



## UPDATE: Woodard Bay NRCA Restoration & Stewardship

Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) is a site that is important to many people because of its unique history and abundant wildlife. Neighbors and others are invited to see the restoration design and talk with DNR's natural areas and aquatic restoration staff about the upcoming work.

### OPEN HOUSE MEETING ABOUT RESTORATION AT WOODARD BAY NRCA

Please drop by between **4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.**

**September 15, 2010**

**North Olympia Fire Station**

**5046 Boston Harbor Rd., NE Olympia WA, 98506**

### Project Background

2007: DNR partnered with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), US Army Corps of Engineers and The Nature Conservancy, to assess the extent of creosote and wood waste contamination at the site. Study results were used to inform a nearshore restoration process.

2008: DNR was awarded funds from the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, administered by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, to develop a nearshore restoration plan. A community meeting was held to share information about the assessment and to seek public input on restoration priorities.

2009: DNR developed four draft restoration alternatives and a community meeting was held to present the alternatives and seek public input.

2010: The restoration plan was completed and DNR received funds from Ecology to complete the first phase of the plan: creosote cleanup at Woodard Bay NRCA.

In addition to public meetings, DNR gathered input from local, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, citizens and tribes. Concerns were raised about protecting bat, seal, bird and other wildlife habitat at Woodard Bay while removing toxic creosoted wood structures from Puget Sound.

## What we heard from the public

### About the Bat Habitat

**Concern:** What is being done to maintain the bat roost habitat as the Chapman Bay Pier deteriorates? Will removal of the southern

portion of the pier impact the route most of the bats fly as they leave the roost to forage?

**Reply:** We, too, are concerned about the bats. We are applying for grant funds to address issues

related to deteriorating bat habitat within the creosote contaminated pier. In spring 2010, we hired contractors to place several metal brackets to support the beams where bats roost. This is a stop-gap measure until funding is obtained for a more permanent solution. Work scheduled for winter 2010-11 will remove only about 150 feet of the 3,000-foot long super-structure (decking, stringers, etc.) on the southern portion of the pier where it meets Weyer Point. This will improve public safety because people routinely attempt to access the deteriorating pier. The rest of the superstructure will remain to support bat habitat until funds are obtained to create a longer-term solution.

### **Purple Martins**

**Concern:** Removing purple martin nest boxes on the pilings will negatively affect the birds.

**Reply:** About 60 pilings will remain on site to support habitat for wildlife including seals, which haul out on log booms supported by pilings, and perching birds. New purple martin boxes, with an improved habitat design, will be installed on the remaining pilings.

### **Perching Birds**

**Concern:** With piling removal, there will be less perching habitat for cormorants and herons.

**Reply:** The project will reduce some of the perching area used by herons and cormorants but many perch structures will remain, including about 60 pilings, portions of the 3,000-foot Chapman Bay Pier, and the seal haul out habitat. Some birds, like herons, also perch in the shallow intertidal areas of the bays and inlet. Because they do not use the structures for critical life stages, like reproduction, we believe it's more important to remove the contaminated pilings from their habitat to restore the nearshore environment for multiple species of wildlife.

### **Removal of Creosote-laden Structures**

**Concern:** How much creosoted material is at the site and why remove it?

**Reply:** All of the piers and in-water structures are saturated with creosote. The exact quantity is unknown.

Creosote is toxic. It is a coal tar distillate wood preservative, with about 300 chemicals including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, known as PAHs. These chemicals can harm marine species, and creosote continues to leach into the water and adjacent sediments over time.

More than 20 years have passed since Woodard Bay was operated as an industrial log dump. Since then, many of the derelict creosote treated structures including the Chapman Bay Pier, Woodard Bay Trestle and more than 600 pilings in Henderson Inlet have been slowly deteriorating, creating concerns for public safety, a source of toxic contamination into Puget Sound and impeding important nearshore processes like movement of sediment, water and light throughout the estuarine system.

## **Restoration Actions**

DNR is employing a phased approach to complete the following recommended restoration actions.

### **Phase 1**

- Remove Woodard Bay Trestle.
- Remove 90% of open water pilings (*leaving piles for seal haul-out habitat*).
- Remove approximately 150-feet of Chapman Bay Pier superstructure.

### **Future Phases**

- Remove up to 50% of Chapman Bay Pier (*leaving the bat roost & flyway habitat intact until a suitable alternative is developed*).
- Remove 28,000 cubic yards of nearshore fill material.
- Enhance high priority wildlife habitat.
- Restore riparian habitat on Weyer Point.
- Enhance public use & environmental education.

*Removal of contaminated materials will follow Best Management Practices, developed using U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards to minimize impacts to sediment and water quality throughout the removal process.*