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Snohomish Marine Resources Committee Partnering with Local Agencies to Promote the Removal of Independent Pilings in the Snohomish Estuary

By encouraging removal of unused pilings, MRC hopes to improve estuary health

EVERETT, Wash., September 22, 2021 – The Snohomish Marine Resources Committee (MRC) and Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Surface Water Management (SWM) division are leading collaborative efforts within the county to promote the removal of independent derelict pilings in the Snohomish River estuary. By facilitating piling removals, the MRC strives to improve water quality and habitat conditions in the estuary since creosote-treated pilings release contaminants that negatively impact the marine food web.

Last year, in the [first phase](#) of the project, funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the MRC completed a [prioritization plan](#) for the potential removal of independent [pilings](#) in the Snohomish Estuary. The report identified 15,564 independent pilings, of which 2,456 are creosote-treated. This year, during the second phase, the MRC met with public agencies and tribal stakeholders to discuss the removal of unused pilings they own. The MRC is providing landowners with information to help create opportunities to remove pilings, which is voluntary.

“As part of this grant-funded project, we hope to continue to partner with other local jurisdictions to encourage finding creative ways to remove unused pilings from the estuary,” said Surface Water Management Director, Gregg Farris. “We are proud of the work that has been done to identify which piling removals would have the largest ecological benefits if removed.”

Stakeholder meetings and additional research informed the development of a [final report](#), which was completed in August and outlines opportunities and considerations for potential piling removal projects into the future, including information about potential funding sources and recommended next steps. Potential opportunities for implementation of piling removal includes stand-alone restoration projects, adding piling removal as a component to a larger project, or as part of a compensatory mitigation project. The MRC plans to continue collaborating with local agencies and stakeholders to provide support on the future potential removal of high-priority independent pilings. To facilitate ongoing collaboration, the MRC has produced an interactive [web map](#) to allow stakeholders direct access to information about pilings under their ownership.

About the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee

The Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is a service provided by Snohomish County Surface Water Management, a division of Public Works. The MRC's goal is to understand, protect, and restore the marine and estuarine ecosystems of the county. Local citizens appointed by County Council use science-based information to develop and implement projects and help shape local and regional marine conservation policy. MRC members work to complement ongoing efforts by both government and non-profit agencies. There are seven MRCs in the Northwest Straits region of the Puget Sound. For more information, visit www.snocomrc.org.

About Snohomish County Conservation and Natural Resources

The Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) includes the Division of Surface Water Management; the Division of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; the Office of Energy and Sustainability and the Office of Agriculture. DCNR works in support of thriving communities; a clean and healthy environment to foster environmental stewardship; ensuring food security; supporting a green economy, and strengthening communities by providing regional parks and infrastructure; protecting the region's water, air, land and natural habitats; enhancing agriculture and recreation; and reducing flooding. <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/5758>

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