



US Army Corps
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Portland District



WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
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Joint 30 Day Public Notice

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District Environmental Assessment and a Washington Department of Ecology Water Quality Certification

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Environmental Resources Branch
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Attn: Wendy Briner

WA Department of Ecology
SEA Program
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Olympia, WA 98504-7600
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Attn: SEA Program, Federal Permit
Coordinator

Public Notice Date: June 13, 2007
Expiration Date: July 12, 2007

Reference No.: CENWP-PM-E-07-02
Name: Cowlitz River Flood Control
Dredging Project, Cowlitz County,
Washington

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Portland District is proposing to perform flood control dredging in the lower Cowlitz River and has applied through the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) for a 401 water quality permit. Ecology will review the work pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA, with applicable provisions of State water pollution control laws.

Project Description: Significant sand deposition occurred in 2006 and continues to occur at the mouth of the Cowlitz River. This deposition has severely reduced the flood capacity of the river channel and its ability to transport sand from upstream. The authorized levels of flood protection for the communities of Kelso, Longview, Lexington, and Castle Rock are reduced as sediment deposition continues on the Cowlitz River due to the loss of channel capacity at its mouth. Because of this imminent loss in flood protection, a short-term (interim) alternative needs to be implemented to maintain flood protection.

Interim dredging of sand from the mouth of the Cowlitz River to RM 2.5 would be effective in restoring the sediment transport potential of the Cowlitz to move sand into the Columbia River, and would increase channel capacity to maintain the levels of flood protection for the four upstream communities.

The interim dredging action would dredge up to 4.21 million cubic yards (mcy) of sand from the lower 2.5 miles of the Cowlitz River and in the Columbia River from the mouth of Cowlitz River (Cowlitz RM 0) to the Columbia River Federal Navigation Channel (FNC), referred to as a transition area. Initial dredging will occur during the Columbia River in-water work window of November 1, 2007 to February 28, 2008. Approximately 2.2 mcy of material will be dredged from the transition area, from the Columbia River FNC to Cowlitz RM 0, over a period of 6 to 8 weeks at the beginning of the in-water work window.

Approximately 1.015 mcy of material will be dredged from the portion of the river between Cowlitz RM 0 and RM 1.3 over the 4 month period. Approximately 995,000 cy of material will be dredged from RM 1.3 and 2.5 during the Cowlitz River in-water work window of August 1 to 31, 2008. Dredges will work up to 24 hours per day 7 days a week. Annual follow-on dredging from the Columbia River FNC to RM 2.5 to the dredged channel depths and bottom widths may be necessary to maintain flood protection levels for the next 5 years. Dredged volumes may vary widely and are expected to range from 500,000 to 2,200,000 cy annually.

Two upland disposal sites for the lower Cowlitz dredge material have been identified. The Wasser and Winters property is located on the east side of the Cowlitz River from RM 0-1. The site consists of approximately 236 acres of land characterized by sand and sparse vegetation. The property was used for upland disposal of dredged material during the emergency operations following the eruption of Mount St. Helens in the 1980s. Since the late 1990s, approximately 1.5 mcy of sand has been sold and removed from the property. The interim dredging action will place up to 3.215 mcy of material from the transition area and lower 1.3 river miles of the Cowlitz channel on the Wasser and Winters (Collins Estate) property in the first year of dredging. The second disposal site, the Swanson Bark Wood Property is located on the west side of the Cowlitz River from RM 1-2. The site consists of approximately 66 acres of land that is currently used for bark mulch storage by the adjacent mulch production and sales operation. An additional 995,000 cy of material from Cowlitz RM 1.3 - 2.5 will be placed on the Swanson Bark Wood property.

Containment of the upland disposal sites will occur by constructing dikes around the perimeter of the sites. Construction of dikes will be accomplished through the use of material existing on the sites and the newly placed material. Return water will be routed to a settling pond and will then be discharged through a weir back into the Cowlitz River or Carroll's Channel, depending on the disposal site. Construction of internal dikes may be used to route the return water through the disposal site. Additional dredged material may be placed on either or both sites during the next 5 years of follow-on dredging and disposal operations.

Environmental Documents: A draft Environmental Assessment addressing the impacts associated with the activity is available for public review and comment. It can be found at the following web site: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/home.asp>

State Water Quality Certification: On May 1, 2007 the Corps submitted a request to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) for a Water Quality Certification (401 Certification), pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. This joint public notice serves to inform all interested parties of the request and to seek comments from the public, local, state, federal, and tribal agencies. This notice does not indicate approval of the proposed project by any state agency.

Additional Information and Comments: To obtain paper copies of the Environmental Assessment, or to provide comments on the proposed project and the Corps' Environmental Assessment please contact Wendy Briner, Environmental Resources Branch, telephone (503) 808-4781, via e-mail at wendy.k.briner@usace.army.mil, or at the address below. Written comments in response to this notice must be mailed by the above closing date.

District Engineer
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In your response, please refer to the above public notice number, title and date. Should no response be received postmarked by the above closing date, a “no comment” response will be assumed.

To request that your name or organization be removed from the mailing list, please contact Charlotte Goodman, 503-808-4761.