

STATE OF THE DUWAMISH RIVER VALLEY 2023

An empowered Duwamish Valley community thriving in a healthy and just environment



OUR MISSION

DRCC elevates the voices of those impacted by the Duwamish River pollution and other environmental injustices for a **clean, healthy, equitable environment for people and wildlife**. We promote place-keeping and prioritize community capacity and resilience.

OUR CLIMATE JUSTICE PLATFORM

Safe Environment

Eliminate community exposure to environmental hazards.

Focus on Placekeeping

Increase jobs, capacity to cope and adapt so the community can remain rooted in place.

Grow Meaningful Involvement

Continue to grow and be led by community capacity and development - including the Youth!

Elevate Community Decision Making

Support community, government and all decision makers to make decisions together.

“

BEYOND MONITORING THE CLEANUP OF SEATTLE'S DUWAMISH RIVER, WE ARE GUIDED BY THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITY WHICH IS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

”



Dear Community,
We created this annual short report with program updates for you! We hope you enjoy it and let us hear from you!

Superfund Program

One River, One Community, One Home

The Duwamish River is our city's only river and was designated a Superfund Site by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2001, identifying it as one of the nation's most toxic hazardous waste sites. Currently Responsible Parties are in the middle of negotiations for the cleanup costs.

Harbor Island Superfund Site

Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Site



Within the Duwamish Valley, sources of pollution are identified and removed or reduced so that they don't reach the surface water and sediments of the river. This is called source control. Source control is led by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Learn more about how to control sources of pollution.

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Where are we with cleanup?

East Waterway



The **East Waterway** is part of the Harbor Island Superfund Site in the Duwamish River. It is part of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe's and Suquamish Tribe's usual and accustomed fishing area and is an important fishing area for immigrant and refugee communities. This site is currently in a cleanup process under EPA. Most of the contaminants are PCBs.



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The **Lower Duwamish Waterway** is divided into three sections. In the **Middle Reach**, sampling of contaminated mud is ongoing and will continue into 2024. The cleanup plan is expected to be done sometime in 2026. negotiations

Middle Reach



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Upper Reach



Responsible parties submitted their 60% clean-up draft plan to EPA for the **Upper Reach** and there should be a final clean-up plan ready this fall. Cleanup is expected to start in late 2024.

While there are over 40 contaminants in the river, contaminants of concern (which refers to those specifically identified as harmful to human health and wildlife) include PCBs, dioxins, arsenic, and cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (CPAHs). **The goal of the long-term cleanup of the Duwamish River is to protect the river environment, its fish and wildlife, and human health by reducing the levels of these toxins.**

Clean Air Program

“ IN 2020, COLLECTIVE EFFORTS CULMINATED IN 15 VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS ”

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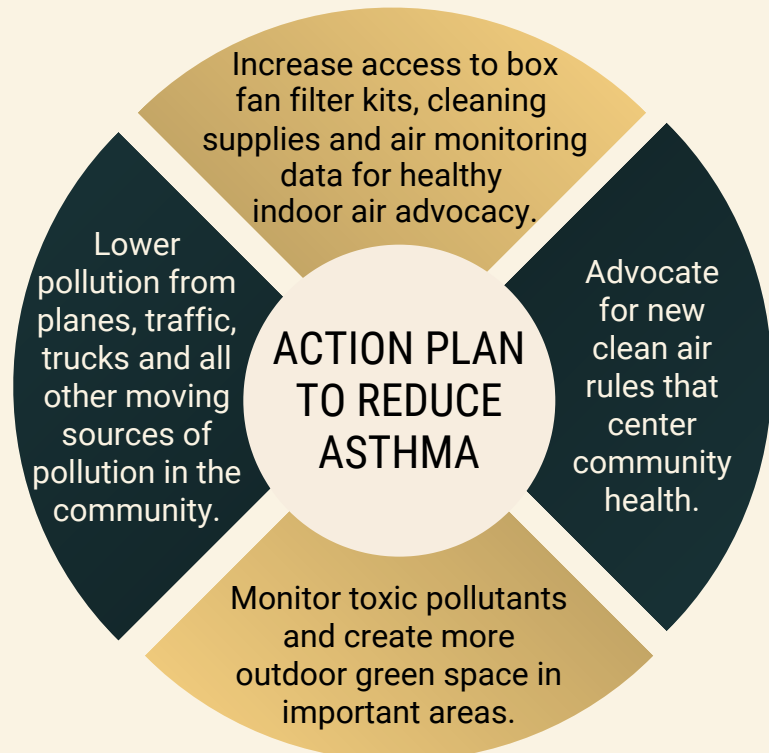
HEALTH CONDITIONS, INCLUDING ASTHMA, NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE LEADING TO LOWERED IQ, CANCER, HEART DISEASE, LOW BIRTH RATES, AND SHORTENED LIFE SPANS, RESULT FROM POLLUTANT EXPOSURE.

