



## WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Sustaining Dredged Material Disposal Sites**

Dredging is an activity that affects the lives of many Washington State citizens and visitors. Dredging and responsible placement of dredged materials is essential to Washington's navigation and maritime economy, as well as to environmental cleanup efforts and recreational activities. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is part of the interagency Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP) that ensures environmentally and economically responsible disposal of uncontaminated dredged materials.

Dredged material disposal fees fund monitoring of disposal sites in accordance with state and federal laws and in conjunction with the program's partners, the Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Over the past decade, declining revenues have contributed to a steadily declining fund balance, which has resulted in an ongoing operating deficit. The disposal fee does not equal the cost of program management. DNR has already implemented effective cost saving measures to maintain the fund balance. **Without additional revenue, DMMP will not be able to keep all sites open, creating significant impacts on waterborne commerce and navigation.**

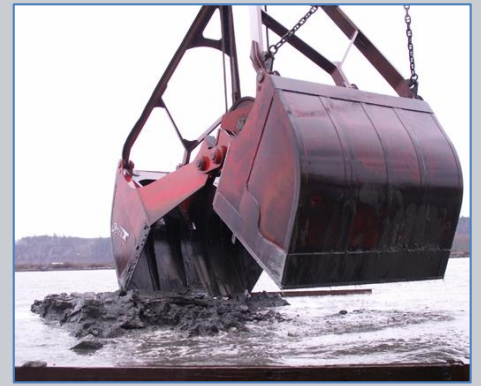
#### **Rule Making Initiated to Adjust Fees**

DNR initiated rulemaking to develop a new fee structure that will address the funding shortfall and keep disposal sites open. The agency [filed the rule change](#) in October. DNR is now gathering feedback from interested parties and stakeholders and will hold a public hearing on the proposed fee structure December 1.

#### **Fees Untouched Since 1995**

Disposal fees were established by the legislature in 1985 (RCW 79.105.510), and were set in 1989 at \$0.40 per cubic yard for Puget Sound disposal sites and \$0.10 per cubic yard for coastal sites. The Puget Sound disposal fee was increased to \$0.45 per cubic yard in 1995 and has not been adjusted since.

DNR has avoided increasing disposal fees by implementing other cost saving measures. In 2015, DNR removed the cost of its DMMP staff from the disposal fee fund and now pays for this position from the Aquatics Resources program budget. In 2019, the legislature removed a requirement for County Shoreline Management Programs to authorize the disposal sites, thus saving the fund additional expenses for permits. The DMMP cooperating agencies have all contributed funds and professional services to minimize the program's costs.



*Fund projections through 2025 show the program will lack adequate funding to complete mandatory monitoring studies beginning in the FY2023-25 biennium unless the fee schedule is changed.*

For more information about this proposal contact:

**Abby Barnes**

[abby.barnes@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:abby.barnes@dnr.wa.gov)

(360) 995 2419



## Dredged Material Management Program 101

As stated in RCW 79.105.500, DNR “provides, manages, and monitors aquatic land dredged material disposal sites on state-owned aquatic lands for materials dredged from rivers, harbors, and shipping lanes.” DNR is responsible for costs attributed to management and environmental monitoring of the twelve in-water dredged material disposal sites.

DNR authorizes use of the disposal sites through a Site Use Authorization (SUA). The dredging proponent must provide confirmation that they have all required federal, state, and local permits prior to

obtaining a SUA from DNR. Once DNR issues the authorization, the dredging proponent may commence disposal subject to conditions described in the state or federal water quality permits, DMMP Suitability Determination Memo and the SUA.

The dredging proponent pays a per cubic yard fee as defined in WAC 332-30-166 for use of the disposal sites. All funds generated from these fees are deposited into the Dredge Material Management Account. In accordance with RCW 79.105.510, funds from the Account “may be spent only for the management and environmental monitoring of aquatic land dredged material disposal sites.” The DMMP is required to be a self-sustaining program funded by revenue generated from disposal site use.

