

Cowlitz River Project Update

Feb. 3, 2020

Kosmos Flats Oil Seep Capped

A heavyweight, slow-moving material - Bunker C oil - was discovered seeping out of an eroded bank along a short section of Rainey Creek on the east end of Riffe Lake in 2019. As part of our commitment to ensuring good stewardship of our environment, Tacoma Power capped the seep in December.

The four-layer cap protects Rainey Creek; it consists of rock, sand, fabric, and a clay liner with oil-absorbing material. Tacoma Power staff and a contractor worked through challenging conditions to get the cap in place before winter storms caused the lake level to rise. The area remains temporarily closed while we continue our environmental review.

We collected 12,000 tons of soil as part of the capping process; it is temporarily staged at the Kosmos boat launch. The boat launch area is closed to the public until we remove the soil for final disposal. Public safety is our top priority and we are working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

The substance was discovered within the area of the former Kosmos industrial sawmill site. It has a tar-like consistency and was used historically for sawmill operations.

Our consultant completed an initial field investigation of the area in December. We will work with them to outline the long-term Cleanup Action Plan, which will be reviewed by the Department of Ecology.

We greatly appreciate our regulating partners who assisted us with the cap permitting process, including the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

We will provide updates at MyTPU.org/Cowlitz. Questions? Please email cowlitz@cityoftacoma.org.



Tacoma Power recently completed this cap of the Kosmos Flats oil seep.

MyTPU.org/Cowlitz

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