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Survey on Dredging Needs of Rural Ports and Waterways

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AGRICULTURE | YOUTH & FAMILIES | HEALTH | ECONOMY | ENVIRONMENT | ENERGY | COMMUNITIES

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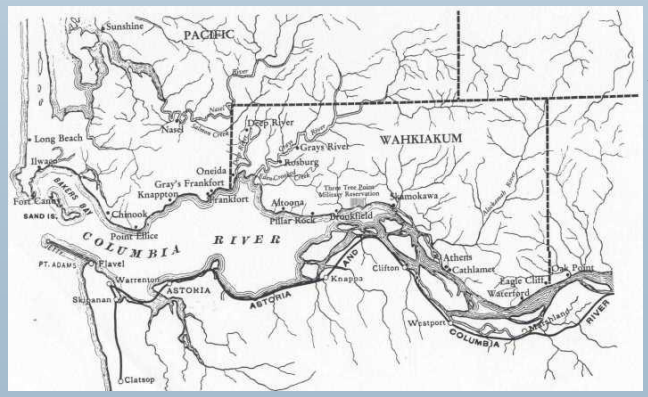
Survey on Dredging Needs of Rural Ports and Waterways

- History of sedimentation and impacts on ports
- Survey tool
- Survey results, common themes
- Impacts, response from decision makers

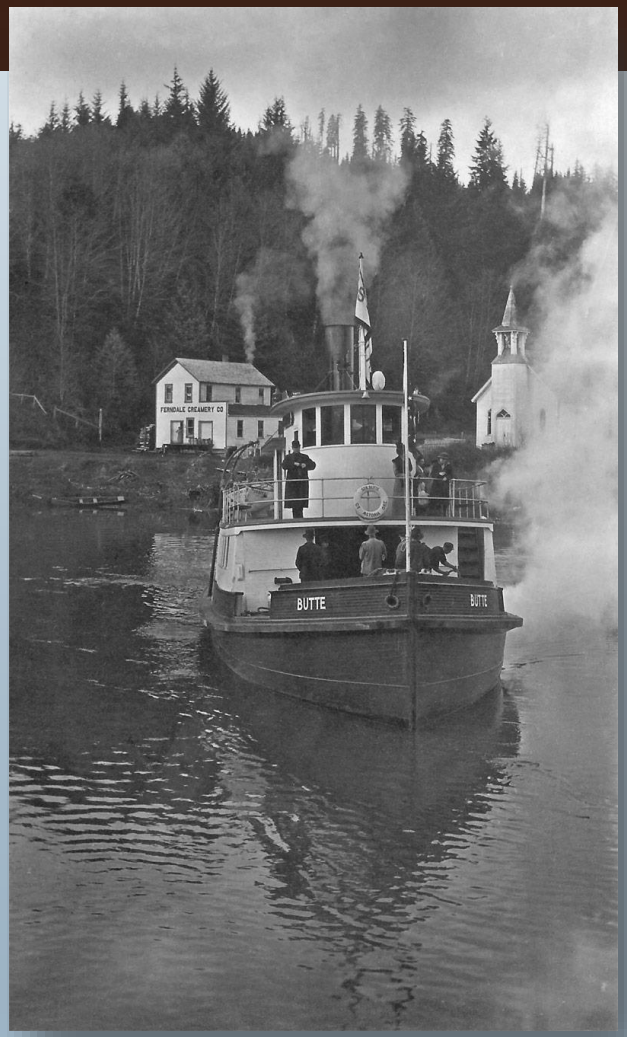
Wahkiakum County:

- **Life on the water big part of culture, heritage, economy**
- **Pop. 4000**



History of sedimentation

- Two port districts in Wahkiakum County; managing four boat ramps, two parks and one marina on Columbia River
- Significant sedimentation off main shipping channel over last 50 years



