

DNR adopts mooring buoy management plan for Quartermaster Harbor

Local News

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OLYMPIA — The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today formally adopted a plan to safely, sustainably, and legally improve moorage opportunities in Quartermaster Harbor while protecting the interests of local recreational boaters and waterfront residents. Quartermaster Harbor is flanked by Maury and Vashon islands and lies within the boundary of the 5,350-acre Maury Island Aquatic Reserve. The reserve includes extensive spawning grounds for Pacific herring, attracts thousands of migrating birds each year, and provides a permanent home for dozens of species, including shellfish, herring, and bald eagles. “We recognize how important this harbor is to boaters as a safe, protected, and scenic place to moor their vessels,” said Megan Duffy, Deputy Supervisor of Aquatics and Geology for DNR. “DNR is committed to providing recreational access and moorage in Quartermaster Harbor, while making sure we protect and conserve the area’s marine environment.” The Quartermaster Harbor Mooring Buoy Management Plan upholds the goals of the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve, established in 2004 to ensure the environmental protection of the unique habitats and species in the area. DNR manages the reserve as well as the state-owned aquatic lands located within Quartermaster Harbor.

Over the years, increased demand for access and moorage in the harbor has raised concerns for navigational safety as more and more boaters try to squeeze into a finite space. The mooring buoy plan establishes buoy fields in Dockton, Burton Cove, and Judd Creek. Vessels owners will apply to DNR for a mooring buoy authorization in one of these locations. **Public input valuable to plan development** DNR began working with community members and boaters on the plan two years ago through a series of public workshops and a public review and comment period on the draft plan. “The public was instrumental in helping craft this mooring buoy plan,” Duffy said. “We really appreciate everyone who came to our workshops and provided their thoughtful comments during the public review process.” In putting together the plan, DNR asked interested citizens to help inventory existing, illegally installed mooring buoys, some of which have been abandoned and have the potential to create navigational hazards. In addition, many of these buoys use anchor systems—such as old engines and concrete blocks—that can harm the seafloor and disrupt habitat. Key features in the Quartermaster Harbor Mooring Buoy Management Plan will: **Establish mooring buoy fields in Dockton, Burton, and Judd Creek.** With input from the public, DNR developed locations for mooring buoys in these three areas to accommodate the needs of boaters. **Require embedded helical or other DNR-approved anchor systems that use midline floats.** Embedded anchor systems are less damaging than other systems, such as concrete blocks. They also require a much shorter scope of anchor line, which will allow for a greater density of vessels. DNR will consider several kinds of embedded anchor systems, as long as they can provide the needed holding power while allowing space for an optimal number of buoys and protecting the seafloor. **Streamline the permitting process** by allowing DNR to obtain the required permits from King County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Boaters will only need to submit one application to DNR, which includes the use authorization (lease) and the permits. **Designate a navigational channel in Dockton** and include a voluntary no-anchor zone. **Remove abandoned and derelict mooring buoys.** **Promote the**

establishment of a public boater access area in Burton Cove.Next steps…carrying out the plan

With the adoption of the plan, DNR will now apply for the required permits from King County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Boaters wishing to install a mooring buoy will only need to submit one application to DNR, which will cover the permits and DNR's mooring buoy authorization.DNR will also remove the 70-by-70-foot net pen that has been illegally moored in Dockton for several decades, along with a sunken boat beneath the net pen, and abandoned creosote pilings and mooring buoys that are scattered throughout the harbor.

For more information· Download the Quartermaster Harbor Mooring Buoy Management Plan at: <http://tinyurl.com/DNR-qm-harbor>· For more information about applying for a mooring buoy permit, contact Lisa Randlette, 360-902-1085, or lisa.randlette@dnr.wa.gov· The draft Quartermaster Harbor Mooring Buoy Management Plan was available for public comment November 26, 2012, through January 7, 2013, through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. Documents related to the SEPA review, including the Final Determination of Non-significance, are available at: [www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience ... ct/Pages/amp_sepa_nonpro](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience...ct/Pages/amp_sepa_nonpro)

[quartermaster_mar.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience...ct/Pages/amp_sepa_nonpro)· For more information about the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve, visit:

[www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience ... qr_rsve_maury_island.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience...qr_rsve_maury_island.aspx)**DNR: Steward of state-owned aquatic lands**

The 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands (mostly submerged lands) are a public trust, managed and protected by DNR for the people of Washington. DNR manages these lands to protect fish and wildlife and to facilitate commerce, navigation, and public access.Revenue is generated from the sale of renewable resources, such as wild geoduck, as well as from leasing submerged lands for mooring buoys, marinas, docks, and other uses. This revenue is used to manage and protect the health and productivity of aquatic resources and to fund local projects that restore aquatic ecosystems and create public access to the waters of the state.