBADCP), and direct turbidity, conductivity, and temperature measurements, and discrete water samples for TSS calibration collected by the Battelle Ocean Survey System (BOSS).

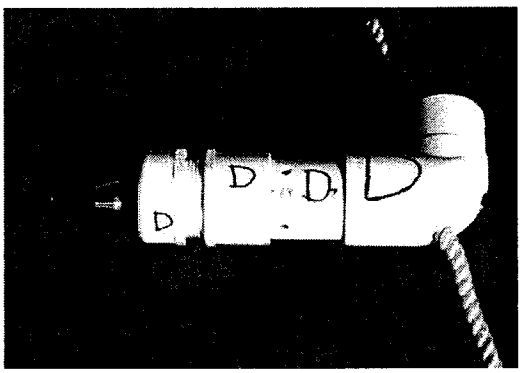


Figure 3. OBS turbidity sensor

Near Field Sediment Resuspension Data Collection: Near field data collection consisted of continuous readings from D&A Instrument Co. OBS-3 Turbidity Sensors (Figure 3) calibrated for a range of 0 to 2000 FTU (formazin turbidity units), discrete water column samples analyzed for total suspended solids, and a video recording of the dredging operation. Five turbidity sensors labeled A, B, C, D, and E were initially deployed, but sensor A was not used because of erratic readings and calibration problems. The remaining four turbidity sensors (B - E) were placed at depths of 1.5 m, 5.5 m, 8 m, and 10.5 m respectively in a vertical array deployed at the front center of the dredge barge (water depth was approximately 12 m). The sensors were calibrated and checked before being deployed each morning using a 440 FTU formazin suspension. The turbidity sensors were within 8 m (in the horizontal plane) of the bucket's digging location at all times.

The four turbidity sensors were connected to a Campbell Scientific CR10X datalogger for data collection and storage. The datalogger received readings from each sensor at the maximum sampling rate of once per second. A laptop PC software monitored the sensor readings continuously and logged them to an ASCII data file. The software allowed the readings to be monitored real-time to identify problems and associate turbidity conditions with dredge operations.

Discrete water samples were collected and analyzed for total suspended solids (TSS) along with other TSS samples collected in the far field water column each day. Sample times and depths were recorded so the results could be correlated with simultaneous turbidity readings.

A time-stamp video camera synchronized with the datalogger clock was used to record dredge operation during most of the monitoring operations. The camera was located on the disposal barge deck where power was available and a wide view of the operation was available. The video recordings were used to recreate the dredge operation, calculate cycle times, and identify times when the dredge was down and eliminate erroneous data.

Far Field Sediment Resuspension Data Collection: The BBADCP and BOSS were installed aboard the 14-m (45-ft) Battelle survey vessel *Aquamonitor* to monitor far field resuspension characteristics.

Broad Band Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (BBADCP): The BBADCP transmits 1,200 kHz acoustic signals through the water and measures the acoustic signals that are returned to the instrument. Four of the five beams point down at a 20-deg angle from the vertical. These four beams measure the water velocity and the velocity of the boat across the bottom. Current speed and direction are determined by adjusting absolute velocity measurements for boat speed. The fifth beam points straight down, and its measurements of backscattered acoustic energy are used solely for detecting the presence of suspended sediment in the water column. Sediment particles in suspension will scatter some of the transmitted acoustic signal, returning a portion of the scattered signal back to the instrument (called backscatter). The strength of this backscatter is a function of the sediment particles' characteristics and the amount of sediment in suspension. Acoustic measurements of suspended sediment plumes uniquely provide the capability to produce three-dimensional images of plumes during a short time interval. These images can be used to locate the positions of other measurements relative to a plume's boundaries and the spatial distribution of suspended-sediment concentrations. The acoustic instrument used to monitor the plume during these dredging operations was an RDI 5-beam BBADCP (Figure 4).

