



**U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers**

Walla Walla District  
Public Affairs Office

# News Release

---

News Release No. 04-38

Date: Nov 2, 2004

---

Contact: Public Affairs Office

---

Phone: (509) 527-7020

---

## **Corps' plans to dredge Snake and Clearwater rivers this winter in doubt**

**Walla Walla, Wash.** - The Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, navigation officials announced today that maintenance dredging on the lower Snake and Clearwater rivers this winter may not proceed as planned.

On Nov. 1, a U.S. District Court judge granted environmental groups' request for a preliminary injunction against the Corps plans for dredging this winter. The Corps, in coordination with the Department of Justice, is evaluating whether or not an appeal will be filed.

Judge Robert Lasnik, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, Seattle, granted the injunction, finding, "that plaintiffs had established a likelihood of success on the merits of their claim that the Corps violated NEPA by failing to prepare a NEPA document for the proposed 2004 - 05 dredging and by failing to consider the cumulative impacts."

The Corps planned to dredge the navigation channel at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers, several port facilities in the Lewiston-Clarkston area, and the navigation lock approaches to Lower Granite and Lower Monumental dams.

The 14-foot deep and 250-foot wide navigation channel through these reservoirs has historically been dredged in some locations. These reservoirs are part of an inland navigation system that provides navigation from the mouth of the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon, to port facilities on the Snake and Clearwater rivers in Clarkston, Wash., and Lewiston, Idaho. Ports and marinas pay the Corps for the costs incurred for dredging their facilities.

The costs savings of transportation by barge on the lower Snake River, compared to other transportation methods, are estimated to be \$44.5 million a year. The lower Snake River waterway is

**-MORE-**

Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876  
Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824  
Web site: [www.nww.usace.army.mil](http://www.nww.usace.army.mil) E-mail: [cenww-pa@usace.army.mil](mailto:cenww-pa@usace.army.mil)

## **Dredging/2-2-2**

141 miles from the confluence with the Columbia River to Lewiston, Idaho. In 2003, 5.3 million tons of cargo was transported on the waterway. The majority of the cargo shipped was agricultural products and petroleum.

On average prior to 1998, the Corps dredged every three to five years. The Corps has not performed navigation maintenance dredging in the lower Snake or Clearwater rivers since the winter of 1998-99.

Although plans for dredging this winter have been impacted by the injunction, the Corps is continuing to develop a long-term Programmatic Sediment Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSMP/SEIS). During this effort, the Corps will continue consultation with NOAA Fisheries and the USFWS, requesting programmatic biological opinions on the long-term plan.