

Ferry Dolphin Replacement Project – At Long Last!

The dolphin replacement project will begin in earnest August 28th, 2017, when American Construction positions a barge on the island side to begin building new dolphins and demolishing the old dolphins. This project is expected to take about two months. They will complete the island side replacement, then move to the mainland side.

There are many new members of the Herron Island community, so here is a little background. In nautical terminology, a “dolphin” is a cluster of piles used as a fender, as at the entrance to a dock. There are four dolphins on each side of the ferry route. They are comprised of old creosoted timbers and have needed replacement for many years. Permitting and lease negotiations with DNR have taken the better part of two years, in addition to applying for and obtaining interim financing and federal loan guarantees.

Last year, HMC secured USDA funding for this project, which is estimated to cost \$1.3 - \$1.5 million. (40 year loan @ 2.75%). It is (hopefully) the last big infrastructure project facing the island for decades. Construction activity will occur only from the barge, on both the island and mainland sides. This work needs to occur during a certain period of the year so as to not interfere with salmon migration.

American Construction of Tacoma is the contractor, and PND Engineers are the project engineers. The engineers will visit the job site daily or nearly daily. HMC will be represented at the site by our “resident inspector”, Charles Smith. Charles is a civil engineer with many years of experience, and has received approval from USDA and PND Engineers to act as our eyes and ears on the project. He will be documenting and photographing the construction activity throughout. This may make him a little less responsive to water system issues unless there is an emergency.

The contractor will bring at least three boats: a barge with the pile driver, a materials barge, and a tug boat. These will stay positioned outside the ferry’s path. They will begin work on the outer dolphins on the island side first. When the island side is complete, they will move to the mainland. The projected project end date is October 25th.

We will do our best to keep you posted on the progress of this exciting project. A project schedule and maps of each side will be posted on the island website, under “Dolphins”.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW:

1. Ferry operations should not be disrupted by the construction.
2. You **MUST** stay at least fifty (50) feet away from the construction site. This includes kayaking, boating or swimming.
3. Hearing protection is advised while you are within 200 feet of the pile driving. Ferry crew will have ear plugs for your use. The engineers have verified that there are no residences within 200 feet of the pile driving.
4. Ferry captains will be updated daily on barge locations, and will have radio contact with the construction operation.
5. The contractor will need to use six parking spaces on the mainland side every work day.
6. Charles Smith will be on site during all of the construction, to document the work, and will have very limited time to respond to questions. Try not to interrupt him while he is working.
7. If you have questions, address them to the HMC Project Manager, Claudia Ellsworth, at 253-312-6610 or pjtmgr@herronisland.org.