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MAKING A *DIFFERENCE* IN THE COMMUNITY: The Superfund Job Training Initiative in Seattle, Washington



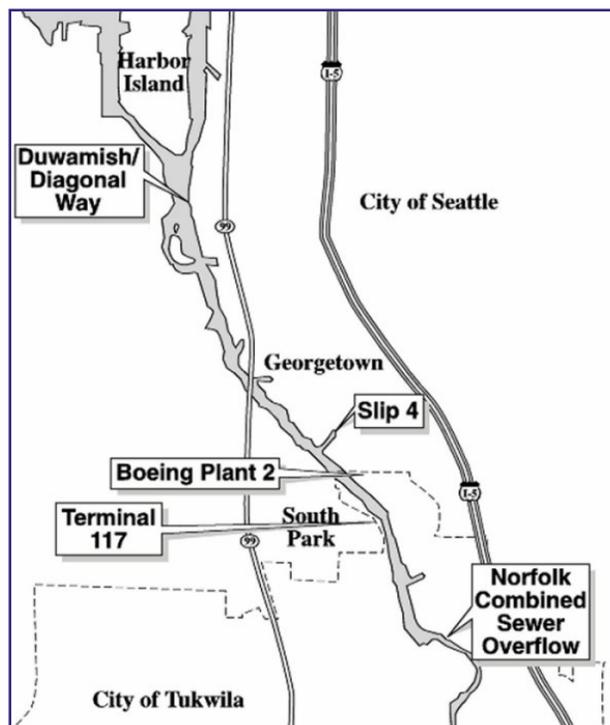
INTRODUCTION

The Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 14 trainees living near the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund site. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/Technical Advisory Group (DRCC), South Seattle Community College and site contractors, SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills and job training linked to the cleanup of the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund site. EPA's goal is to help communities create job opportunities and partnerships that remain in place for the long term.

CANDIDATE OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING: MAY 2013

DRCC, the project's community partner, reached out to the community to recruit interested candidates, distributing flyers, sending out emails, and presenting at community meetings. Area organizations and local newspapers also advertised the program. During May 2013, 56 people came to the program's six orientation sessions. Following these sessions, more than 50 people completed a preliminary testing stage. Twenty-five people participated in program tryouts.

Program tryouts included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, a physical fitness evaluation, and observation by a team of evaluators from the project's partners. Fourteen of the 15 trainees selected during tryouts went on to complete the program.



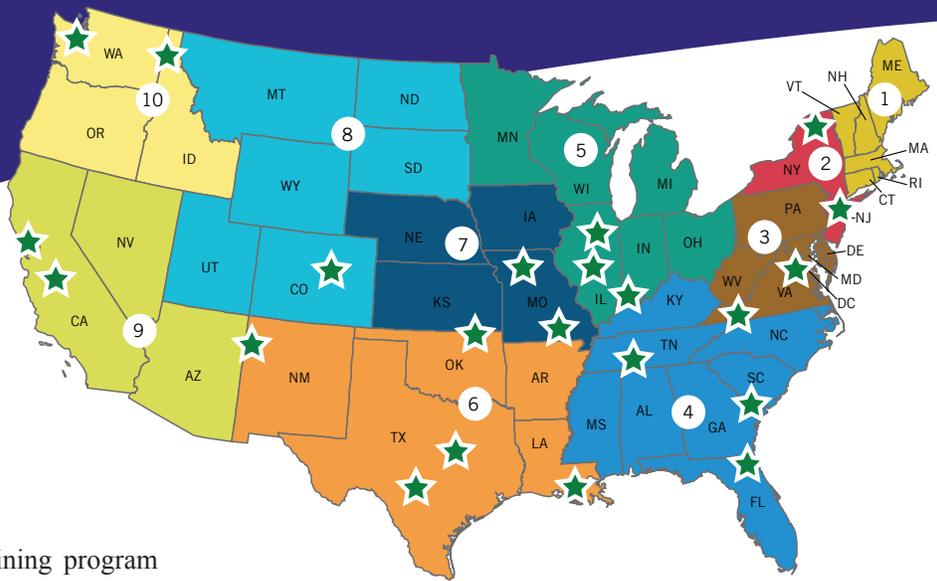
The Lower Duwamish Waterway site stretches about five miles south from Harbor Island. The area around the site includes the South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods.

SITE HISTORY

The Lower Duwamish Waterway site is a five-mile stretch of the Duwamish River that flows into Elliott Bay in Seattle, Washington. Industrial corridors as well as the South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods flank the waterway. EPA placed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 2001.