Established in 2019, the Duwamish Valley Clean Air Program focuses on air pollution reduction and public health, primarily within the marginalized communities of South Park and Georgetown in the Duwamish Valley (DV). A collaborative initiative managed by the Duwamish River Community Coalition (DRCC) and partners Just Health Action and Cedarplank, the Clean Air Program involves over 25 groups from government, non-profit, and community sectors. **Asthma prevalence reduction, chosen through a Results Based Accountability process, serves as the program's key performance indicator.**

SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION AND WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

Industry/Particulate Matter: Industrial activities release arsenic, lead, chromium, cobalt, nickel, and ultra-fine particulate matter, significantly contributing to DV air pollution.

Trucking/Diesel Emissions: Trucking-related activities are significant pollution contributors, emitting diesel soot and black carbon from trucks, railroads, and ships.

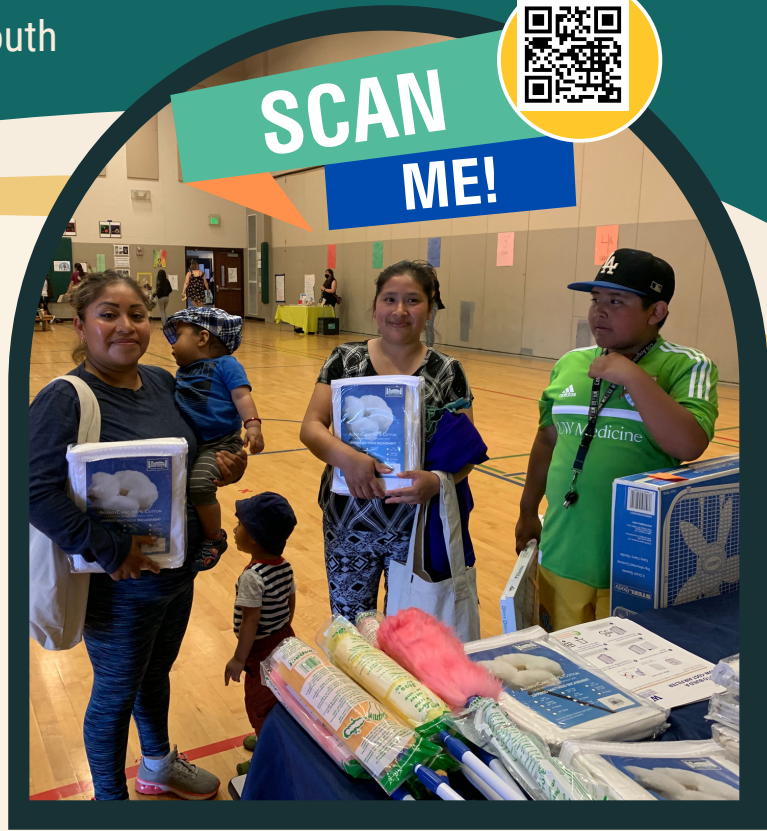


DAISY Study

Duwamish Valley Air improvement Study for Youth
Addressing Indoor Air Quality



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The Duwamish Air Improvement Study for Youth, or DAISY, is a community-engaged research project that will build community power to **improve air quality and reduce asthma in the Duwamish Valley**. DRCC seeks to:

- find air pollution hotspots,
- empower community advocacy for emission reduction strategies,
- conduct healthy home assessments, and
- measure individual and community empowerment.

