

Maintaining the Old Mouth of the Cowlitz River is critical to keeping jobs at Longview Fibre



# Longview Fibre at the Old Mouth of the Cowlitz

## History

The Old Mouth of the Cowlitz River channel was typically dredged every two years during the 1950s and 60s. No dredging occurred between 1966 and 1981. It was last dredged by clamshell in 1991. In the 1990s, the channel was dredged nearly annually by the Corps-owned sand bypasser dredge *Sandwick*. The *Sandwick* last dredged the channel in 2002, but is no longer used, due to turbidity and environmental concerns.



## Current channel status

Maintenance dredging on the Old Mouth of the Cowlitz channel has not been performed since 2002. A recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sounding chart documents the heavy sedimentation in the channel.

Chip barges bound for Longview Fibre Paper & Packaging, Inc. on the Old Mouth of the Cowlitz must be light-loaded in order to navigate the channel, and even then can only enter at high tide. Barges are scraping bottom, and a few have even run aground.

## Estimated economic impacts

Longview Fibre depends on this federally-maintained waterway to receive a large percentage of their chip supply.

- Total wood used at the mill – 100,000 bone dry tons per month
- Wood transported by barge – 24,000 bone dry tons per month
- Percentage of total wood provided by barge = 24%
- Number of barges needed to provide this wood = 19 per month (fewer when ocean barges are utilized)
- Barged chips account for about 12,000 tons per month of paper and containerboard products produced by the mill
- Longview Fibre products sell at an average price of \$600 per ton
- The loss of 12,000 tons per month would reduce gross revenue by approximately \$7,200,000 per month
- Longview Fibre employs over 745 people in direct production activities, and about 1,000 overall at their Longview location
- If Longview Fibre loses access to their barge-unloading facility due to a lack of maintenance dredging, the company will likely be forced to curtail manufacturing by 10-15%
- Curtailment of up to 135 employees would be likely
- Payroll losses alone would be up to \$600,000 per month
- Such a cutback would make it difficult to meet customer orders, exposing the company to possible permanent loss of business that would be hard to recover in the highly-competitive global markets in which they compete

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