

## 14 BENEFICIAL USE

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### 14.1 BENEFICIAL USES GUIDELINES

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“Beneficial use” is the placement or use of dredged material for some productive purpose. While the term “beneficial” indicates some “benefit” is gained by a particular use, the term has come to generally mean any “reuse” of dredged material. As part of overall sediment management in Washington, the regulatory agencies responsible for sediment management support the productive reuse of dredged material.

Applicants considering potential beneficial-use projects should bring these projects to the attention of the DMMP agencies early in the evaluation process, especially if DNR owns the dredged material desired for reuse. When DNR is not the owner of the material, a project proponent should approach the material owner and negotiate for its use. The project proponent will be asked to provide either a brief written project description, or provide a presentation of the proposed project.

To ensure a beneficial-use project’s viability, evaluation of the proposed dredged material is required. **Please note: standard DMMP characterization may or may not be sufficient for the proposed beneficial use.** Other permitting agencies may require additional testing to insure the material is suitable for the proposed use. For example, NMFS or WDFW may require additional chemical or biological analyses as part of the project’s ESA consultation.

### 14.2 SEDIMENT CHARACTERIZATION OF BENEFICIAL-USE MATERIAL

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Unconfined aquatic projects (such as beach nourishment, habitat restoration, and in-situ capping) are projects where dredged material may come directly into contact with the surrounding aquatic environment. For most projects, detected chemicals of concern must fall below SQS (Sediment Quality Standards) levels and any bioassays must pass SQS criteria. Material that has levels of chemicals greater than SQS but lower than CSL (Cleanup Screening Level) may be appropriate for beneficial use on a case-by-case basis after consideration of site-specific factors and coordination with landowners and/or resource agencies. For other projects, additional chemicals may need to be analyzed, or alternative screening levels may be requested by another agency. DMMP Suitability Determinations will document the sediment quality of each project relative to SMS SQS and CSL criteria, and provide a preliminary assessment of a project’s suitability for in-water beneficial use based on this analysis.

1. **Dioxin:** Projects in the Puget Sound basin: If the dredged material is below the Puget Sound background of 4 ppt TEQ, then it qualifies for in-water beneficial use.
2. **Other areas of the state:** The dredged material needs to be compared to “background” or one or more reference stations. For example, in Grays Harbor the DMMP agencies have compared dredged material to the aggregate data from six reference stations within Grays Harbor for beneficial use at Half Moon Bay and South Beach. On the Columbia River, the range of dioxin TEQs measured at background stations downstream of Puget Island has been used to evaluate flow-lane disposal. Beneficial use on the Washington side of the lower Columbia River would be treated similarly.

As always, best professional judgment may need to be applied in making case-by-case determinations.