Figure 4. BBADCP

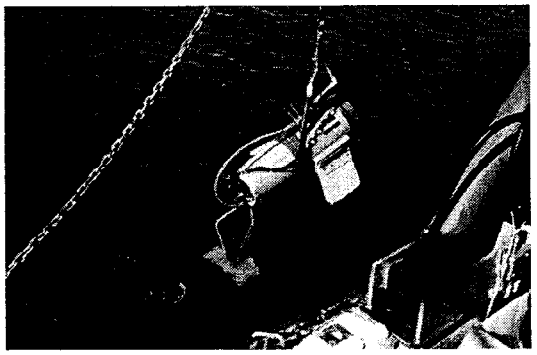


Figure 5. BOSS towfish

Battelle Ocean Survey System (BOSS): The BOSS was also installed aboard the survey vessel *Aquamonitor* for in situ water property monitoring and collection of water samples. The BOSS is comprised of an underwater towed sensor package (conductivity, temperature, depth, and in situ turbidity sensors) (Figure 5), a stainless steel seawater pump for continuous delivery of water samples to the shipboard laboratory, a winch and handling system for on-deck installation, and a PC-based software system interfaced with DGPS navigation for data acquisition, storage, and real-time display. Water depth data from a vessel-mounted echosounder within the vessel's laboratory is provided continuously to the BOSS data acquisition system.

During the monitoring operations, the BOSS served three major functions: 1) to acquire continuous, real-time data on the BOSS towfish position, 2) to acquire real-time, in situ measurements of temperature, salinity, sensor depth, and turbidity while the sensor package was either profiling vertically or being towed horizontally, and 3) to deliver a continuous flow of seawater, at a rate of approximately 12 L per min, from the depth of the towed instrument package to the onboard laboratory for collection of discrete water samples. A total of 305 discrete water samples were collected using the BOSS during the background phase of the monitoring program. Collection of these discrete samples was accomplished by the onboard technician placing an empty sample bottle under the continuous flow of seawater. These water samples were filtered onboard.

Real-time data on the BOSS towfish position was computed from the known vessel position (via DGPS) and from the computed lay-back of the towfish (the horizontal distance from the DGPS antenna to the towfish). Specialized software routines developed by Battelle were used to display the salinity, temperature, turbidity, and depth data in real-time on a color CRT monitor. Sensor data were merged with the DGPS position data and automatically stored in a BOSS data file.

BUCKET-LOADING CHARACTERISTICS DATA: The average densities of dredged material placed in the barges were calculated to investigate bucket-loading characteristics with regard to the material's water to solids volume ratio. The dredged material weight was determined by recording the barges' drafts and using the displacement tables to calculate hopper material weight, and its volume was determined by measuring the height of material in the hopper and using the ullage tables (tables that relate level of dredged material in barge to material volume) to calculate hopper material volume. Other data required to calculate the water to solids ratio included the dredged material mineral and water densities. Sediment samples were collected from the hopper and analyzed to determine the mineral density, while the water density was calculated with the conductivity and temperature data collected from the towed-body previously described. No chemical analyses were conducted on any water or sediment samples collected during the study.

NEAR FIELD MONITORING RESULTS: Turbidity observations were the primary near field data collected during the study. However, a limited number of discrete water samples were taken coincident with turbidity readings. Thirty-three samples were collected and analyzed for TSS to corroborate the turbidity data during the bucket operations. Turbidity can be used as a surrogate for TSS, but it must be recognized that factors other than sediment concentration influence turbidity. These factors, which include particle size, shape, and organic content, complicate conversion of turbidity measurements to TSS concentration. Although the data correlating turbidity and TSS values in this study were scattered, they show a definite relationship; $r^2 = 0.65$. More than 226,000 turbidity observations were collected during the three partial days used to study the three buckets. The primary advantage of using turbidity is the rapid number of measurements that can be obtained at very little additional cost per sample measurement. Additionally, the observations can be monitored on a real-time basis to gather direct knowledge about the dredging operation itself. Turbidity data collected during extended downtimes were assumed to represent background conditions and used to adjust turbidity data. Measured ambient turbidity conditions are summarized in Table 2. The results show turbidity conditions with small ranges and standard deviations. These data seem to reasonably represent ambient turbidity

conditions. Thus, average values were subtracted from all other turbidity observations to adjust them for ambient conditions.

