



Nor'Wester Newsletter

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FY2024 Corps Work Plan Released

Following the passage of FY2024 Energy and Water Development appropriations on March 8, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) had 60 days to develop a work plan detailing how the Corps will allocate the discretionary funds appropriated by Congress. The Corps released the [FY2024 Work Plan](#). It outlines how the funds for the [Construction](#), [Investigations](#), and [Operations & Maintenance](#) accounts will be spent.

PNWA staff is pleased to report advocacy efforts resulted in additional funds for our regional priorities including:

- \$13.592m - South Jetty construction at the Mouth of the Columbia River
- \$25.017m - Seattle Harbor donor port funding
- \$28.863m - Tacoma Harbor donor port funding
- \$1.6m - Mouth of the Columbia River additional dredging
- \$1.27m - Columbia and Lower Willamette additional dredging
- \$220k - Environmental compliance documentation for critical pile dike repair at Washougal
- \$25.705m - Bonneville Lock & Dam for Bradford Island CERCLA remediation
- \$96.080m - Howard Hanson Dam for continued fish passage and other repairs
- \$1.325m - Mud Mountain Dam for continued fish passage and other repairs
- \$900k - Swinomish Channel to address McGlenn jetty repair
- \$21.8m - Baker Bay pile dike construction

Many thanks to PNWA members who attended the Mission to Washington in March to advocate for funding for our region's priorities with our Members of Congress!

PNWA staff will now work with the Portland, Walla Walla, and Seattle Districts and Northwestern Division of the Corps to understand their capabilities for FY2025 which will inform our advocacy work for FY2025. We will update the PNWA Corps Supported Project List (aka "the matrix") and share that document soon.

Senate EPW WRDA Text Released

On May 17, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee [announced](#) the release of [text](#) for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. PNWA staff and our members will continue to work with the Senate EPW Committee and our Congressional delegation to make adjustments to the language in this draft. The bill must first pass out of committee and then the full the Senate. The House must also go through a similar process before the House and Senate conference the bill and pass a final version.

The following is a summary of provisions in the Senate EPW bill text that are relevant to PNWA priorities:

Project Clarification and Conveyances:

- The ASA-CW, at Federal expense, shall continue to maintain the pile dike system constructed by the Corps for navigation along the Lower Columbia River and Willamette River.
- Sense of Congress that the Port of Portland, Oregon, is the sole dredging operator of the federally authorized navigation channel in the Columbia River, and the Corps should continue to provide operation and maintenance support for the Port of Portland, Oregon, including for dredging equipment. It also acknowledges the pipeline Dredge Oregon is old and that "Congress commits to ensuring continued dredging for the Port of Portland."
- The Corps is authorized to convey property to the Port of Skamania.

New Projects:

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW) is authorized to conduct a feasibility study for the following projects for water resources development, conservation, and other purposes, including:

- The project for navigation, Mount St. Helens, Washington
- The project for ecosystem restoration, Wind, Klickitat, Hood, Deschutes, Rock Creek, and John Day tributaries, Washington

Expedited Completion:

The ASA-CW shall, to the maximum extent practicable, expedite completion of the following projects:

- The project for navigation, Seattle Harbor, Washington, for deepening the East Waterway at the Port of Seattle.

GAO Studies:

Within a year of enactment of the WRDA of 2024, the following GAO Studies should be conducted by the Comptroller General:

- A review of the Section 408 program.
- An analysis of opportunities for the Corps to modernize the civil works program through technology and best available engineering practices.
- A report describing efforts of the ASA-CW to facilitate improved environmental review processes for project studies, including through the consideration of expanded use of categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, or programmatic environmental impact statements.
- A study on dredged material disposal site construction which will assesses the costs and limitations of the construction of various types of dredged material disposal sites, with a particular focus on aquatic confined placement structures in the Lower Columbia River. It will include a comparison of the operation and maintenance needs and costs associated with the availability of aquatic confined placement structures; and the operation and maintenance needs and costs associated with the lack of availability of aquatic confined placement structures.
- An analysis of the distribution of funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.

Corps Reports:

- Within a year of enactment, the ASA-CW is required to submit a report on the impact to the Corps' civil works program of material contaminated by hazardous substances, (which includes dredging to maintain federally authorized channels) as well as propose legislative language to address the issue.
- The ASA-CW shall prioritize the completion of the prospectus for the United States Moorings Facility, Portland, Oregon, required for authorization of funding from the revolving fund.
- Within a year of enactment, the ASA-CW is required to deliver a user's guide on the use of public-private partnerships for water resources development projects.

Inland Waterways:

Inland Waterway construction project cost share is proposed to be adjusted on October 1, 2024 from 65% federal and 35% sponsor to 75% federal and 25% sponsor. Projects funded under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are exempt from this provision.

Deauthorization:

- Upon enactment, an approximately 74,490 square foot area of the Federal channel in the East Waterway of Seattle Harbor, Washington is no longer authorized.

Other Items of Interest:

- Tribal Partnership Program pilot projects will include 5 projects including projects along the Mid-Columbia River, Washington, Taneum Creek, Washington, or Similk Bay, Washington; or at Big Bend, Lake Oahe, Fort Randall, or Gavins Point Reservoirs, South Dakota. **However, dam removal, studying dam removal, or studying federal dams is not authorized as part of the pilot projects.**
- In an effort to ensure that new WRDA provisions and policy changes are being implemented consistently across the country, the Senate EPW WRDA bill contains a provision to establish a WRDA implementation team. This team will consist of 2 representatives of the Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW) office, 2 representatives from Corps Headquarters (HQ), and 1 representative of each Division and District.
- Calls for the formation of an 11 member Levee Owners Advisory Board. The Owners Board consists of non-Federal interests from each region of the country that owns, operates, and maintains a levee system that was constructed by the Corps.
- Authorized environmental infrastructure in Oregon was increased from \$50m to \$90m and the limitation to Southwest Oregon was eliminated.

PNWA staff and members will continue to advocate to our Pacific Northwest Congressional delegation and committee staff for our WRDA [priorities](#). Anticipated to be released in June, we eagerly await the text of WRDA 2024 from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. We will work closely with both chambers to maximize results in the Conference version of the WRDA 2024 bill.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to [Dena Horton](#).

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Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association | 4224 NE Halsey Street, Suite 325, Portland, OR 97213

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Sent by dena.horton@pnwa.net powered by



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