



## Derelict Structure Removal Program: Project Prioritization Guidelines

As the stewards of 2.6 million acres of state-owned land beneath Washington's lakes, rivers, marine waters, and estuaries, DNR has a unique role in protecting and restoring our waterways. The Aquatic Resources Restoration Program works to restore ecological quality and function to native aquatic habitats for their ecological values, for the benefit of the people, plants, and animals by restoring, enhancing, creating, and protecting healthy ecological conditions in freshwater, saltwater, and estuarine systems through partnerships with Tribes, state and federal agencies, and others across Washington.

Following the passage of Substitute Senate Bill 5433 Derelict Structures and adoption of [Chapter 79.160 RCW – Derelict Aquatic Structures](#), DNR has authority to:

- remove, salvage, scrap, dispose of, refurbish, or repurpose derelict aquatic structures.
- acquire aquatic facilities that do not meet the definition of derelict aquatic structures but could provide habitat benefits if refurbished or repurposed.
- purchase or acquire lands and facilities to carry out the purpose of the program.

The RCW requires DNR to submit all derelict structure removal projects to the Puget Sound Partnership **nearshore credit program**. In addition, DNR was tasked with developing informal guidelines to prioritize removal projects for inclusion in the derelict structure's removal program, which are outlined below.

**Derelict Aquatic Structures** include overwater and in-water infrastructure where, as a result of catastrophic damage, disuse or neglect, conditions exist that make the structure unsafe for use, pose a hazard, or pose risks to public health or safety of the surrounding environment (as defined in [RCW 79.160.010](#)).

The following informal guidelines outline the criteria DNR will use to prioritize derelict structure removal projects. Priority will be given to:

- Sites that are a known point source of debris/pollutants or that pose other environmental impacts.
- Emergency situations where structural failure or other unforeseen events may be imminent may elevate the removal priority to avoid further impacts to human health and safety and/or the environment.
- Project areas that fall within programmatic HPA and SEPA permits, or areas where the programmatic permits can be used exclusively.
- Projects adjacent to existing and future conservation areas, critical habitats, or projects in areas with synergy to other conservation and recovery efforts.
- Sites where removal will result in gains towards Environmental Justice per the Washington Environmental Health Disparities map.
- Sites with willing partners where multiple funding sources can be leveraged to expand the scope of the removal and restoration.
- Sites located in service areas where there are available conservation credits to help federal permit applicants meet obligations to offset impacts to critical habitats using the Puget Sound Partnership habitat conservation calculator.
- In accordance with RCW 79.160.050(c), prioritization will not consider whether the applicant is a state or local entity.