



NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

August 21

***Helicopter removal of creosote logs from Lake Hancock estuary
at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station***

OLYMPIA—Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is removing creosote logs and chemical-laden debris from Lake Hancock near Greenbank on Whidbey Island. The media is welcome to observe and film helicopter operations on Monday, August 21, if escorted by DNR or Navy personnel. Media wishing to fly in the immediate airspace will need permission from the Navy. Call contacts above for instructions.

Ground operations this week have identified and positioned more than 700 pieces of material for removal. The toxic-laden materials are being stacked by the helicopter onto a landing, awaiting final removal on August 22 and 23. The materials will be disposed of in a confined upland site.

Lake Hancock is an estuary wetland system. It provides a significant habitat for juvenile salmon. Various salmon species found in Puget Sound use Lake Hancock at some part of their life cycle.

Navy practice bombing range

The removal area has been used as a Navy practice bombing range. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11 team has three people on site to assist DNR. Their job is to scan the area around the creosote logs or pilings. Remaining members of the unit are on call to carry out any required ordnance disposal. No ordnance has yet been detected in the project area.

Creosote removal program part of Puget Sound Initiative

This project has been funded by the State Coastal Protection Fund, the Northwest Straits Commission and DNR restoration funds. The effort is also part of a comprehensive creosote removal included in the Governor's Puget Sound Initiative.

The U.S. Navy has provided access to the site and all permits needed to complete the work.

Creosote is a toxic chemical that commonly has been used as a wood preservative for more than 50 years. It acts as a pesticide, herbicide and fungicide—used widely in both dry land and marine applications. Recent studies have shown that creosote compounds are toxic and carcinogenic to a variety of organisms. Use in wood products may be resulting in acute and chronic adverse impacts to the aquatic environment.

DNR, as manager and steward of the 2.4 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands, is committed to restoration and protection of the health of Puget Sound. DNR began creosote removal projects in 2005.

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