Example, Skamokawa

1939, Skamokawa, Port 2

1973, Skamokawa, Port 2

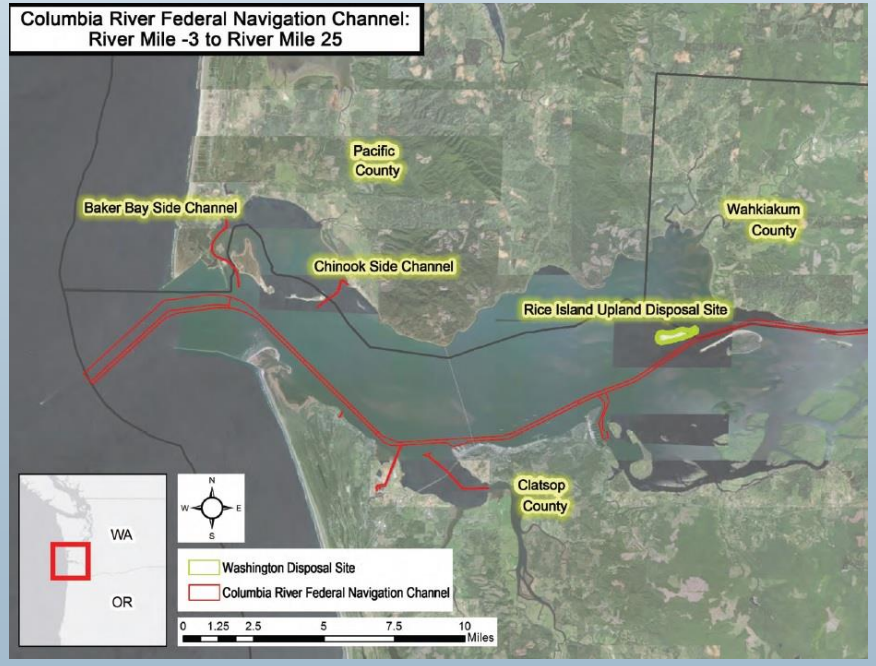
Skamokawa

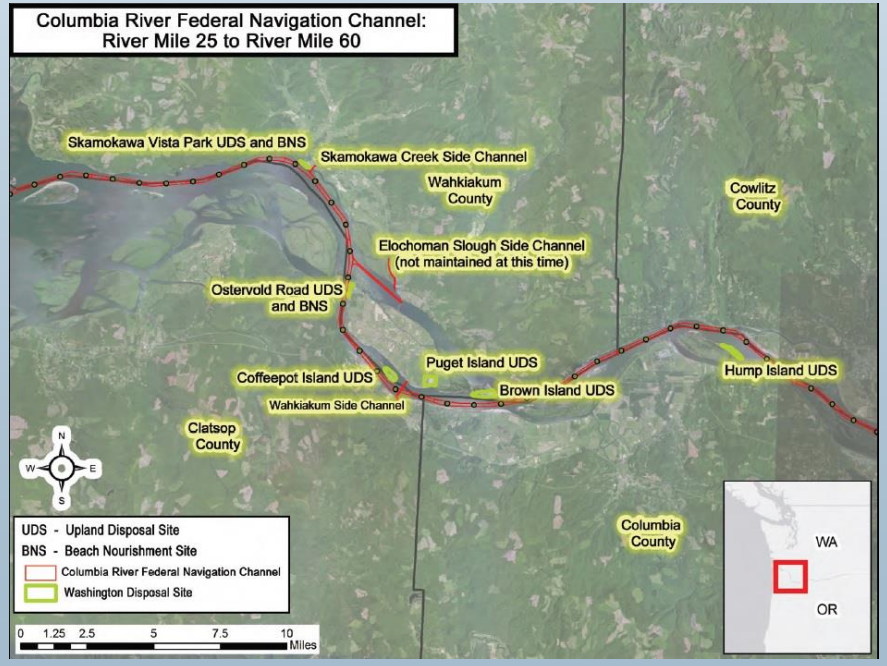
1995, Skamokawa, Port 2

2015, Skamokawa, Port 2

Dredge spoils sites

- Upland Disposal Sites
- Beach Nourishment Sites





Army Corps of Engineers, http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil

