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Columbia Snake River Extended Closure



As a reminder, there will be an extended lock closure for the Walla Walla and Portland Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

To ensure communication is provided in a timely fashion, the Corps intends to hold weekly virtual meetings. During these meetings, the District Project Managers will provide stakeholders with updates regarding the progress of maintenance work and upgrades during the outage. The primary point of contact if you have questions regarding the navigation outage is Kenny Koebberling via [email](mailto:kenny.koebberling@usace.army.mil) or 509-527-7364.

The virtual meetings will be held every Thursday at 10:00 AM (Pacific) beginning on January 18, 2024, through March 28, 2024. To join the virtual meetings, use the following link: <https://usace1.webex.com/meet/kenneth.e.koebberling>

Project	Closes		Reopens	
Bonneville	March 3, 2024	12:01 AM	March 16, 2024	11:59 PM
The Dalles	March 3, 2024	12:01 AM	March 16, 2024	11:59 PM
John Day	March 3, 2024	12:01 AM	March 16, 2024	11:59 PM
McNary	January 14, 2024	6:00 AM	March 29, 2024	11:59 PM
Ice Harbor	February 26, 2024	6:00 AM	March 22, 2024	11:59 PM
Lower Monumental	January 14, 2024	6:00 AM	March 29, 2024	11:59 PM
Little Goose	January 14, 2024	6:00 AM	March 29, 2024	11:59 PM
Lower Granite	January 14, 2024	6:00 AM	March 29, 2024	11:59 PM

MARAD Reauthorization



On December 14, the House passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which passed the Senate the day before sending the bill on to the President's desk for signature. Included in the NDAA was reauthorization for the Maritime Administration (MARAD).

The bill authorized the following amounts for MARAD programs:

- \$15m for "maritime environmental and technical assistance"
- \$15m for U.S. Marine Highways program – the bill also requires a report on how to increase the overall effectiveness of the marine highways program and a pilot project report using one marine highway project as a pilot project in the analysis to identify barriers and improvement recommendations.
- \$30m for expenses necessary to assist small shipyards and for maritime training programs - the bill also requires a report within 180 days and then annually assessing the status of U.S. shipbuilding and repair capabilities as well as a report on port preferences for U.S. Flag Vessels.
- \$500m for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) with the stipulation that none of the authorized funds "under this title for this program may be used to provide a grant to purchase fully automated cargo handling equipment that is remotely operated or remotely monitored with or without the exercise of human intervention or control, if the Secretary of Transportation determines such equipment would result in a net loss of jobs within a port or port terminal".

For PIDP, the bill adds language to ensure that projects for port and port-related infrastructure that support seafood and seafood-related businesses, loading/unloading commercially harvested seafood and fish products, processing, cold storage, etc. are eligible for PIDP grants. The bill also clarifies that PIDP port shore power projects for both passenger vessels and vessels that move goods or freight are eligible for grants.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D, WA) successfully included language to assist small ports that struggled to qualify for MARAD grants as small ports due to the manner in which the Corps tracks tonnage data for port geographic areas. The language clarifies the assistance to small inland river and coastal ports and terminals section to ensure the Secretary uses data specific to the eligible applicant for tonnage determinations and that use of independent audit data is allowed if the Secretary determines it is acceptable to use audit data instead of Corps data.

The bill also made technical corrections to the Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program, Marine Highways program, and to define deep water ports and strategic seaports.

PNWA Supports Donor & Energy Transfer Ports

PNWA signed onto a letter authored by the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House Appropriations Committee and Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. The letter supports the inclusion of Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations [bill report](#) language supporting harbor maintenance trust fund (HMTF) allocations for donor and energy transfer ports to be included in the final conferenced version of the FY2024 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill.

HMTF allocation changes were enacted in WRDA 2020 to include:

- 15% for Emerging Harbors;

- 12% for Donor and Energy Transfer Ports expanded uses (8% for donor ports and 4% for energy transfer ports);
- 13% for the Great Lakes Navigation System; and
- 17% for Commercial Strategic Seaports

However, despite the authorization in WRDA 2020, the HMTF allocation for donor and energy transfer ports did not materialize in the FY2023 Corps of Engineers work plan or the Administration's FY2024 budget request. As a result, the Senate Appropriations Committee under Senator Patty Murray's leadership, included strong directive language in the FY2024 Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill report:

"Donor & Energy Transfer Ports.—The Committee directs the Corps to allocate any work plan HMTF funding for Donor and Energy Transfer Ports consistent with section 102 and section 104 of WRDA 2020 (Public Law 116–260). The Corps is reminded that

Donor and Energy Transfer Ports are eligible to receive additional funding recommended in the deep-draft harbor and channel funding line for expanded uses".

"Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Targets.—The Committee is disappointed that the Corps has twice failed to recommend HMTF work to meet the section 102 WRDA 2020 targets. The Committee is perplexed the Corps did not put a single dollar towards the

donor and energy port target in the fiscal year 2023 work plan. Donor and energy ports are critical to our National supply chain and stable HMTF funding for expanded uses is fundamental to maintaining international competitiveness. This funding can assist with capital improvements at these critical ports which already pay a significant share of the collected tax. The Committee expects the Corps to meet the donor and energy target in the fiscal year 2024 work plan and include the funding in future budget submissions... Finally, in conjunction with the fiscal year 2024 work plan the Corps is directed to provide the Committee a list of all projects, expanded uses, and HMTF funding amounts for each section 102 WRDA target".

To read the full letter sent to the Appropriations Committee, [click here](#).

NOAA & USFWS Final Rule Making



In June, NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed three rules related to updating the Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations. The first rulemaking addressed [Interagency Coordination](#) in how the agencies interpret ESA Section 7 related to the environmental baseline and mitigation requirements during the consultation process. The second rulemaking expands what can be considered [critical habitat](#) for listed species. The final rulemaking was proposed solely by USFWS to reinstate the [4\(d\) rule](#) "blanket rule". PNWA and several national and regional port colleagues submitted comments by the August 21, 2023 deadline. Over 121,000 comments were received. At the time, no timeframe for when the Services would finalize the rules was given.

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs ([OIRA](#)) for the [Biden Administration](#) recently published the Fall 2023 Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions, known as the [Unified Agenda](#). The Unified Agenda shows that the anticipated final rules are set for publication in April 2024.

To view the announcement for Agency Coordination, click [here](#).

To view the announcement for Critical Habitat Designation, click [here](#).

To view the announcement for Reinstating the 4(d) Rule, click [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact [Dena Horton](#).

NOAA Announces Coastal Inundation Community of Practice



NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, Sea Grant, and the American Society of Adaptation Professionals will collaboratively create a new national network to advance coastal flooding science, knowledge, and solutions. The agencies will host a virtual meeting to present the [Coastal Inundation Community of Practice](#).

Virtual Kick Off Meeting
January 30, 2024
11:00am – 1:00pm Pacific
To register, click [here](#).

To sign up to receive updates on programs and events, click [here](#).

It is anticipated participants will include local floodplain managers, planners, resilience and climate coordinators, resource managers, consulting engineers, and those who work to address current and future coastal flooding. An in-person [event](#) is planned on February 12 in Charleston, SC. To learn more about the Coastal Inundation Community of Practice, visit the [website](#).

2024 Virtual Regional Meeting Schedule

In preparation for the Mission to Washington March 3-7, 2024, PNWA will hold a series of virtual regional meetings to hear about emerging issues, new projects, review navigation funding and issues (including WRDA and Regulatory), and provide an overview of the Mission to Washington. Links to the meetings will be sent to registered participants. So please save the following dates and register below:

Lower Columbia River Virtual Regional Meeting

February 21, 2024 from 10:00am - 12:00pm

Inland Columbia River System Virtual Regional Meeting

February 21, 2024 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Oregon Coast Virtual Regional Meeting

February 22, 2024 from 10:00am - 12:00pm

Puget Sound and Washington Coast Virtual Meeting

February 22, 2024 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm

[*Click here to register for the meeting\(s\)*](#)

If you have any questions, please contact [Dena Horton](#).

2024 Mission to Washington

The 2024 PNWA Mission to Washington promises to be an event you will want to attend! Join us in the nation's capital as we meet with lawmakers and their offices to ensure our priorities and issues are top of mind.

Throughout the program, participants will gain valuable insights and network with key federal agency officials, industry partners, and DC insiders. In addition, we will spend two days on Capitol Hill meeting with the Northwest Congressional

delegation. Details of the agenda will be released in the coming weeks. Make your plans to join us today!

Register for the 2024 Mission to Washington



*Season's Greetings
from our crew to yours*

Happy Holidays

*May 2024 bring you
joy and prosperity!*

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Pacific Northwest Waterways Association