



NEWS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Joel VanEtta (206) 292-3000
or (206) 931-1225

Glacier Northwest reports good progress as new dock construction halted to protect fish **Adverse weather and delays for fish protection slow progress**

SEATTLE – Construction crews building a new barge loading dock at Glacier Northwest’s Maury Island sand and gravel mine will stop vibratory pile driving after Wednesday in compliance with permit requirements that protect spawning herring. Piling installation will resume on August 15.

“Considering the terrible weather the crew made excellent progress on removing portions of the old dock and vibrating in the pilings for the new dock,” said Pete Stoltz, Glacier’s permit coordinator. “We also had a few days and several additional hours where we stopped vibrating in new piles because we found and reported sand lance eggs on the beach and once to verify no killer whales were in the area.”

Regulations limit in-water construction from January 15 to August 15 to protect spawning herring and migrating juvenile salmon. Work on the upland areas of Glacier’s site, and other dock work above the water, can continue as long as required permit conditions and mitigation measures are employed.

“We’ve got quite a bit of work we can do during this hiatus and we’ll be ready to finish up work on the dock quickly when the fish window reopens in August,” Stoltz said. “Our focus over the next several months will shift more to the work we need to do on the upland part of the site.”

A request to fisheries agencies to extend construction was denied despite Glacier’s offer to conduct additional monitoring for the protection of herring.

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“We offered an unprecedented monitoring effort to protect the herring spawning and support extending our construction period,” Stoltz said. “The regulatory agencies have carefully considered all of the information and made sound decisions all the way through the permit process and we respect their decision not to grant our request for an extension.”

Glacier’s permits did not require that the presence of the tiny sand lance eggs be reported to regulatory agencies or that pile installation be stopped when a total of 17 eggs were discovered in eight samples collected since December 4th. The eggs are smaller than the head of a pin.

Since Glacier reported the presence of the tiny sand lance eggs, permits have been revised to include them in the required environmental monitoring the company performs. Restrictions on construction activities that can be performed on and near the areas of the beach where sand lance spawning occurs were also added to permits.

Demonstrators also delayed vibratory pile driving for several hours on one afternoon when they maneuvered kayaks and small boats dangerously close to the heavy machinery installing the pilings.

“This activity was not only unsafe for the people in the boats, it is also unwarranted and designed solely as a desperate attempt to attract media attention for repeatedly discredited and inaccurate statements about the environmental impacts of our project,” Stoltz said. “Let me make this very clear. The truth is that our dock project has been intensely scrutinized for more than 10 years. Every local, state and federal environmental agency, administrative body and court to review the project has unanimously concluded that the construction and operation of the barge-loading dock will not harm Puget Sound, any endangered or threatened species or their habitat. Nor will it harm the island’s aquifer. Any statement to the contrary is simply untrue and unsupported by the facts.”

The stated purpose of the Backbone Campaign to attract media attention to its activities is now being applied to the inaccurate and untruthful claims about the environmental effects of Glacier’s project because opponents have failed at every opportunity to convince the regulatory agencies and the courts.

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In addition, these tactics are the result of the participation of one or more members of The Ruckus Society. The Ruckus Society trains groups in taking “direct action” such as the demonstrations recently staged at Glacier’s site. One or more members of the Ruckus Society was also involved in preparing many of the organizations that took “direct action” in the streets of Seattle during the WTO riots.

“We do not think their views or tactics reflect the views of the citizens of Washington and it is highly unfortunate that their actions are interfering with a project the state needs for its public and private infrastructure,” Stoltz said.

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