Introduction

Maintaining drainage by dredging is a common and proven method to remove nuisance vegetation and accumulated sediments. Dredging is also the practice with the most negative impacts to natural resources. Fish, fish habitat and water quality are significantly impacted during and after dredging. Informational Factsheets #20 Watercourse Re-vegetation and #22 Farm Practices suggest methods that will prevent sediments and nuisance vegetation from impacting the watercourse, thereby reducing the need for dredging.

Additionally, BMP Factsheet #15 Fish Protection and Factsheet #16 Water Quality Protection Measures provide detailed Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to fish and water quality during dredging. The following general BMPs apply to all maintenance dredging work:

Dredging BMPs

General BMPs

1. Timing Limitations: Whenever water is present in the channel, maintenance dredging below the waterline shall only occur from August 1 through September 30 of any year for the protection of migrating juvenile and adult salmon.

2. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT: A representative of the Drainage Improvement District or contractor shall notify the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Area Habitat Biologist (AHB) of the project start date. Notification shall be received by the AHB prior to the start of dredging activities. Note: This notification assumes that the DID has obtained all appropriate permits prior to work.

3. Dredging shall be conducted with hand tools and/or a tracked excavator equipped with a clam shell or lidded bucket to minimize fallback.

4. Each pass with the excavator bucket in the channel shall be complete.

5. Dredging shall be held to the absolute minimum necessary to achieve the target channel width, depth and gradient.

6. The channel banks shall be sloped such that the resulting channel banks are stable.

7. Maintenance dredging shall not straighten or shorten the existing channel alignment.

8. Existing large woody material embedded in the channel bank or streambed shall be left undisturbed and intact.
Silt Management
9. When water is present in the channel, maintenance dredging activities in and immediately upstream of a watercourse reach that has been identified as juvenile salmonid rearing habitat in the Drainage District’s Drainage Maintenance Plan shall implement silt management provisions 10 through 14.

10. Prior to initiating maintenance dredging activities, a temporary silt fence shall be installed immediately downstream of the watercourse reach to be dredged. The temporary silt fence shall be installed across the watercourse and perpendicular to the water flow.

11. The temporary silt fence shall remain in place for the duration of the maintenance dredging activity.

12. If watercourse flows are encountered that exceed the design capacity of the silt fence, the maintenance dredging activity shall stop until the watercourse flows subside.

13. Prior to the removal of the temporary silt fence from the watercourse, silt that has accumulated behind the silt fence shall be removed to the greatest extent possible.

14. The temporary silt fence shall be removed within 2 days of completing the maintenance dredging activity.

*BMP Factsheet #16 Water Quality Protection Measures* provides detailed information on sediment management.

Fish Removal
15. When water is present in the channel, the provisions in *BMP Factsheet #15 Fish Protection* shall be implemented prior to initiating maintenance dredging activities in watercourse reaches that have been identified as juvenile salmonid rearing habitat in the Drainage District’s Drainage Maintenance Plan.