



Project eUpdate – March 2012

Thank you for reading the Columbia River Crossing email update.

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Message from the CRC project directors: Starting a new phase

Project Director: Nancy Boyd

Deputy Project Director: Kris Strickler

We are moving into a new phase for the Columbia River Crossing project. The project finished 2011 having accomplished several milestones. We published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the year ended with receipt of federal approval in the Record of Decision for the preferred alternative.

Before construction can begin, however, we have much work ahead of us to refine engineering designs, apply for needed permits and finalize construction sequence plans.

As we do this, federal and state leaders are turning their attention to funding the project. Oregon Governor Kitzhaber and Oregon legislators requested the project develop information on how the Oregon section of the project could be built in phases, to meet the current economic conditions with a conservative funding approach. In January, CRC provided this [information](#) to the Governor and Oregon legislators. In Washington, legislators have agreed on legislation to authorize tolling of the I-5 bridge.

We will continue to keep the community and stakeholders informed through both the construction planning and the construction funding processes.

CRC project wins 2012 National Environmental Excellence Award

The CRC project has been awarded a national environmental award for its work to evaluate construction effects to fish species.

CRC received a 2012 National Environmental Excellence Award by the National Association of Environmental Professionals for its 2011 study of potential impacts to threatened and endangered fish in the Columbia River. The project's submittal, *Columbia River Crossing Hydroacoustic Analysis on Threatened and Endangered Fish*, was recognized for excellence in demonstrating use of best available environmental technology.

CRC conducted test pile research to measure pile driving noise levels, distance of sound travel, and effectiveness of "bubble curtains" to reduce underwater noise. The results of the study were used to evaluate environmental impacts and plan for construction. The research showed that installation of the test piles can be done primarily by a vibration method.

The Columbia River is a migratory corridor for 16 species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including three endangered runs of salmon. Other species of concern include white sturgeon, Pacific lamprey, and California sea lions. Underwater noise impacts from installation of hundreds of piles could harm these aquatic species. (Piles will be installed to support temporary work platforms during construction of the replacement I-5 bridge.)

Learn more about the test pile study results [here](#).

Oregon Supreme Court opinion supports land use findings and forward movement of CRC

The Oregon Supreme Court has upheld earlier findings by the Land Use Board of Appeals confirming the process for local authorization under state land use laws for the Columbia River Crossing project.

In December 2011, four petitioners challenged a land-use decision by Metro which allowed the highway, local roadway, and light rail system improvements of the CRC project. The court's opinion released Feb. 16, 2012, concluded that the petitioners challenging earlier decisions "failed to show that Metro either exceeded its statutory authority or made a decision ...that was not supported by substantial evidence."

Additional information about the court decision and the CRC Land Use Final Order process is available in the [project newsroom](#).

Columbia River Crossing pre-construction drilling test to begin in March

The Columbia River Crossing project will conduct a construction techniques test project starting mid-March. Construction on the test project is scheduled to be complete in June 2012.

This test project will help engineers evaluate:

- Construction techniques for bridge foundations
- Noise and ground vibration levels produced by pile driving at different locations and distances
- Installation methods to ensure the construction phase of the replacement I-5 bridge stays on schedule and on budget
- Methods and procedures to help ensure foundation work will not diminish groundwater quality

The test project focuses on construction techniques for drilling shafts and pile driving. Construction crews plan a total of three drilled shafts and five driven piles at two on-land locations just west of Interstate 5 near the I-5/State Route 14 interchange in Washington and the Hayden Island interchange in Oregon. Drilled shafts are deep, cylindrical holes into which concrete is poured for bridge foundations. A pile is a long, cylindrical steel column that is driven into the soil to provide support for bridges and other structures.

Please visit the [CRC website](#) for more information, including a [map](#) with temporary detours for bicyclists and pedestrians.

CRC provides construction planning information

The Final Environmental Impact Statement describes how construction of the CRC project will occur in segments. The first section to be built will be the bridge, its touchdowns to land, and the light rail transit extension from the Expo Center in Portland to its terminus near Clark College in Vancouver. Information about [construction planning](#) is on the CRC website.

Project information available in updated Recently Asked Questions document

Updated project information is available online in the [Recently Asked Questions](#) document. You'll find answers to the recent questions we have been hearing, such as:

- How will the CRC project benefit the region's economy and create jobs?
- What is the significance of the Record of Decision and what happens next?
- What is included in the CRC project's finance plan?

Additional information also can be found on the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page online.

CRC releases finance and schedule reports

Monthly Financial and Schedule reports for [December](#) 2011, [January](#) 2012 and [February](#) 2012 are posted online. These updates provide information about CRC planning work and project delivery. Each report has information on the project's expenditures, finances and schedule.

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