

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA) OF 2024



The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is the main legislative vehicle for authorizing federal navigation projects and implementing policy changes for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. WRDA is a key piece of legislation for PNWA's membership. We support keeping WRDA on a two year schedule and passage of a bill in 2024, to ensure timely and consistent authorization of navigation projects and improvements to Corps policy. Our priorities are:

Policy Priorities

Lower Columbia River & Estuary In-Water (Aquatic) Confined Placement Definition Clarification. There is a lack of dredge material disposal sites for the Lower Columbia River as we look ahead to maintaining the Federally-authorized navigation channel for the next 20 years. To meet the maintenance needs of the project, the Corps intends to strategically utilize aquatic confined placement structures for in-water disposal. **Definition clarification is needed through WRDA to ensure these aquatic confined placement structures are deemed in the national interest and built at full Federal expense rather than cost shared.** Factors to consider:

The Corps currently balances dredge material from the Columbia River between upland, shoreline, aquatic, and deep-water disposal sites to ensure the bulk of the dredged material remains in the river system for ecological purposes. However, there is insufficient disposal capacity for the next 20 years which requires the identification of new disposal locations. Some sites will require structures to retain the material.

There are 233 pile dikes between the Mouth of the Columbia River and Bonneville Dam which were constructed between 1885 to 1969. These pile dikes were intended to reduce dredging needs over time, stabilize the river channel, increase bank protection including protection of dredged material sites. However, these pile dikes have not been maintained over time which inhibits their functionality.

For the amount of sediment removal required, there is a current lack of dredges on the West Coast with appropriate capabilities for pumping material along the shoreline and in upland placement sites. There is also a lack of available land and permitted shoreline and upland placement sites along the Columbia River as well.

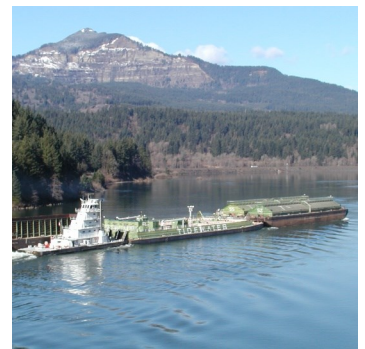
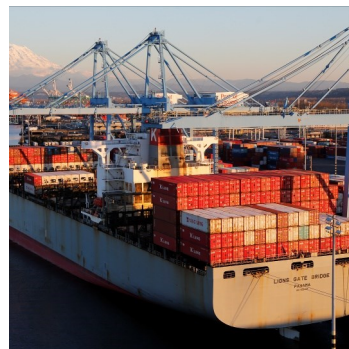
It is not fiscally or ecologically feasible to dredge and continually dump in deep-water disposal sites. As a result, it has been determined that the current regime for maintenance dredging is not sustainable without the addition of in-water (aquatic) confined placement facilities.

Rehabilitation of the jetties at the Mouth of the Columbia River was recently completed representing over \$200 million in federal investment.

The potential to use some of these structures and dredge material for beneficial use for juvenile salmonids and/or streaked horned lark, both listed species, could also be explored.

It is in the federal interest to support construction of these facilities to maintain the Columbia River as a major U.S. export gateway with benefits to the region and the nation. Once these are built, they will limit the amount of sediment re-entering the navigation channel and reduce the overall maintenance dredging needs of the project long-term and the costs associated with maintenance of the federal project in the future and prevent loss of Federal investment that was made during the channel deepening and jetty rehabilitation.