A century of heavy industrial use left the waterway contaminated with toxic chemicals from many sources – industries along its banks, stormwater pipes, and runoff from upland activities, streets and roads. Pollution in river sediments includes polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins/furans, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and arsenic. Many of these chemicals stay in the environment for a long time, and have built up to unsafe levels in resident fish and shellfish. Because of contamination, state and local health departments warn against eating crab, shellfish or bottom-feeding fish from the Lower Duwamish River.

EPA and the Washington Department of Ecology are working to clean up contaminated sediment and control sources of additional contamination in the waterway.



TRAINING: MAY 2013

The Lower Duwamish Waterway SuperJTI training program took place over three weeks. It included:

Pre-Employment Training: Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo Solutions provided the training.

Technical Training: Trainees completed 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training, OSHA-10-Hour Safety training, and CPR and first aid training. Environmental Management Training and South Seattle Community College provided the training.

Upon completion of the program, trainees possess the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in their communities.

Lower Duwamish Waterway SuperJTI is one of the many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for unemployed and underemployed citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.

Lower Duwamish Waterway SuperJTI Trainees:
Live in areas affected by the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund site. Ten of the trainees (71 percent) live in the community affected by the Superfund site. An additional two trainees (14 percent) live within five miles of the site.
Include male and female participants. Six (43 percent) of the selected trainees are female. Eight (57 percent) are male.



JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW UP: JUNE 2013 — DECEMBER 2013

After graduation, trainees interviewed with area subcontractors, including AECOM, Anchor QEA, Envirocon, Inc. and IMCO General Construction, for available cleanup positions. Several trainees now work on site and in the metropolitan Seattle area as sampling technicians, in union/trade positions, and in manufacturing jobs. Remaining graduates interview with site and other employers as positions become available.



Lower Duwamish Waterway SuperJTI participants at the June 2013 program graduation ceremony in Seattle, Washington.

Lower Duwamish Waterway SuperJTI staff and DRCC followed up with the graduates for six months after the program graduation. During this time, graduates could change positions but were encouraged to remain employed, either with one of the site subcontractors or another employer.

SUPERJTI COMMUNITY PROFILES: Making a Difference

Angielena Chamberlain



Angielena Chamberlain lives in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood, which borders the site. When she first heard about the SuperJTI program, she knew she wanted to be a part of it. "I felt that learning new skills and becoming more aware of the environmental impact of industrial areas on local public health would be empowering."

Angielena found the training expanded her understanding of environmental contaminants, health and safety protocols, and the realities of environmental inequality. "I found the life skills training the most beneficial because the trainers helped us understand how to work with people from different backgrounds in sometimes challenging job-site situations," she reflected. "It also helped me think about my own skills and how I can best contribute and be a valuable part of any team." Now seeking employment after graduation, Angielena sees herself differently. "I discovered that people see me as more of a leader than I saw myself," she said. "That was eye opening."

Marianne Clark lives next to the Duwamish River and is passionate about its cleanup and restoration. "I have lived here much of my life, and seen the pollution get worse," she said. "I want to see a clean river, so people can be down there fishing, walking on the sand, enjoying themselves. You can't do that right now." When she heard about the SuperJTI program, she saw an opportunity to get involved; following the program's rigorous screening process, she was selected as one of the program's 14 trainees.

Marianne found the training informative and particularly enjoyed working with the instructors and her fellow trainees. "I had been out of school a long time," she noted, "but the teachers made me feel comfortable from the start. It was exciting to come back each day." With cleanup planning for the river ongoing, Marianne is optimistic for the future. "My goal is to contribute my time and energy to make sure the river is healthy again," she said.

Marianne Clark



Trevor Crockett



Trevor Crockett first heard about the SuperJTI program through social media. A 10-year military veteran completing a bachelor's degree in environmental science, Trevor saw the training as vital to the next stage of his career. "The instructors were excellent and the hands-on parts of the training broke things up nicely," he recalled. "The cultural diversity course in particular was outstanding. I felt very positive at the end of the SuperJTI training." Now pursuing employment opportunities and completing his education, Trevor feels that the training "has added to my credentials."

What is the SuperJTI Program?

The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups. The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce. EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.

For more information, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti

Or contact SuperJTI's National Program Managers:

Melissa Friedland
EPA Regions 1-5
(703) 603-8864
friedland.melissa@epa.gov

Viola Cooper
EPA Regions 6-10
(415) 972-3243
cooper.viola@epa.gov



United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation (5204P)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

EPA 9200.3-95FS FS | March 2013 | www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti



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