



SUPERFUND FOCUS SHEET

FALL 2007 UPDATE

Ongoing Pollution Stymies Cleanup

Cleanup of the Duwamish River sediments at the Port of Seattle's Terminal 117 in South Park and Slip 4 in Georgetown has been delayed due to ongoing sources of pollution – mainly PCBs – that could recontaminate river sediments. Because of widespread use before PCBs were banned in the 1970s, the persistent chemicals are showing up in soils and stormwater making their way to the river today. If not controlled before cleaning up, attempts to remove PCBs from the river could be jeopardized by recontamination. As a result, cleanup of the most contaminated hotspots – termed “early action areas” – slated for fast-track cleanup is on hold.

At the Malarkey site, the discovery of high levels of PCBs in the “uplands” at the former industrial property caused community concern and prompted EPA to rethink the original cleanup plan in order to include the upland property as well

as the river sediments and bank. That new plan is still in development, and is expected to be finished by next year. The plan will remove contaminated soil and control potential releases from the upland, and the Port of Seattle has committed to making the former Malarkey site safe for residential and public use.

On the Georgetown waterfront, where a historical river spur has been dubbed “Slip 4,” accumulated chemicals from sewage and storm drains has left the inner slip a high-priority cleanup area, due to the environmental and human health risks from PCBs. Plans for the Slip 4 cleanup are complete, but the sediment removal scheduled for this year has been put on hold, following the discovery of PCBs in stormwater pipes that lead to the river. The source of the PCBs has been traced to an 18 acre area of north Boeing Field, but the exact cause of the release is still unknown. Boeing, King County (which owns the

Sewer and storm drains still carry chemicals to the river



airport) and Seattle (which used to operate a steam plant in the vicinity) will be put under an order by the state Department of Ecology to conduct a full investigation. Until the source of the PCBs is found and controlled, cleanup in Slip 4 cannot proceed without risking recontamination.

Where one cleanup has already been done – at the outfall of the Diagonal Way Combined Sewer Overflow and Stormdrain near Kellogg Island – recontamination is already occurring, less than three years after spending \$10 million to remove a “hotspot”

WHO'S WHO IN THE RIVER CLEANUP

The lower Duwamish River is being cleaned up under a federal-state agreement between the U.S. EPA and Washington State Department of Ecology. Both federal Superfund and state MTCA (Model Toxics Control Act) cleanup regulations apply.

U.S. EPA:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – federal agency responsible for the Superfund program and lead agency for sediment cleanup for the Duwamish River Superfund Site.

Ecology:

Washington State Department of Ecology – state agency responsible for the toxic cleanup program and lead agency for pollution source control for the lower Duwamish River.

Lower Duwamish Waterway Group:

Public-private partnership of agencies and businesses that have entered into an agreement with EPA and Ecology to fund and conduct investigations for the Duwamish River site. Members are the Port of Seattle, City of Seattle, King County and The Boeing Company.

South Seattle youth help river, community: Meet the Urban Environmental Justice Youth Corps

In the past year, two dozen South Seattle and South King County teens have cleaned up trash, beautified riverfront parks, harvested vegetables at community farms, served up meals at local food banks, surveyed residents about environmental health, and pitched in at neighborhood events throughout the Duwamish River Valley. Based in South Park, the bilingual Urban Environmental Justice Youth Corps have given back to their community while learning how to make a difference in the future of their river and neighborhoods.

A federal Superfund Site –one of the most toxic hazardous waste sites in the country – the Duwamish River’s resident fish are unsafe to eat and much of its waters unfit for swimming after heavy rains due to millions of gallons a year of sewage overflows into the river. Even the land surrounding the river appears to be loaded with enough PCBs to frustrate



Youth group graduates learn to sail on the research boat Carlyn

efforts to clean up what’s in the mud under the water (see related story, page 1).

But the river is also a valued asset to its local neighborhoods. Kayakers ply the waters on summer days, waterfront homes overlook beachcombers and dog walkers at low tide, and

visitors to riverfront parks enjoy watching herons, eagles and harbor seals feasting and frolicking in the currents and incoming tides. Despite health concerns, an unknown number of low-income families and Seattle’s homeless fish for their daily dinner, harvesting sole and crab, as well as less-contaminated salmon, for their evening meal.