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Impacts on rural ports

- Permitting for dredging costly and time intensive
- Limited staff and revenues
- Boat ramps inaccessible during medium to lower tides
- Loss in moorage and ramp fees

Elochoman Marina, Port 1
Jim Nieland, Panoramio.com

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Countywide Needs Assessment Survey

- Funded and implemented by Wahkiakum Marine Resources Committee staff and volunteers
- Followed two community forums previous year
- Focused on main tributaries to Columbia: Skamokawa Creek, Elochoman River, Grays River and Deep River

Wahkiakum County
MRC

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Needs Assessment Survey

- Distributed 1790 surveys via bulk mailings, hard copies
- Mailed June 2013
- Press release to local paper week prior
- 521 returned surveys; 29.1% response rate

Welcome Slough Boatworks

Survey Design

- Ten questions
  - 7 multiple choice
  - 1 open ended
  - 2 yes or no, if yes then open ended
  - Front and back, one page
- Stamped return envelopes
- No follow up reminders or additional survey copies

Question focus:

- Perception of need for dredging
- Impacts on homes
- Impacts on businesses
- Willingness to help with manpower or funding
- Suggestions or ideas

Survey Results

- Perception of need:
  - On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the need for these tributaries to be dredged?
- 65% rated 8-10 (highest need)
- 17% rated 5-7 (moderate need)
- 4% rated 2-4 (little need)
- 6% rated 0-1 (no need)

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Perception of need: economy

- Concerns rooted in economic and safety interests: marina and boat ramps are economic drivers
  - *"The Marina is important to the economy of downtown Cathlamet. It really needs to be kept up."*

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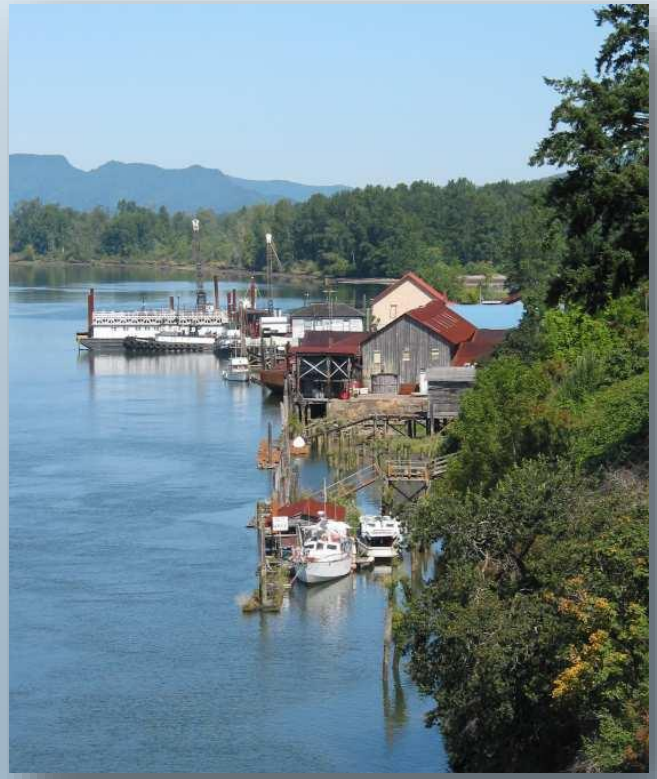
Perception of need: economy and public safety

- *"Access to the (Columbia) River is an economic necessity for this community…access to the marina, or safe access to and through areas such as the Cathlamet Channel create economic and public safety issues for the region."*



Impacts to business

- *Marina needs to stay accessible to boat traffic which brings people to local businesses.*

Impacts to business

- *Local business commerce-Tourist influx overall Columbia ship traffic (Deep Draft).*

Impacts to business

- *Causes more frequent valley flooding which maroons us in our home and keeps customers from getting to our business.*

Don Speranza, Inn at Crippen Creek

Impacts to business

- *I commercial crab & fish the lower Columbia river and due to the lack of water on the north side of the river, we are running out of places to fish.*