Table 2
Summary of (Near Field) Background Turbidity Statistics; All Turbidity Values In FTU

Depth (m)	Average	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1.5	3.9	0.34	3.0	7.4
5.5	3.3	0.56	2.2	11.7
8.0	4.0	1.0	2.7	9.0
10.5	21.4	3.8	13.3	31.0

The turbidity measurements (adjusted for ambient turbidity conditions) of the CableArm, Enclosed, and Conventional buckets are presented in Figures 6, 7, and 8, respectively. The vertical line inside the box represents the median turbidity while the shaded box represents upper and lower quartiles on either side of the mean. The whiskers extend over the range of observed data.

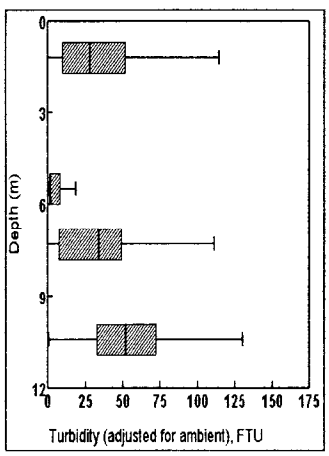


Figure 6. CableArm bucket turbidity

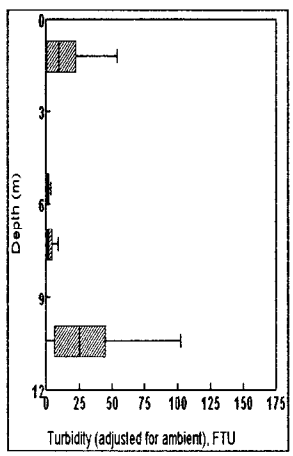


Figure 7. Enclosed bucket turbidity

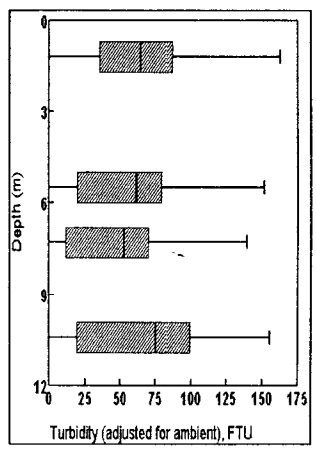


Figure 8. Conventional bucket turbidity

The Conventional bucket (Figure 8) generated the highest turbidity and suspended sediment, probably because of loss of sediments from the open top. The depth-averaged turbidity for the Conventional bucket was 57.2 FTU and suspended solids concentration was 210 mg/L (not adjusted for ambient TSS). Consistent with a prior study (McLellan et al. 1989), the Conventional bucket distributed turbidity throughout the water column. The TSS ranged from 105 mg/L in the middle of the water column to 445 mg/L near the bottom. Average turbidity varied a bit less and ranged from 46 to 64 FTU.

Although both the CableArm (Figure 6) and Enclosed bucket (Figure 7) leaked substantially through the seals and grated vents in the upper part of the buckets, neither resulted in as much turbidity or TSS as the Conventional bucket. The depth-averaged turbidities were 31 FTU and 12 FTU respectively for the CableArm and Enclosed buckets. The depth-averaged TSS values for the CableArm and Enclosed buckets were, respectively, 31 mg/L and 50 mg/L (compared to

210 mg/L for the Conventional bucket). Six water samples were collected for TSS analysis for the CableArm bucket. Of these six samples, two were taken at a time when excessive debris were being encountered that kept the bucket from closing properly which lead to unrepresentively high TSS values (200+ mg/L) so only four samples were used to calculate the TSS depth-averaged value.

The most significant difference was in the middle water column where turbidity values were substantially less than at the bottom and near the surface. Turbidity for the CableArm bucket ranged from 6 to 55 FTU, and TSS from 14 mg/L to 66 mg/L. The Enclosed bucket resulted in turbidity from 1 to 31 FTU and TSS from 14 to 112 mg/L.

FAR FIELD MONITORING RESULTS: The BBADCP records data for both current and fifth-beam backscatter in bins that represent 25-cm-thick slices across each beam, continuously along the beam. The bins start 50 cm from each beam's transducer and produce valid data to near bottom. The data from all five transducers and all bins for each transducer are recorded every 2 s.

