

State of the River Update Summer 2016

Progress on the cleanup of the Duwamish River Superfund Site

August 2016

The Cleanup of the Duwamish River Since the Release of the ROD

The Record of Decision, the final cleanup plan for the Duwamish River Superfund Site, was released in December 2014. Since that time, EPA, agencies, potentially responsible parties, and others have been working to take the needed steps to start the active cleanup of the entire Duwamish River. This includes:

- The **Potentially Responsible Parties** negotiating between one another to determine who is responsible for what portion of the cleanup. These are closed-door negotiations that do not involve EPA or the community. At the end of the process, potentially responsible parties have the opportunity to sign an Agreed Order with EPA or fight their responsibility to cleanup the Duwamish River in court. The latter could cause delays and would increase costs.
- The EPA and the Lower Duwamish Waterway Group (LDWG) (a group of the four main potentially responsible parties) signed **an agreement** to continue to move the cleanup forward. Within this agreement, LDWG agreed to fund the following:
 - The establishment of a post-Early Action Area cleanup baseline
 - A Survey of waterway users and assessment of in-water structures to shape the recovery category recommendations
 - The development of effective institutional controls related to fish consumption in the Duwamish River
- Finishing up the **cleanup of the Early Action Areas!** The work at these areas is nearing completion – and it is expected that this will cleanup 50% of the PCBs in the Duwamish River.

There is much underway – including source control, understanding who fishes in the River, updating community engagement and more. Check out the rest of this update for more information.



A portion of Boeing Plant Two's Restoration Area

Celebrating Two of the Early Action Areas!

The cleanup of the Early Action Areas is expected to be complete soon! Two of the recent sites deserve a little bit more attention and celebration – T-117 and Boeing Plant 2!

- **Boeing Plant 2** has a storied past – including as the site of B-17 Bomber production, a fake rooftop neighborhood, and more. That storied past left a legacy of pollution. During the cleanup of the site, Boeing removed 165,000 cubic yards of toxic sediment over a mile stretch of the river.
 - Today, this one-mile stretch is home to a habitat restoration site for the health of fish and wildlife. This cleanup and habitat restoration has been recognized by multiple Awards – including Excellence in Restoration from NOAA and the World Organization of Dredging.
- **T-117** is a joint cleanup of the Port of Seattle and the City of Seattle – and its current progress is the result of the communities voice! Rather than simply cleaned up to industrial levels, T-117 is being cleaned up to the residential standards and will include a habitat and public access site. In Fall 2016, the City of Seattle expects to complete its cleanup of the streets as well as installation of roadside green stormwater infrastructure and, in 2017, the Port of Seattle is expected to start construction of the habitat site (learn more on the back of this update!). The project is hosting a celebration of the work at this site on September 17, 2016! Stay tuned.

Ensuring Cleanup in the Long-term

There are efforts throughout Puget Sound to engage community members in controlling sources of stormwater pollution - including reducing pollution in the stormwater that flows directly into our local waterways as well as reducing the number of combined sewer overflows during heavy rainstorms that result in sewage in these waterways. This work is important for the health of the Duwamish River and the broader Puget Sound as well as waterways throughout the country.

Pollution from stormwater (which includes litter, pollutants from our cars, pet waste, fertilizers, and so much more) is today's number one source of pollution in the Duwamish River. This source of pollution must be **sufficiently** controlled before this final cleanup work can get underway. If it is not, the river will be re-polluted after time and money is invested in cleaning it up.

What does it mean to control sources of pollution?

The Washington Department of Ecology is the agency in charge of determining the sources of stormwater pollution and ensuring they are controlled. Sources include industries, residential stormwater pipes, and more. The Department of Ecology issues permits for all potential sources and conducts inspections to manage this. At an industry level, this means that industries either need to direct their water to a treatment facility or treat it onsite before releasing it into the stormwater system.



Stormwater regularly flows into the Duwamish River

When it comes to stormwater coming from our streets and sidewalks, King County Wastewater Treatment Division and Seattle Public Utilities work together to control incidents of combined sewer overflows and other sources of stormwater pollution. This is done through a combination of green and grey infrastructure. In Georgetown, the Wet Weather Treatment that is underway is part of this effort. The RainWise incentive program is also part of this effort.