Longview Daily News, tdn.com

Impacts to home

- *Increased siltation of East Birnie Slough has limited my ability to access the river. Water front property is losing value due to the decreasing usability of the water ways caused by shoaling and increased milfoil weeds.*

Impacts to home

- *Increased flooding in past 20 yrs. Weed seeds every year. Lost one car and damaged pickup. Floods shop 1-4 inches. House has been raised 4 feet.*

Photos.oregonlive.com

Common themes

- River central to economy, and sedimentation of ports/tributaries impacts local commerce
  - Sports and commercial fishing
  - Boating
  - Lodging
  - Farms

Common themes

- Increased flooding over last 20 years
- Tidegate, culvert and dike problems
- Increased bank erosion
- Increased permitting time, cost for repairs

Wahkiakum County Eagle, waheagle.com

Common themes

- Residents seeing backup into surrounding valleys, flooding homes, farms

Water.weather.gov

Overall support

- Do you support the overall concept of dredging these local tributaries to again establish working waterways for marine commerce?
  - No: 13%
  - Yes: 88%

Common concerns with dredging

- Impacts on salmon habitat
  - *"Dredging destroys salmon habitat."*
- Cost
  - *"Our taxes are high enough. We seniors cannot afford to pay out anymore county or city taxes!"*

Volunteer service

- Would you be willing to volunteer services or expertise to these projects?
  - 30% Yes
  - 59% No

Wahkiakum County Eagle

Offers of help

More than 80 offers of help

- Expertise: equipment operator, tug boat captain, dredge operator, 30 years dredging experience, grant writing, tree planting, equipment repair, and general labor, “my back…”

Ideas for Solutions

- *“Check out the Portland Yacht club's small dredge-cost $15k plus repairs. Let's try to interest a big port (Longview) to partner with Port 1.”*
- *“Sharing the cost of dredge with Cowlitz and or Pacific County.”*

Ideas for solutions

- *"Contact local tug owners to see if they would prop wash Port entries if State approves and at what cost. If there is support from them it may help convince officials to approve."*

Ideas for solutions

- Several partnership and funding ideas
  - Salmon recovery board
  - Diking districts
  - Army Corps of Engineers
  - Tug operators

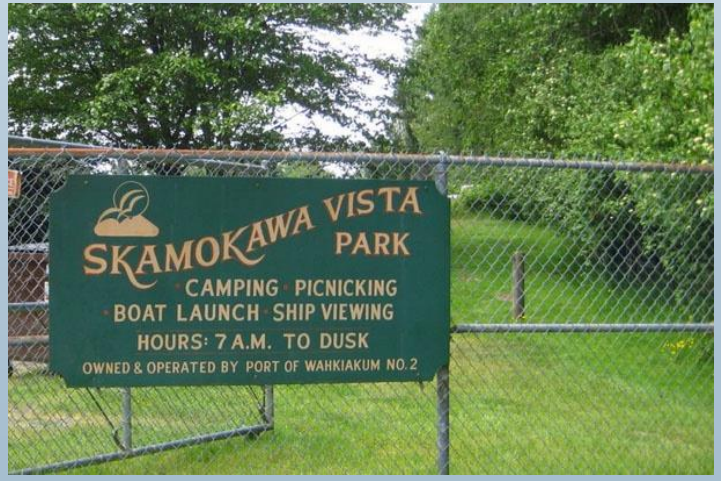
Steps forward

- Based on survey response, MRC partnered with DNR for survey of river bottom near Elochoman Marina, moving forward permits
- Port District 1 purchasing small dredge

Longview Daily News

Steps forward

- Port 2 developing new boat ramp in Skamokawa, using survey results for funding.



Steps forward

- MRC partnered with The Nature Conservancy and Conservation District on habitat restoration and new inlet structures on lower Skamokawa Creek.

Estuarypartnership.org

Summary

- Major impacts to economy
- Increased flooding to homes
- Willingness to help
- Major concerns are habitat and tax increases
- Ports and local agencies moving forward with improvement to access, tidegates

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Thank you!

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