In the monitoring reported here, the naturally occurring variations in ambient acoustic backscatter were determined from measurements made by the BBADCP along transects across the study area during times when there was no dredging. In each of the fifth beam's 25-cm bins, the standard deviation of the acoustic backscatter was calculated for all measurements made along these transects. Since the fifth beam points straight down, these values for each bin represent the standard deviation of acoustic backscatter as a function of depth. Just prior to the start of the dredging operations, a transect was made in the area where the plume from the dredging operation was expected to be located. Acoustic backscatter values from this transect were subtracted from the values obtained during monitoring of the plume, and the results were divided by the standard deviations of the background variations. This resulted in numbers that represent the observed acoustic backscatter above background (ABAB). Horizontal positions of the BBADCP and dredge (determined by DGPS systems) were logged and, after postprocessing of the BBADCP data, plots of the ABAB relative to the dredge position and depth were produced as shown in Figures 9, 10, and 11.

Figure 9 shows the results from a transect run on 5 August, down the axis of the plume, starting near the dredge and running downstream (north to south). The distances along the horizontal axis are distances from the end of the crane that was used to conduct the dredging. An interesting feature of this transect is that near the dredge, the maximum ABAB values (and therefore the highest concentrations of suspended sediments) are not on the bottom, but approximately 3 m above the bottom. On this day, dredging was conducted with the CableArm bucket. Examination of the bucket revealed that less than half the seals on the bucket were intact, and it is possible that the higher ABAB values 3 m above the bottom are from sediment being "washed" from the bucket. Figure 10 shows a transect down the axis of the plume on 6 August, when dredging was being conducted with the GLDD Enclosed bucket. This figure shows maximum suspended sediment concentrations near the bottom. The high ABAB values at the surface are believed to be from spillage over the side of the scow that resulted from the placement of some sample dredged material on the side deck of the scow for geotechnical sampling purposes. Figure 11 shows the dredge monitoring results for the Conventional bucket. Here maximum concentrations cover more than half the water column and extend all the way to the bottom. In a general