What is coming from upstream? As part of this source control work, the Department of Ecology in partnership with EPA, King County, the City of Seattle, cities upstream, and others are studying what type of pollution is coming into the Duwamish River from further upstream. The Pollutant Loading Assessment is a tool to identify these sources of pollution and develop strategies to address them in order to prevent re-pollution of the Duwamish River.



Rain Garden in South Park

The Role of DRCC/TAG and the Community DRCC/TAG continues to actively monitor and engage with the efforts above to ensure they reflect the voice of the community and support the long-term health of our river. In addition, the work of the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps and the community to pick-up litter, plant and steward trees and other plants, as well as restoration efforts like Duwamish Alive! are all important for the success of this source control work.

Involving the Community in the Cleanup of the Duwamish River

In 2015, EPA began the process of updating the official Community Involvement Plan for the Duwamish River Superfund Site. To do this, they conducted interviews with over 100 people, organizations, agencies, businesses, tribal members and other stakeholders in the cleanup of the Duwamish River. This input shaped the Community Involvement Plan, expected to be released in final form in Fall 2016. This document includes information such as the groups, media, and methods to connect with in reaching the diverse communities of the Duwamish Valley.

One important feature of the Community Involvement Plan is the proposal for the **Superfund Roundtable** to bring together the Potentially Responsible Parties, Community, Tribes, and the Agencies to discuss the design of the cleanup as well as potential impacts. This Roundtable came out of discussions DRCC/TAG and others. As the proposal moves forward and develops, DRCC/TAG will collaborate with the communities to ensure that this format is effective and provides equitable voice to the communities.

Engaging with the Fishing Community

The Fisher's Study led by EPA

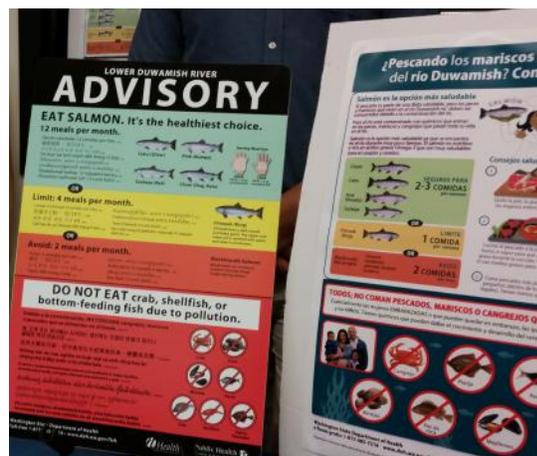
The Record of Decision called for a Fisher's Study to understand how and why the Duwamish River is being used as a source of fish as well as to understand what by these communities about the risk of eating fishing from the Duwamish River. To do this, the Lower Duwamish Waterway Group funded a study led by Windward Environmental, LLC. This study included on-river standardized surveys in multiple languages over a period of time as well as key informant interviews that allowed community members to delve deeper into issues. This study shows that fishing on the river is tied to these communities social and cultural identities, including preparing traditional meals, learning to fish, sharing of the fish, and more. Other information gathered included where people were fishing on the Duwamish River, what they did with the fish, the age and ethnicity of these fishers, and where they resided. A full report about the study is expected to be released later this year.

The intention is to use this data in working with the fishing community to reduce their exposure to these toxic fish. Currently, DRCC/TAG is working with EPA to ensure that this does not simply result in improved institutional controls. Rather, that they will work with the fisher's community to develop alternatives that address their cultural, social, and subsistence needs with the fisher's community having a voice throughout this process.

The Work of Just Health Action with Fishers on the Duwamish River

Since 2014, Just Health Action has worked to establish Vietnamese and Latino immigrant fisher Advisory Groups (AG), reflecting two communities who may be eating contaminated seafood from the Duwamish River. This effort uses a Participatory Learning & Action (PLA) Model to work with AGs and the broader fishing community. This work highlighted that for these communities, fishing provides them with health, cultural, and a spiritual connection to nature, and food security benefits.