Proposed definition language includes, **“New dredged material stabilization and retaining structures are considered in-water confined placement for dredged material held in place to the maximum extent practicable in the Lower Columbia River and Columbia River Estuary to implement the ongoing operations and maintenance of the Columbia River Federal Navigation Channel at full Federal expense and therefore, does not count towards any previously authorized 902 limit for Columbia River Navigation Improvements. Authorized projects in the Columbia River includes the Columbia and Lower Willamette Rivers Below Vancouver, WA & Portland, OR - Rivers and Harbors Acts 1912, 1930, 1962, 1999.”**



WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA) continued



Policy Priorities (continued)

Pile Dike Maintenance Definition Clarification. The Corps' Portland District is conservatively interpreting authorization to maintain the pile dike system in the Lower Columbia River including viewing pile dikes that have disconnected from eroded shorelines as if they are new projects rather than maintenance of existing projects. When maintained properly, pile dikes serve to train the river flow to assist with sediment transport and decrease channel maintenance over time. This also results in preventing draft restrictions which impacts navigation efficiency and safety and also benefits climate change goals by reducing fuel consumption and emissions.

Proposed language to clarify the maintenance of pile dikes includes, **“Extension of existing pile dikes and channel training structures necessary for maintenance repairs shall include reconnection to the existing shoreline or extension towards the channel in order to restore function is authorized.”** Currently, authorized projects in the Columbia River with pile dikes includes:

- Mouth of the Columbia River (MCR) - River and Harbor Act of 1884, 1905, 1954, 1983
- Columbia and Lower Willamette Below Vancouver, WA & Portland, OR (C&LW) - Rivers and Harbors Acts 1912, 1930, 1962, 1999
- Columbia River between Vancouver, WA and The Dalles, OR (VTD) - Rivers and Harbors Act of 1938, 1946
- Columbia River at Baker Bay, WA & OR (Baker Bay) - River and Harbor Act of 1933, 1935, 1945

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. Significant Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) reforms were included in the 2014, 2016 and 2020 WRDA bills. No changes are proposed at this time.

Columbia Snake River System. PNWA supports the multi-purpose locks and dams on the Columbia Snake River System and opposes dam breaching studies and project proposals.

Project Priorities

Columbia River Channel, Oregon and Washington. Proposed language includes, **“The project for the Columbia River Channel, Oregon and Washington, is modified so that federal reimbursement to the Port of Portland for the operating cost of a locally-owned pipeline dredge shall, notwithstanding any other law, include the full acquisition costs, including financing costs and salvage value, of such dredge and associated equipment without requiring that ownership of such dredge and associated equipment be transferred to the federal government; provided that such acquisition costs be prorated over a period of up to 30 years, as determined by the Port of Portland.”**

Port of Skamania Property Conveyance. As a result of Federal, State, and trust land ownership, and the added development restrictions from the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, very little land in Skamania County, Washington is developable for commercial and industrial purposes. In 1986, the Port of Skamania initiated a request to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to acquire industrial property and a building in North Bonneville for the purposes of economic development. Decades have passed and the Port of Skamania would like to acquire the 1.6 acre parcel of land and building for economic development. **PNWA seeks to include language to authorize the conveyance of Corps property located in the relocated town of North Bonneville, Washington, Section 19, Township 2N, Range 7 E.W.M. Lot I-2 to the Port of Skamania, Washington. Also, given the unique circumstances of Skamania County's lack of developable land due to Federal, State, and trust land ownership, and the property in question is not directly adjacent to the Columbia River or Bonneville Pool, this conveyance should include a waiver of applicability of the Secretary of Interior's Right of First Refusal, under section 401(e) of Public Law 100-581, 102 Stat. 2938, 2944 (1988).**

Mount St. Helens Sediment Control. The Mount St. Helens Sediment Control project is an open construction project which currently allows dredging for flood risk management only. However, sediment from Mount St. Helens continues to impact federally authorized navigation channels in the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers. In addition to dredging for flood risk management, authorization for dredging to address the navigation impacts to the Cowlitz River and the Confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers is needed. Proposed language includes, **“The Mount St. Helens project authorized by Congress under the Supplemental Appropriations Act of August 15, 1985 (Public Law 99-88) shall include dredging to address both flood risk management and navigation impacts to federally authorized channels on the Cowlitz River and Confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers.”**