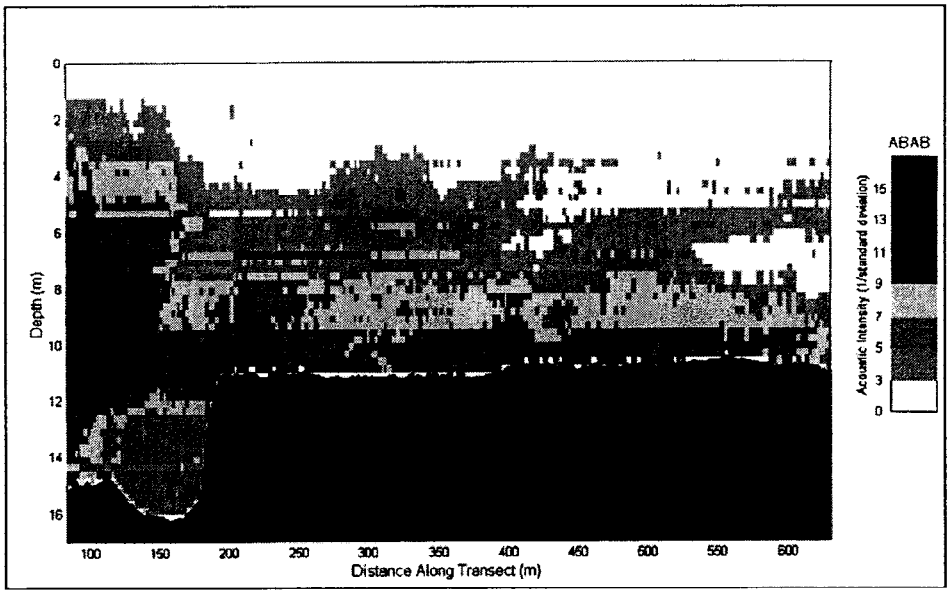


Figure 9. CableArm bucket

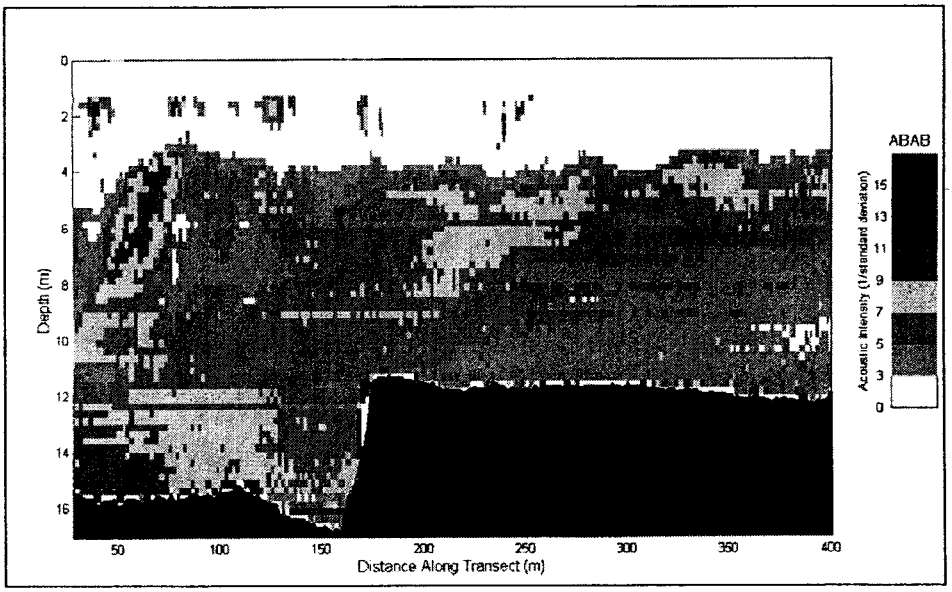


Figure 10. Enclosed bucket

qualitative way, the conclusion drawn from these three figures is that for this operation, the Enclosed bucket created less suspended sediment than the CableArm, and that they both produced less suspended sediment than the Conventional bucket.

The BOSS was used to acquire in situ water property data and discrete water samples at vertical profiling stations and along horizontal profiles (tows). The objective of the vertical profiling (conducted while the survey vessel was stopped/drifting) was to acquire data on temperature, salinity, seawater density, and relative turbidity throughout the water column, but an error in the

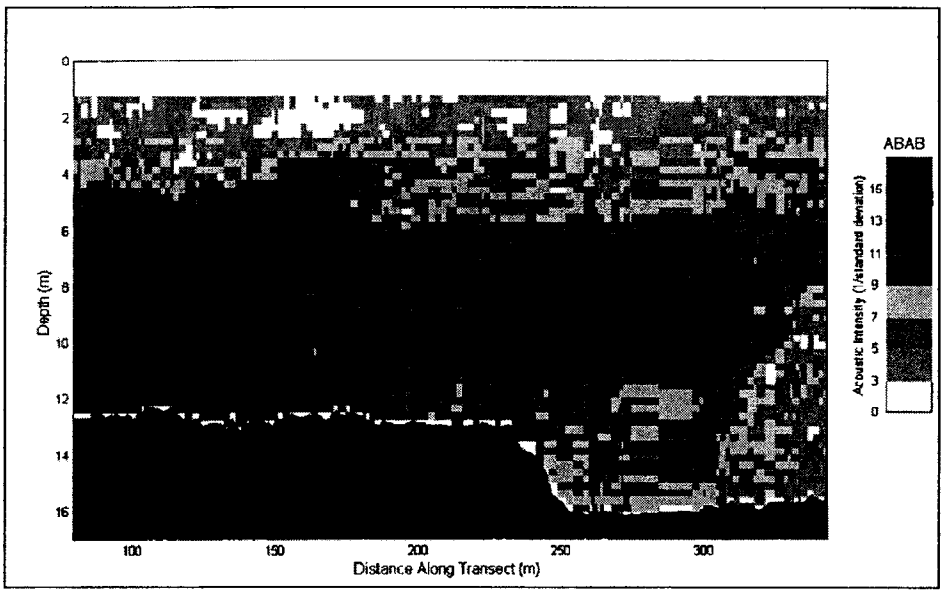


Figure 11. Conventional bucket

BOSS data acquisition software resulted in profile measurements achieving a maximum depth of only 69 percent of that intended (and displayed in real-time aboard the survey vessel). Consequently, no data were acquired in the lower 30-40 percent of the water column during either the vertical profiling or horizontal towing on any of the three days of monitoring operations.

