Lower Duwamish Waterway Record of Decision

Fact Sheet on the Final Cleanup Plan

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Region 10

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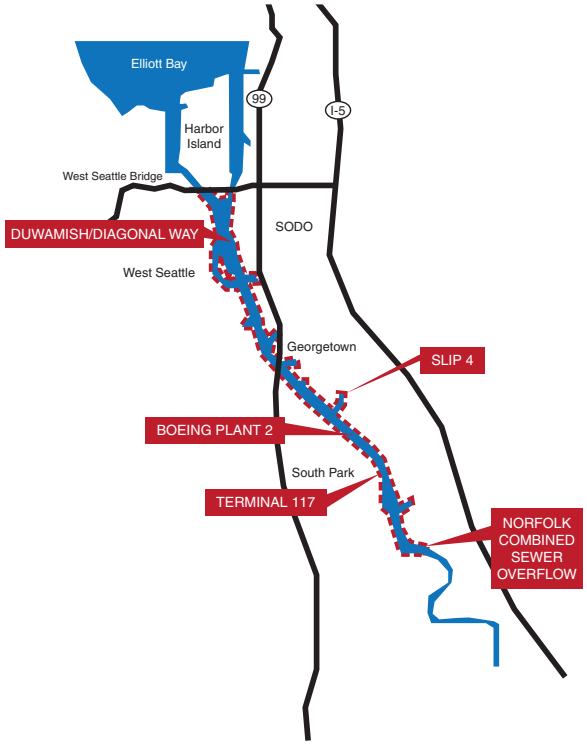

Lower Duwamish Waterway and Early Action Cleanup Areas

Goals and Benefits of the Cleanup

The actions described in the final cleanup plan will help local communities, wildlife, and ecosystems by:

- Reducing health risks to people who come into contact with contaminated sediments, and eating resident seafood.
- Protecting plants and animals from the effects of toxics.
- Improving water quality in the Duwamish.
- Reducing the amount of contamination flowing downstream into Puget Sound.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released the final cleanup plan for the Lower Duwamish Waterway. The Plan is called a Record of Decision, or "ROD," and it presents EPA's final decision after considering the more than 2,000 public comments we received on the proposed plan. The Plan adds to the work already underway along the most contaminated parts of the Lower Duwamish Waterway, and to work by the Washington Department of Ecology to control sources of pollution entering the Duwamish. All of these actions together will remove over 90 percent of the contamination in the waterway.

What is in the final cleanup plan?

The Plan combines active cleanup measures like dredging and capping, and passive cleanup measures such as natural sedimentation, to reduce risks to people's health and the environment from toxic chemicals, while ensuring that commercial activities continue in this important industrial area. The Plan identifies achievable goals for making the waterway healthier. The estimated cost of the cleanup is $342 million.

An estimated 177 acres will be actively cleaned up:

- 105 acres of dredging or partial dredging and capping. An anticipated total volume of 960,000 cubic yards would be dredged and disposed in an upland permitted landfill
- 24 acres of capping
- 48 acres of enhanced natural recovery—placing a clean sand or dirt layer to speed up recovery of contaminated sediments

Why does the Duwamish need to be cleaned up?

More than 100 years of industrial and urban use has polluted the sediments (mud on the river bottom), water, and marine life in the Lower Duwamish Waterway. Many people and businesses are affected by both the pollution and the cleanup. The cleanup of the Duwamish is part of a larger effort for a healthy Puget Sound.

How long will it take?

Cleanup of the Duwamish is already underway.

- Some of the most contaminated areas have already been cleaned up and others will be completed in 2015.
- Ecology, EPA, and local governments have made great progress to date in controlling sources of pollution to the Duwamish and this work will continue into the future.

The time frame to implement the work in the final cleanup plan is estimated to be 17 years: 7 years of active cleanup and 10 years of monitored natural recovery. Implementing will start after EPA negotiates an agreement with parties responsible for the contamination to do the work.

Learn more:

Visit EPA's Lower Duwamish Waterway web site at
www.epa.gov/region10/duwamish.html

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TDD or TTY users, please call 1-800-877-8339 and ask for Julie Congdon at (206) 553-2752

Fishing for the Safest Seafood from the Lower Duwamish River? Eat Salmon.

The main way people are exposed to chemicals in the river is through eating fish.
Don't eat resident fish, shellfish, or crab that live year-round in the river.
Salmon are the healthiest choice because they spend a short time in the river.

Chum
Coho
Pink
Sockeye

SAFE TO EAT
2-3 MEALS per week

OR

Chinook (King)

LIMIT
1 MEAL per week

OR

Blackmouth Resident Chinook caught during winter

CAUTION
2 MEALS per month

DO NOT EAT RESIDENT FISH, SHELLFISH, or CRAB

Especially WOMEN who are or may become PREGNANT, NURSING MOTHERS, and CHILDREN.

They have chemicals that can harm the growth and brain development of babies and children.

For more information call 1-877-485-7316 www.doh.wa.gov/fish