The DAISY **Community Advocacy Team** (CAT) learns about air pollution and asthma, helps make decisions about the study's direction, acts as the community's voice, advocates for solutions, and participates in meetings.

Do you know any families with asthma who would like to be part of the Study? Reach out at contact@drcc.org.

The Moss Study

A youth-led research project focused on health equity through clean air

This research involved Duwamish Valley Youth Corps members, US Forest Service, local government bodies, universities, community leaders, and health advocates. **The study revealed elevated LEAD LEVELS in Duwamish Valley compared to other industrial areas, further supporting the consensus that no safe level for lead exposure exists.** Additionally, it identified likely contributors to metal pollution in Duwamish Valley.



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Duwamish Valley Youth Corps Program (DVYC)



DVYC provides local youth with unique hands-on opportunities to learn about environmental and climate justice, collective care, green jobs, and community advocacy.

DO YOU KNOW ANY YOUTH 13- 19 YEARS OLD WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF OUR PROGRAM?

WE HOST 3 COHORTS PER YEAR: FALL, WINTER, AND SPRING. EACH COHORT LASTS FOR 11 WEEKS, AND REQUIRES A COMMITMENT OF 2 SESSIONS PER WEEK OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS, FOR A DURATION OF 2 TO 3 HOURS PER SESSION. WE ASK THAT ANY YOUTH INTERESTED IN APPLYING PLEASE BE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13-19.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

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Field trips to the **Georgetown Steamplant, MoPop, Alki Beach, UW Campus, King County Wastewater Treatment facilities** in Renton & Woodinville, and boat rides on the Duwamish River.

Collected over **800 pounds of garbage** and **500 pounds of weeds**, and **gave away and planted 600 trees** through numerous restoration events and neighborhood clean-ups events.

Worked with UW nursing students to develop ways to **help the community in the event of a flood**, and how to exercise **healthy mental hygiene** to help themselves and loved ones.

Provided **insight and feedback directly to city leaders**; and on topics such as Reconnect Seattle, Alki Point Healthy Streets, the Resilience District, and South Park Library activities and more!



Advocacy in the Duwamish Valley Flooding Updates

In December 2022, the Duwamish River overflowed into parts of South Park (SP), flooding about 25 homes. The combined sewer overflow pipes also released sewage into the river. The homes sustained extensive damage that required months of cleaning, demolition and rebuilding. Many residents remain displaced or living with construction, and some renters are permanently displaced. Flooding can occur in three ways (and in combination).



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GROUND WATER

SP is located in a flood plain. Some SP homes are in low-lying areas where ground water is close to the surface. Heavy rains, high ground water, & high tides increase the likelihood of flooded yards/homes.

SEA LEVEL RISE

Rising sea levels have increased the likelihood of the river overtopping (and sewage backups).

OUTDATED SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

When there are very high tides and heavy rains, sewage back-ups may occur. This is a chronic issue.

Post-flood, DRCC partnered with Just Health Action (JHA) and other community-based organizations (Khmer Community Seattle King County, Villa Comunitaria, and Cultivate South Park) to support affected community members. DRCC raised \$80,000 to support impacted residents. **DRCC, JHA and partners are collaborating to prepare for the next rainy/King Tide season**, including regular City meetings to share community perspectives on the flood + aftermath.

We are forming a community advisory group to address residents' needs and brainstorm solutions to flooding.

Who pays for the flood damage?

Seattle has recently taken responsibility for some problems with sewage infrastructure. However, this is only the case for houses located in Seattle. Several SP homes flooded but are in unincorporated King County. Different systems of governmental processes make it challenging for community to organize + advocate.



Photo Credits: WE ACT for Environmental Justice

What can you do?

Our priority is to **center community voices**. Join our collective efforts as we stand **United for Justice**. We want to hear from you!!

➤ Report environmental problems or concerns in less than five minutes! with the IVAN tool.

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➤ Sign up for DRCC's newsletter and read more on our website!

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➤ Learn about **open comment periods**, how to write **public comments**, and find contact information for **local elected officials**.


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TRANSPARENCY - COLLABORATION - EQUITY - COMMUNITY - ACCESSIBILITY
EMPOWERMENT - JUSTICE