The calibration relationship between TSS concentration (mg/L) of 305 discrete water samples versus simultaneous turbidity measurements of the BOSS in situ transmissometer (in units of 1/m)[1] exhibited a good correlation between the optical turbidity measurements and laboratory analysis of water samples ($r^2 = 0.93$). Consequently, all BOSS turbidity data have been converted and presented herein in units of mg/L. Figure 12 illustrates an example of one of the vertical profiles of TSS, in units of mg/L (not adjusted for ambient TSS), that were obtained at four vertical profiling stations along a line extending southward from the dredge when it was using the CableArm bucket. Stations 61 and 58 were approximately 90 and 210 m south of the dredge, respectively. These profiles illustrate considerable TSS variability, presumably as a result of distance from the dredge, as well as patchiness in the suspended sediment plume that was being advected southward at a speed of roughly 17 cm/sec during the ebb tide. Closest to the dredge (at station 61), maximum TSS values of roughly 185 mg/L were observed at 7-m (23-ft) depth, but note that no data were acquired in the depth range from 7 m to 10.5 m (bottom depth). Hence, if a plume of concentrated suspended sediments did exist in the lower portion of the water column, it would not have been detected by the BOSS sensors that were always situated at shallower depth.

The following is a summary of the maximum TSS concentrations encountered during the BOSS monitoring operations in the upper two-thirds of the water column:

[1] Beam Attenuation (BA) readings are in units of 1/m.

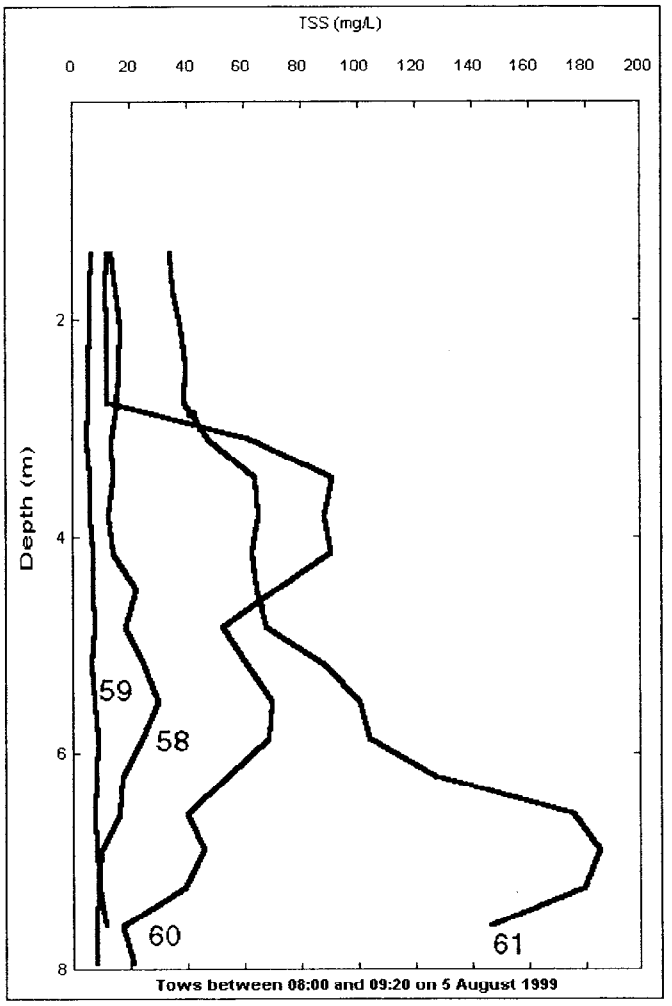


Figure 12. BOSS plots of TSS (not adjusted for ambient TSS) vs. depth (numbers next to the plot lines indicate station numbers)

	Maximum TSS (mg/L)	Depth (m)
CableArm Bucket	200	3.5
Enclosed Bucket	75	8
Conventional bucket	80	3.5 - 6

From these observations of maximum TSS concentrations, during each of the three days of sampling operations, it would appear that the CableArm bucket released more suspended solids in the upper two-thirds of the water column than either of the other two buckets, which is contrary to expectations. Inspection of the near field results does, however, show that maximum TSS concentrations encountered during the CableArm dredging were high and comparable to those during the Conventional bucket dredging at the 1.4 m (4.5 ft) and 8 m (26.5 ft) sampling depths. These results point out that comparisons between maximum TSS observations for each day of sampling can be misleading because they do not account for variations in hydrodynamic

conditions that dilute the far field suspended matter. Calculation of mass, such as the load of suspended solids per unit of receiving volume during dredging operations, is presently being conducted using the BOSS data set, and results will be presented in a separate report.