The Youth Corps teens are tackling the river’s problems and enjoying its riches through the Environmental Justice program, which will continue in the 2007-08 school year. This year’s students spent three days on a research sailboat in Puget Sound, learned to kayak on the river, visited the University of Washington chemistry lab and County’s wastewater treatment plant, and made individually-

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THINGS YOU SHOULD DO

River Calendar

October 13, 10 am-2 pm

Duwamish Alive! Volunteer Restoration Day

Join DRCC and dozens of partners for a day of hands-on trash cleanup and habitat restoration work at nine sites along the Duwamish River. DRCC will be co-hosting the work party at Georgetown’s Gateway Park North at the end of 8th Ave. S. Call (206) 954-0218 or visit www.duwamishcleanup.org for more information.



October 27, 11 am-1 pm

Duwamish River Boat Tour

Free public boat tour of the Duwamish River Superfund Site. Join DRCC, the Duwamish Tribe, and EPA representatives aboard the “Admiral Pete” for this two hour tour to learn about the cultural and natural history of the river, pollution hot spots, past and future cleanup areas, habitat restoration sites, and a critter search for eagles, osprey, seals and otters! Call (206) 954-0218 or email info@duwamishcleanup.org to reserve your spot: space is limited – register today!

November 29, 6-9 pm

River Cleanup Public Meeting

EPA is releasing the results of its six-year river investigation this fall. Where is the pollution? How much is there? Where is it coming from? How does it affect me?

Come to this Public Meeting to learn the answer to these and other questions about the environmental and human health risks of toxic pollution that has settled in the river. For more information, call (206) 954-0218 or email info@duwamishcleanup.org.

**Concord Elementary School
723 S. Concord St, South Park, Seattle.**

DRCC MEMBERS

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, Duwamish Tribe, IM-APAL Foundation, Georgetown Community Council, ECOSS, People For Puget Sound, Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, South Park Neighborhood Association, Washington Toxics Coalition, Waste Action Project

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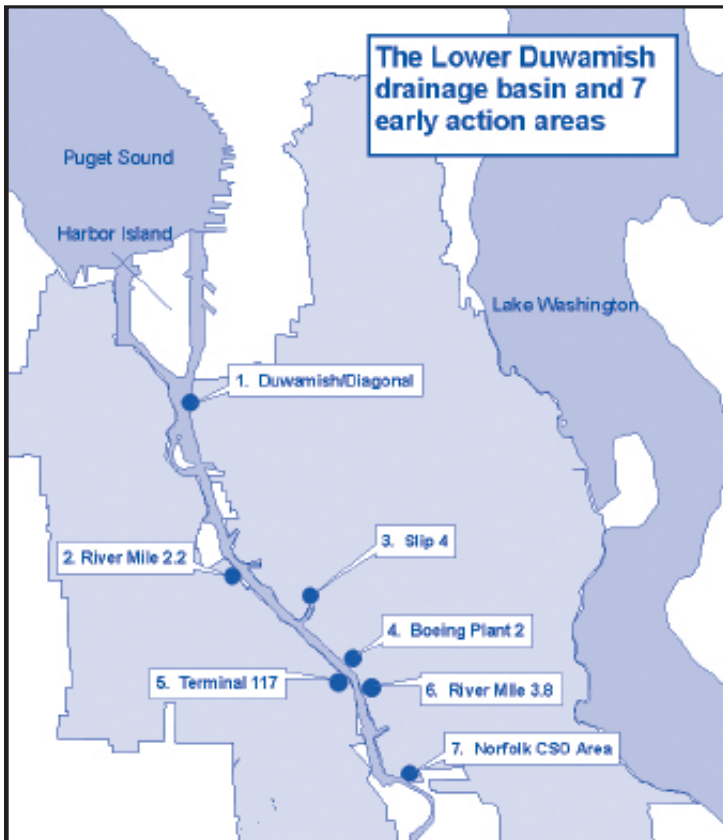
DUWAMISH RIVER CLEANUP COALITION 2007 UPDATE

3rd Annual Duwamish River Festival draws 750 people to celebrate Seattle's hometown river: Duwamish River Park, S. Park, August 18, 2007



PHOTOS BY Jim McGowan

From left: Bert the Salmon entertains festival visitors, Duwamish Tribal Council ex-officio member Thomas Speers receives gift from visiting Thai government delegation, Guelagetza Mexican dance troupe performs at river festival, Water taxi arrives from Georgetown



Map courtesy of Washington State Department of Ecology.

While the Early Action, or "fast track" areas are being cleaned up, planning and data collection for the riverwide cleanup continues. A full, riverwide cleanup decision is expected in early 2008. Once approved, design and cleanup will begin.

To get involved in these and other Duwamish River cleanup efforts, contact DRCC at info@duwamishcleanup.org or (206) 954-0218, or visit us online at www.duwamishcleanup.org.

