

Project Location

McBride Slough is a small drainage ditch located near Portland International Airport, which receives runoff from both Port of Portland-owned properties and other adjacent owners. The modified waterway has received drainage for over 100 years from surrounding development and serves an important flood control function.

Historical Pollution

In 2011, Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD) identified chemicals of concern such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), polyaromatic hydrocarbons, metals and pesticides in the sediment from maintenance dredging activities. It is assumed that the majority of the contamination likely originates from historic PDX runoff. PCBs were once widely used in industrial and commercial business and are found in paint and caulk, electric transformers and capacitors, wire and cable coatings, and in coolants, sealants and lubricants. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) identified the Port of Portland as the responsible party and required actions towards cleaning up the contamination.

Researching a Solution

To address the problem, the Port entered into a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement with DEQ and completed the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. The Port also completed technical investigations such as stormwater sampling, recontamination modeling, source control research and biological surveys.

Taking Action for Cleanup

The work removing contaminated sediments is scheduled to take place from June through November 2018. The remedy includes the removal of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sediment and the placement of an activated carbon layer. Short- and long-term monitoring will check the effectiveness of the remedy. Although only a portion of the work area is on Port property, the Port will manage all the work and work with the other impacted property owners as needed. Additional source control is being investigated to prevent possible recontamination.

Timeline

- 1900-1955: Existing Columbia River floodplain drainage channel modified by fill and addition of human-made ditches
- 2011: Maintenance work finds chemicals of concern
- 2012: Legal framework for investigation agreed between Port and DEQ
- 2013-14: Port completes Remedial Investigation and Risk Assessment
- 2015: DEQ issues a Record of Decision on how to clean up the site
- 2016: Port enters a consent judgment to design and perform the remedial action
- 2018: Construction is scheduled for June – November

Contact

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