

Army Corps begins Fremont Cut restoration work

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SEATTLE—A draft management plan for restoring historic vegetation at Fremont Cut has been approved, allowing the Corps to proceed with Phase I restoration work. Phase I includes planting 53 poplar trees in the historic colonnade and removing 22.

Tree removal is scheduled to begin Feb. 5 along the Fremont Cut. The Corps will begin planting young poplars soon afterward. Shrubbery planting will be completed by this summer.

The Corps received federal concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Nov. 9, the National Marine Fisheries Service Jan. 3, and the State Historic Preservation Office on Jan. 11.

The Corps undertook an extensive coordination process with Federal, State, local, Tribal, business, community groups and interested members of the public beginning in March 1998. The draft Fremont Cut Vegetation Rehabilitation Plan was available for public review and comment at the Fremont, Queen Anne, Ballard, Seattle libraries and Chittenden Locks Administration Building Oct. 16 through Nov. 30, 2000, and will remain on file.

This comprehensive plan is broken into four phases:

- Phase 1 will occur in 2001, removing 22 poplars and planting 53 (2 existing young trees will be retained).
- Phase 2 is planned for 2010, 32 poplars will be removed and 40 replanted (8 existing young trees will be retained).
- Phase 3 conducted in 2018, removing 19 poplars and planting 23 (1 existing young tree will be retained).
- Phase 4 planned for 2030 or later, depending upon the health of the trees, will remove 22 poplars and replant 21 (5 existing young trees will be retained).

The existing colonnade of Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') will be replaced with 12-foot Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra* 'Afghanica'). They are projected to grow 3 feet per year, although they can grow from 3 to 5 feet per year. During all phases of this restoration effort, the majority of poplars will be taller than 40 feet.

The Corps will also plant various shrubs and ground covers beneath and around the trees to increase the amount of vegetation overhanging the channel. These plants are grouped into three categories: plants of the same genus and species as the Seattle Garden Club historic period (late 1950s and '60s); plants of the same genus as existing historic plants; or native plants.

The Corps operates the Lake Washington Ship Canal, including the Fremont and Montlake Cuts and the Chittenden Locks in Ballard. The Lake Washington Ship Canal Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and must be maintained according to federal preservation standards. The Corps' plan is to restore the aging poplar colonnade in a historically appropriate manner and to replant shrubs and ground covers that have been lost over time.