

Regional Sediment Evaluation Framework, Federal Perspective

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US Army Corps of Engineers
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▪ **Welcome**

- ▶ Regional Partnership
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ What the SEF does
- ▶ What it doesn't do
- ▶ What we are still working on
- ▶ The way forward



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■ **Regional Partnership**

- ▶ **Cooperative Interagency effort to develop a consistent approach for evaluating sediment proposed for dredging and disposal in Idaho, Oregon and Washington**
- ▶ **Included Corps (Portland, Seattle and Walla Walla Districts and NWD), USEPA Region X, NMFS, USFWS, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality**
- ▶ **Public Coordination including review draft in February 2009 and public meetings in Oregon, Washington and Idaho**



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▪ Purpose

- ▶ Provides regional guidance framework for sediment sampling, testing, and test interpretation to evaluate suitability for open water disposal
- ▶ Intended to improve consistency and reduce delays by agreeing up front on acceptable testing procedures and screening levels for civil works and regulatory projects across Pacific Northwest region
- ▶ Based on earlier documents including National Testing Manuals developed by Corps and USEPA for ocean and inland dredging and disposal, Puget Sound Dredged Disposal Analysis (PSDDA), and Dredged Material Evaluation Framework for the Lower Columbia River



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- **What the SEF Does**

- ▶ **The SEF provides the agencies and permit applicants with a tiered framework for evaluating sediments that the regulatory agencies across the three state region have agreed will help to determine whether they meet regulatory requirements**
- ▶ **The SEF provides local flexibility because specific site conditions can influence the suitability determination for unconfined in water disposal.**
- ▶ **The SEF identifies screening levels below which sediments are not likely to have unacceptable environmental effects based on past testing and experience**
- ▶ **The SEF addresses potential impacts of contaminants in sediment on species of concern, including ESA listed species, but doesn't address all potential impacts associated with a dredging project**



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■ What it doesn't do

- ▶ The SEF was not developed for cleanup (superfund) dredging, but can be used as a tool to indicate when additional testing or precautions are appropriate
- ▶ The SEF does not establish any new regulatory standards or legal requirements
- ▶ The SEF is not intended to identify management practices for materials unsuitable for unconfined in water disposal or leave surfaces, but can be used to identify when additional management is appropriate in order for a dredging project to proceed



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- **Areas we are continuing to work on**
 - ▶ **The Quality Control/Quality Assurance section (Chapter 11)**
 - ▶ **Freshwater standards**
 - ▶ **Bioaccumulation (Chapter 8)**



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■ **The Way Forward**

- ▶ **This is a living document and we plan to review and consider new science and update it annually, using a public coordination process similar to PSDDA**
- ▶ **We plan to meet with stakeholders and discuss remaining questions and concerns**
- ▶ **We will consider developing management actions (Chapter 9) to address sediments unacceptable for unconfined in water disposal**