It is very unfortunate that the BOSS software problem precluded data collection in the lower third of the water column during this measurement program. The plumes of suspended solids in the lower 3 m of the water column most likely contained the greatest mass of suspended sediment (as indicated by the near field and BBADCP data).

BUCKET LOADING CHARACTERISTICS: Laboratory tests of the average dry solids (mineral) densities of sediment samples collected from the three barges were 2.69 g/cc, 2.70 g/cc, 2.69 g/cc respectively for August 5 (CableArm bucket), August 6 (Enclosed bucket), and August 7 (Conventional bucket). An average value of 1.014 g/cc for water density above the water-sediment interface was measured by the BOSS. The water-to-solids volume (loading) ratios of the buckets were calculated to be, respectively, 3.75 for the CableArm, 3.97 for the Enclosed bucket, and 3.76 for the Conventional bucket. Parameters that may have influenced these ratios include the following factors. Pre- and postdredge surveys indicated that the dredged material face-thickness (vertical thickness of dredged material be dredged) was similar for the Enclosed and CableArm, but the Conventional bucket excavated approximately one-fourth full barge in a thinner face before it was relocated to an area with a similar face-thickness, thereby increasing its water to solids loading ratio. More than 50 percent of the CableArm bucket's side lip seals were also missing throughout the duration of the demonstration. This condition would have allowed more water to leave the bucket as it was lifted from the water, thereby decreasing its water to solids loading ratio. Due to these varying parameters, a definitive statement cannot be made regarding the question of additional water entrainment of enclosed buckets, but the Conventional bucket still had the second lowest loading ratio overall, even after dredging in a thinner face for a significant portion of time.

SUMMARY:

Near Field: Based on turbidity measurements, the Conventional bucket produced the highest amount of sediment resuspension spread throughout the water column. Use of the CableArm bucket appeared to reduce sediment resuspension in the water column as the observed depth-averaged turbidity was 46 percent less than observed for the Conventional bucket; insufficient TSS data were collected during the CableArm bucket operation to completely confirm this reduction, although the few data collected show an even higher reduction. The Enclosed bucket had the lowest overall turbidity and substantially less in the middle of the water column. Observed depth-averaged turbidity for the Enclosed bucket was 79 percent less than observed for the Conventional bucket. This compared well with observed TSS which showed depth-averaged TSS concentrations for the Enclosed bucket 76 percent less than for the Conventional bucket. Functional seals on the CableArm bucket would have probably further reduced water quality impacts; however, according to the contractor, these seals were difficult to maintain on this navigation job.

Far Field: The BBADCP provided good qualitative data to indicate relative amounts of sediment resuspension in the plume and delineate its boundaries. BBADCP data results

correspond to results from those data collected in the near field. BBADCP coverage provided insight on where to sample with more the quantitative sampling equipment of the BOSS. Regrettably, the depth error in the BOSS-collected data limited its coverage, but these data are still being analyzed with regard to calculation of mass (i.e., the load of suspended solids per unit of receiving volume during dredging operations). The results of this analysis will be published in a report currently in preparation.

Collectively, the three systems yielded data that provided good insight on the different buckets' sediment resuspension characteristics, but plumes are difficult to track and measure. This difficulty stresses the need to continue developing methods to standardize plume data collection and analysis methodologies for future projects. Also, to account for variations in sediment characteristics, thickness of the dredge cut, etc., multiple days of sampling with each bucket are recommended to provide a more valid statistical basis for comparison.

POINTS OF CONTACT: For additional information, contact Tim Welp, Timothy.L.Welp@usace.army.mil , Don Hayes (80 1-58 1-7 110, hayes@civil.utah.edu), Mike Tubman, Michael.W.Tubman@usace.army.mil, Scott McDowell (40 l-847-42 10, Scott.e.mcdowell@saic.com), Tom Fredette, Thomas.J.Fredette@usace.army.mil , or Carl Albro (78 l-934-057 1, aIbro@battelle.org.

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