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Harbor Island Superfund Site

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Superfund Program

One River, One Community, One Home

The Duwamish River is our city's only river and was designated a Superfund Site by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2001, identifying it as one of the nation's most toxic hazardous waste sites. Currently Responsible Parties are in the middle of negotiations for the cleanup costs.

Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Site

Within the Duwamish Valley, sources of pollution are identified and removed or reduced so that they don't reach the surface water and sediments of the river. This is called source control. Source control is led by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Learn more about how to control sources of pollution.

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Where are we with cleanup?



The East Waterway is part of the Harbor Island Superfund Site in the Duwamish River. It is part of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe's and Suquamish Tribe's usual and accustomed fishing area and is an important fishing area for immigrant and refugee communities. This site is currently in a cleanup process under EPA. Most of the contaminants are PCBs.

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The Lower Duwamish Waterway is divided into three sections. In the **Middle Reach**, sampling of contaminated mud is ongoing and will continue into 2024. The cleanup plan is expected to be done sometime in 2026.

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Responsible parties submitted their 90% cleanup draft plan to EPA for the **Upper Reach** and there should be a final clean-up plan ready this fall. Cleanup is expected to start in late 2024.

While there are over 40 contaminants in the river, key drivers of the clean up (which refers to those specifically identified as harmful to human health and wildlife) include PCBs, dioxins, arsenic, and cancer-causing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (CPAHs). The goal of the long-term cleanup of the Duwamish River is to protect the river environment, its fish and wildlife, and human health by reducing the levels of these toxins.

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