

Moses Lake Dredging Permit Process Nears Completion

Rate Payer Update Fall -2010



State and Federal Agencies Approve District Dredging

As serious sediment accumulation in Moses Lake has increased over the years and, more recently, begun to block boat access in shallow lake locations, the Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District and the City of Moses Lake have completed a long series of pre-permit negotiations regarding the start of sediment dredging set to begin in Parker Horn in 2011.

Said Curt Carpenter, general manager of MLIRD, “after four years of complex preparations, the board of directors and the district’s small staff are very excited that the next important phase of

Moses Lake rehabilitation is underway. The lake needs help now; we planned ahead, purchased

MLIRD Staff installing new gates and culverts at the new Rail-Road Crossing, for the Parker Horn Dredge Project, November 16, 2010

and re-built the necessary equipment and we’re already at work. With rate payer property values are at stake sediment must be dealt with, first in Parker Horn which poses the greatest challenge to sediment management.”



Planning Pays Off – Pre-dredging Projects Underway

After two years of groundwork by district staff and two world class dredging contractors, a detailed Sediment Management Plan was completed in September, 2009, along with various reports and permit filings to local, state and federal agencies. In March the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a determination that a federal permit would not be required. State approval arrived next, in a September letter from the Department of Ecology indicating that the proposed project would not impact wetlands and recognized there would be a positive impact to the lake.

During this period, the MLIRD also requested and has completed multi-party mediation through the Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance. The purpose was to resolve any remaining issues, particularly those raised by the City of Moses Lake. Now completed, final city permit approval for sediment dredging in Moses Lake is anticipated to be granted early in 2011.

Sediment Background

Caused by both human and natural processes, excess sediment flowing into Moses Lake is estimated at 50,000 cubic yards annually. Deposited as silt, this continues to cause a range of negative impacts beyond blockage of boat access, including major changes in fish and wildlife habitats.

As silt build-up in the lake began to increase following completion of Grand Coulee Dam in 1942, any number of trial and error projects over many years failed to seriously reduce or stop the process. Better research and modern techniques were obviously needed. Begun anew in 2007, the district has now completed a series of comprehensive management plans, acquired and fully restored the dredging equipment necessary to proceed.