

# **SUPERFUND**

## **LOWER DUWAMISH RIVER SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

**EPA U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**AUGUST 1998**

## ***Lower Duwamish River Sampling Seattle, Washington***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be conducting an environmental assessment of the lower Duwamish River. This fact sheet describes the activities that will be taking place this fall and announces the availability of EPA staff to meet with interested citizens and discuss the project.

### **Background**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) petitioned EPA to conduct an assessment of the lower Duwamish River. The federal Superfund Law, also known as CERCLA, allows the public and other agencies to request EPA to conduct assessments of potential releases of hazardous substances. NOAA has responsibility under the Superfund law to protect natural resources in coastal and marine waters, which includes salmon and other fish species found in the Duwamish River. NOAA is concerned about contamination in the whole Duwamish waterway and what kind of impacts the contamination is having on the fish species.

An assessment process is used to determine which sites qualify for the National Priorities List (NPL), which is a listing of the nations priorities for full scale environmental investigation and possible cleanup. Samples are collected to determine what hazardous substances are present at the site and whether the substances are being released into the environment. This assessment will help determine whether the Duwamish River should be considered for inclusion on the NPL.

### **The Sampling**

This fall, EPA will begin sampling from near the southern end of Harbor Island (approximately river kilometer 1.5) to just south of the turning basin (approximately river kilometer 11.5). Sediment and core samples will be taken from the river and slips and analyzed for a number of hazardous substances. EPA will not be conducting any upland (soil) sampling during this assessment.

Sampling will be conducted to gather information that can be used to determine eligibility for the National Priorities List (NPL), provide comprehensive information on the contaminant distribution, and support ongoing and future investigations within the river. The sampling will focus on the collection of surface and subsurface (up to 4 feet deep) sediment chemical data from intertidal and subtidal sampling locations throughout the lower portion of the Duwamish River.

EPA will be collecting approximately 300 sediment surface and subsurface samples. The portion of the river that is maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) as a federal navigation channel, typically referred to as the Duwamish Waterway, will be sampled by the Corps this summer.

EPA will be sampling using a "grid" approach. The area to be sampled is divided into equal blocks, with samples taken inside each of the blocks. More focused sampling will take place near public access areas, such as the fishing pier at Terminal 105 and intertidal area adjacent to residential communities and near slips and sloughs in the vicinity of existing and potential habitat restoration areas, such as near Kellogg Island and the upper turning basin.

Samples will be analyzed for a wide variety of contaminants. Based on past sampling in the area, the most widespread contaminants are PCBs and heavy metals. All surface and subsurface sediments will be analyzed for PCBs and heavy metals such as but not limited to, lead cadmium and chromium.

Other potential contaminants include volatile organic compounds, pesticides, dioxins/furans, and organotins (an additive in marine paint). Because these contaminants do not appear to be as widespread at concentrations of concern, more limited sampling for these chemicals will be conducted.

### **Opportunity for an EPA Meeting**

If there is sufficient interest, EPA will arrange a meeting to discuss the upcoming sampling event. If you are interested, please contact Krista Rave, Outreach Coordinator in Seattle at (206) 553-6686.

EPA will be releasing fact sheets, such as this one, to keep interested citizens informed. Please feel free to share this fact sheet with other people you know who may be interested.

## Who Can I Contact for More Information?

If you have any questions, please contact one of the following people in Seattle:

David Bennett, EPA Site Assessment Manager at (206) 553-2103

or

Krista Rave, Outreach Coordinator at

(206) 553-6686

Outside of Seattle, 1-(800) 424-4372

A copy of the sampling plan is available for your review at the EPA Records Center in Seattle. You can set up a time to review the document, by calling (206) 553-4494.

For those with impaired hearing or speech, please contact EPA's telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) at (206) 553-1698. To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above.



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

EPA Region 10  
Community Relations and Outreach  
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECO-081  
Seattle, Washington 98101-1128

BULK RATE  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
U.S. EPA  
Permit No. G-35

***SUPERFUND FACT SHEET  
Lower Duwamish River Sampling  
Seattle, Washington***