



## Fact Sheet

### **Columbia Slough Sediment Cleanup Project Moore and Wright Islands Natural Area Cleanup**

Industrial, agricultural and urban use along the Columbia Slough led to elevated concentrations of contamination in Columbia Slough sediments today. As a result, a fish consumption advisory was issued for fish that live their whole lives in the Columbia Slough, which are called resident fish.

Contaminated sediments between Moore and Wright islands and the former Pacific Carbide site are the focus of this sediment hot spot cleanup project and part of the overall Columbia Slough sediment cleanup plan.

#### **Moore and Wright islands cleanup project**

From July to December 2025, DEQ led a sediment cleanup and habitat restoration project in the Columbia Slough – south of Moore and Wright islands. Administrative controls will be prepared in 2026, including signs to alert boaters of the in-water cap and recording environmental restrictions on official documents.

The project included:

- Capping contaminated sediment to isolate it
- Removing polluted bank soil
- Restoring shoreline habitat

#### **In-water cleanup**

A 2.8-acre protective cap was placed over contaminated sediment between Moore and Wright islands and the former Pacific Carbide site. The cap includes a reactive core mat that traps contamination, and it is covered with fish-friendly gravel armoring and a sand habitat layer. Some nearby areas received a thin layer of sand mixed with activated carbon to bind contamination in the sediment.

The in-water remedy is expected to reduce PCB concentrations by about 85% in sediment porewater – the water between sediment particles – in the project area. It will protect bottom-dwelling organisms and reduce the amount of PCBs that build up in resident fish over time.

#### **Habitat restoration**

The bank was regraded to reduce steep slopes and provide flood mitigation, resulting in approximately 2,600 cubic yards of polluted bank soil being removed and disposed of at Wasco County Landfill. Soil amendments along with native seeding and plants were installed along the regraded bank to improve ecological habitat. As plants grow along the restored bank, they will also help provide shade and improved habitat along the waterway. Vegetation maintenance will be performed for three years to ensure plant survival.

#### **Funding**

DEQ and the Oregon Department of State Lands applied for and received a \$1 million U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Cleanup Grant in 2023 to assist with cleanup costs. DEQ used its Columbia Slough settlement funds to perform the remaining work, including a settlement from the adjacent former Pacific Carbide facility. The total construction cost for this specific project is approximately \$3 million.

## About the Columbia Slough sediment cleanup project

The Columbia Slough runs parallel to the Columbia River and includes about 31 miles of waterway from the Willamette River to Fairview Lake. Industrial, agricultural and urban development along the Columbia Slough has resulted in contamination accumulating in the bottom of the slough. Some contaminants, including PCBs and pesticides, bioaccumulate in resident fish that live in the slough year-round.

In 2005, DEQ issued a cleanup plan, called a Record of Decision, for the Columbia Slough. The cleanup plan describes the framework for cleaning up sediment contamination in the slough. The primary components include in-water cleanups of contaminated sediment hot spots, addressing pollution at upland areas that may affect the Columbia Slough, also known as source control, and monitored natural recovery.

### Learn more

Get more information about the Moore and Wright islands cleanup project and overall Columbia Slough sediment cleanup effort by visiting DEQ's website:

- **Moore and Wright islands cleanup project:** <https://ordeq.org/Moore-Wright>
- **Columbia Slough sediment cleanup project:** <https://ordeq.org/columbiasloughcleanup>

### Contact

Sarah Miller, Project Manager with DEQ's Northwest Region Environmental Cleanup Program

- **Email:** [sarah.miller@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:sarah.miller@deq.oregon.gov)
- **Phone:** 503-229-5040
- **Address:** Sarah Miller, Oregon DEQ, 700 NE Multnomah St., Suite 600, Portland, OR 97232



**Photo from September 2025:** Construction crews installing the reactive core mat cap covered by fish-friendly gravel armoring and sand habitat. Completed Columbia Slough sediment surface in the foreground.

---

## Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in the administration of its programs and activities. For translations or alternate formats, visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).