

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Snohomish Estuary Piling Removal

The Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is leading this project to promote the removal of independent pilings in the Snohomish River estuary.

Independent pilings are single or clustered pilings in the estuary that are not associated with a dock, marina, or bulkhead. The MRC is interested in facilitating piling removal to improve water quality and habitat conditions in the estuary. Removal of creosote-treated pilings is a primary interest of the MRC due to the contaminants released into water and sediments, which can negatively impact the marine food web.

In the first phase of the project, pilings in the estuary downstream (north) of Highway 2 were inventoried and prioritized.

**15,564**

Pilings were **identified and prioritized** for removal based on the amount of ecological benefit

**2,456**

Pilings were **creosote-treated**

**6,982**

Pilings were **identified as high priority** for removal

In this second phase, the MRC met with public agencies and tribal stakeholders who own pilings to discuss removal of unused pilings. Landowner participation in piling removal is entirely voluntary. The MRC aims to provide landowners with information that helps them create opportunities to remove pilings on their properties.



[Explore the MRC pilings inventory web map](#)

### Creosote-treated Pilings

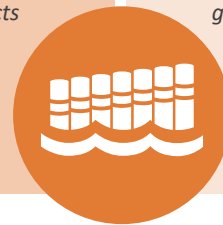
Creosote piles can leach throughout their lifetime and pose a threat to human and environmental health.

*Creosote removal work can be funded by project sponsors, such as through a capital budget, and/or by grant funding. DNR has programmatic permits for creosote removal, and it is suggested to collaborate with DNR on projects that involved creosote.*

### Untreated Pilings

Non-creosote pilings can have negative impacts when they impact habitat function and landscape connectivity.

*For reducing costs, options could be considered to cut the pilings and use wood nearby for additional habitat benefit. Non-creosote pilings do not require expensive disposal costs. It may be difficult to find grant funding for and may be best paired with additional restoration work.*



## IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES FOR PILING REMOVAL

**1**

### Stand-alone Restoration Project

Piling removal can be completed as the sole focus of a restoration project.

*This work can be funded by project sponsors, such as through a capital budget, and/or by grant funding.*

**2**

### Part of Another Project

Piling removal can be included as part of other planned work in the estuary, such as restoration, site maintenance, or redevelopment.

*If the larger project is grant funded, piling removal may be an allowable expense.*

**3**

### Compensatory Mitigation

Piling removal can be part of compensatory mitigation to offset impacts from other projects.

*Creosote-treated pilings have much more mitigation value than untreated pilings due to the benefits of removing toxic creosote from the aquatic environment.*

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Anticipated Permitting Requirements

Local, state, and federal permits will be required to remove pilings in the Snohomish estuary.

### Tribal Notification and Consultation

Pilings in the Tulalip Reservation are under the Tulalip Tribes' regulatory authority regardless of parcel ownership.

### Cultural Resources Considerations

Pilings that are more than 50 years old may be considered historic properties that could require documentation and evaluation prior to removal.

### Piling Usage

Understanding of ongoing uses of pilings, including use by wildlife, was considered in the phase 1 prioritization and should be considered before removal.



## Potential Funding Sources

The following programs may fund for piling removal projects that align with their funding missions:

- [Washington Department of Natural Resources Creosote Piling Removal Program](#)
- [Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program: Puget Sound Program](#)
- [Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program](#)
- [Nearshore Mitigation Credits – Wildlands Inc. and NOAA Fisheries](#)

## Recommended Next Steps



### Continued Coordination among Stakeholders

Check-in annually to share updates and gather new information



### Leveraging Additional Resources

Work with Puget Sound Partnership to get Snohomish River estuary piling removal listed as a mitigation opportunity; continue dialog with DNR



### Additional Information Gathering

Conduct historic context review; confirm creosote presence/absence; research potential funding sources and share updates



### Facilitate Removal Efforts

Work with partners on future projects and promote opportunities to include piling removal; engage private landowners

For more information, please visit: [www.snocomrc.org/projects/creosote-pilings](http://www.snocomrc.org/projects/creosote-pilings)