River Investigation complete: results due out this fall

Six years after the Superfund listing of Seattle's Duwamish River, EPA has completed its oversight of investigations of the extent, distribution, and risks caused by toxic pollution in the river sediments – the mud at the bottom of the river.

The results of the investigation – called the Remedial Investigation, or "RI," Report – will be available in draft form in early November. The report will include results of sampling in the river, maps of chemicals found in the river bottom, information on risks to the environment and human

health, and identification of ongoing sources of pollution. Copies of the draft report will be available at the South Park Library, or online at www.ldwg.org.

Questions about the report will be answered at a Public Meeting on November 29 (see River Calendar). Comments and questions can also be addressed to DRCC by December 10 for inclusion in our response to EPA at info@duwamishcleanup.org, or BJ Cummings c/o DRCC, 5410 First Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

What is YOUR river's future?

Waterfront parks? Industrial preservation? Affordable housing? Condos? Bike trails? Put on your thinking caps, pull out your mental paintbrush, and join your neighbors and local businesses in "visioning" the future of the Duwamish River.

The Superfund cleanup of the Duwamish River will profoundly shape the future

of the river valley and what is possible here over the next 50 years. Make sure that the cleanup plan supports your community's vision, instead of restricting our choices.

To schedule a visioning workshop for your neighborhood or organization, contact DRCC at (206) 954-0218 or info@duwamishcleanup.org.

South Seattle youth help river, community: Meet the Urban Environmental Justice Youth Corps

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directed films as part of a program run by Youth Corps' partners at the South Park Community Center, which helps to fund the program.

The program is open to all students in 8th through 12th grades, and is particularly targeted to Spanish-speaking or bilingual and at-risk teens. This summer, ten Youth Corps graduates and new recruits will spend a week working – with pay – in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, fixing trails and pulling invasive weeds while living in and learning about the Pacific Northwest's national forests and the environmental careers available there.

Many Youth Corps graduates are already making a difference in their communities. Maria Torres, two-time Youth Corps graduate (Fall 2006 and Spring 2007), entered and won a design contest for the new South Park Action

Agenda logo, earning a \$100 check from the City of Seattle. Her design now graces all official City materials about the project, and has been made into thousands of promotional stickers distributed throughout the neighborhood. She has just graduated from the La Cima Leadership Training program, which she attended with a scholarship from DRCC, and will be the peer leader for the 2008 Environmental Justice Youth Corps, earning a stipend for her work and valuable experience for her resume. Maria will graduate from Tyee High School in 2008.

DRCC's next Environmental Justice Youth Program will run in the Winter and Spring of 2008. Interested teens and their families should contact DRCC at (206) 954-0218 [English] or (206) 450-5692 [Spanish] to register or request more information.

Ongoing Pollution Stymies Cleanup

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from nearby contaminated lands may be a source of PCBs accumulating on the clean "cap" covering the river bottom.

In each of these cases, it appears that pockets of contaminated soil throughout the Duwamish River Valley are the primary source of PCBs to the river today. While the river bottom is the focus of the Superfund investigation, finding and controlling PCBs and other contaminants throughout the river valley appears to be critical to the success of the cleanup.

Other chemicals, such as phthalates – a reproductive toxin that is a common ingredient in cosmetics and plastic products – are widespread in household and industrial wastewater

and urban stormwater runoff citywide. A "working group" of Seattle, King County, Tacoma, Department of Ecology and EPA representatives are developing a strategy for control of phthalates to the Duwamish and other area waters.

PCBs are industrial chemicals banned in 1977 that are known carcinogens and can damage the liver, kidney and other body organs. Phthalates, widespread chemicals used in cosmetics, health and beauty products, plastics and hundreds of other consumer goods, are reproductive toxins and suspected carcinogens. Both PCBs and phthalates are found throughout Duwamish River sediments and in its resident fish and crab.

Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition
(206) 954-0218
info@duwamishcleanup.org
www.duwamishcleanup.org

WHO'S WHO IN THE RIVER CLEANUP

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Trustees:

Natural Resource Trustees – government agencies responsible for ensuring protection of natural resources during and after cleanup, including directing restoration of damaged resources: includes federal, state and tribal governments.

DRCC:

Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition – EPA's "Community Advisory Group" for the lower Duwamish River – solicits public input and involvement in the river cleanup. DRCC represents ten community, environmental, and tribal stakeholder organizations.



Duwamish River
Cleanup Coalition
5410 First Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98105

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