Because residual contamination will last many years, both the Vietnamese and Latino AG's requested a sustainable, long-term approach to keeping the community informed. Their top request was to explore a collaboration with Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to develop an educational program to help immigrant fishers and their families understand messages about fishing regulations, licensing, protecting resources, and healthy fish consumption as well as advocating for their own health. Starting in Fall 2016, JHA will work with Public Health – Seattle and King County, WDFW, and community facilitators to develop a "promotores model" (peer training model) series of workshops. As 'certified' promotores, peer trainers can gain marketable skills as advocates and educators with technical knowledge which can serve them well when more economic opportunities arise as well as being strong voices in decision-making. DRCC/TAG will continue to engage with JHA as this exciting work moves forward.



Examples of current fish warnings on the Duwamish River

Enhanced Natural Recovery and the Carbon Amendment

Part of the final cleanup plan for the Duwamish River included the Enhanced Natural Recovery plus Activated Carbon (ENR+AC). This technology has worked other places and now a pilot study is underway to determine its viability in the Duwamish River. During the pilot study, EPA will study the stability of ENR+ AC (i.e. whether it stays in place), look at the changes in PCB bioavailability, and look at the potential benthic community impacts of ENR+AC as compared to simply Enhanced Natural Recover. These pilots will be done in-river in coordination the Muckleshoot Tribe in order to ensure it does not interfere with fishing season!

The Community Fact Sheet focused on the release of the Record of Decision in December 2014 is available online at www.duwamishcleanup.org/superfund-info

Public Access Sites Getting a New Life!

Did you know your local park or green space could soon be getting a facelift? There are many design efforts underway to update local parks and public river access sites! There are many community members working hard to increase and beautify access to our river – check out some of the projects underway:

- **12th and Elmgrove** is a key public river access point for South Park, identified in the South Park Green Spaces Vision Plan. The goal is improve this resting area with seating, new plantings, and outdoor art. Recently, Artist Ben Zamora was selected to install permanent public art at the space to reflect the scenic nature of the site. Input about the whole site is being collected in 2016, with work expected to start in 2017. More information available at seattleparks.org.
- **Duwamish Waterway Park** is undergoing an update! The design process is being led by ELM Environments with support from a Small and Simple grant from the Department of Neighborhoods. The final concept for the park is expected to be released in mid-September for your feedback! More information available at seattleparksfoundation.org
- **T-117** Is about to become a public access site and habitat restoration area. The Port of Seattle is designing a site that can be used for education and public access to the river for boats and people. It will also have elevated view points of the Duwamish River! This site will be important for people and wildlife. More information is available at www.t117.com.

Upcoming: At **Hamm Creek**, the Seattle City Light Training Facility is about to undergo an expansion. Expect to hear more about work on the habitat and public access site soon!

Other work underway by DRCC/TAG

- **Duwamish Valley Youth Corps** – South Park and Georgetown youth ages 13 to 19 are working hard and are transforming into the next generation of conservation leaders! Recruiting now for Fall 2016 for the next 12-week cohort.
- **Duwamish Community Action for Clean Air** – In partnership with a diversity of groups, we are installing green walls, reducing indoor air pollution through filters and Healthy Home Assessments, and filling in the information gaps. Learn more at duwamishcleanup.org/clean-air
- **Healthy River / Healthy Communities** – We are working to take action on environmental and community health priorities through raising funding and building the capacity of this community through resources and connections.
 - Recently, we received funding from the Seattle Foundation’s Communities of Opportunity grant program to work with the community and local decision-makers to ensure equitable investment on community priorities in the Duwamish Valley.
- **Duwamish Alive!** – Join us at T-107 for hands on restoration efforts. We work in the fall and spring to keep this important restoration area healthy and thriving.



Launching kayaks from Duwamish Waterway Park

Advisory Council Members

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice | The Duwamish Tribe | IM-A-PAL Foundation | Environmental Coalition of South Seattle | Georgetown Community Council | People for Puget Sound (a program of WEC) | Puget Soundkeeper | South Park Neighborhood Association | Washington Toxics Coalition | Waste Action Project