



November 10, 2003

News Release

## Contaminated sediment cleanup begins in Duwamish River

To protect water quality, fish and ultimately public health, the agencies and tribes managing the Elliott Bay/Duwamish Restoration Program are dredging a 7-acre area of contaminated river sediment at the Duwamish/Diagonal combined sewer overflow and storm drain.

The dredging contractor is scheduled to begin work the week of Nov. 10. Dredging will end by early December. The area will be restored with a 3-foot-thick cap of clean sediment, rocks and seeding for new habitat. All in-water work will be finished by the end of February 2004, when juvenile salmon start their run downstream.

After several years of planning and comment from the public, the agencies involved agreed to remove about 70,000 cubic yards of sediment from the river bottom. The sediment will be transported to a regional solid-waste landfill in rural Eastern Washington owned by Rabanco of Seattle.

"This is a major milestone in eventually returning the Duwamish to a healthy, protective waterway," said Don Theiler, director of King County Wastewater Treatment. "It is one of our early action sites and the partners have worked hard to ensure we are able to move quickly with this work."

King County's regional wastewater treatment utility is managing the cleanup for the program. Other members of the program panel are the state Department of Ecology, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Muckleshoot and Suquamish tribes, and City of Seattle.

The dredging will remove contaminated sediment from a small stretch of the Lower Duwamish Waterway just north of Kellogg Island. The Duwamish flows northwest from Tukwila, splitting around Harbor Island and emptying into Elliott Bay south of the Seattle waterfront. The lower waterway has been heavily industrialized for more than 80 years, getting discharges from a large industrial, urban area.

A 1991 consent decree settled a 1990 lawsuit filed by NOAA against the City of Seattle and the former Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (Metro), now King County's Wastewater Treatment Division. The lawsuit alleged injuries to natural resources in Elliott Bay and the lower Duwamish River.

Several projects have already been completed in the \$24 million program. The projects include two other sediment cleanups, six wildlife habitat restorations and various pollution source-control measures.

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