



Eddon Boat cleanup begins

First leg of multi-million dollar project to last until December

Paige Richmond
of the Gateway

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Gateway photo/Lee Giles III

Monday marked the first day that ecologist Joseph Pursley and his crew from Anchor Environmental began work on the Eddon Boat Park Project. This week, Pursley is sampling soil and overseeing contractors dredging 100 years of contaminated sediment from in front of the yard.

As of Monday, the City of Gig Harbor finally started to get its hands dirty — or at least covered in sediment. After more than two years of planning and permitting, the city launched the sediment remediation portion of the Eddon Boat Park Project, a multi-year and multi-million dollar endeavor to restore historic buildings and create a park for public access at the Eddon Boatyard.

Orange flags, massive construction equipment and men in hard hats moved onto the site Monday morning. Members of city staff — including City Engineer Steve Misiurak, Project Manager Marcos McGraw and Historic Preservation Coordinator Lita Dawn Stanton — were also at the Eddon Boat property as the project began.

Eventually, the first leg of the project will involve dredging contaminated sediment from the harbor in order to meet environmental standards. But for the next week, Anchor Environmental — the firm in charge of the project — will bring large equipment on site, sample the soil and address historic preservation issues.

The combination of environmental restrictions and historic preservation guidelines are big reasons why it has taken the city so long to begin the project, which was initially scheduled to begin in July.

It was 2004 when Gig Harbor citizens approved a \$3.5 million land acquisition bond to allow the city to purchase and improve the land where the Eddon Boatyard is located.

Since then, the city has been working with the state Department of Ecology to receive permits and approval.

“When we dig, how much we dig, and how much we dispose” is all mandated by environmental policy, said Joseph Pursley, an ecologist with Anchor.

Anchor will also have an archaeologist on site to make sure certain historic structures, including one of the boat carriages next to the dock, are properly documented and preserved.

Any time one of the workers finds a historic item, which could be anything like an abandoned boat or an automobile dumped near the boatyard, it must be properly documented.

The documentation process is one reason why restoration on the Eddon Boat Park Project has moved slowly. It's also what makes the project unique.

“The coolest thing about this project is there's dredging, historic preservation and a parks master plan,” Pursley said. “You don't come across many communities like Gig Harbor, where projects are based on historic use.”

Historic preservation has also helped the City of Gig Harbor receive additional funding. Currently, the city has received grants from the state Environmental Protection Agency, the Research Conservation Office, Department of Natural Resources and Heritage Capital Projects fund totalling nearly \$2 million.

The city had “been very aggressive about acquiring grants,” Stanton said.

Misiurak added that, between those grants and the purchase-sale agreement of the Eddon Boatyard land, it is unlikely the city will pay any money out-of-pocket for the project.

The next two months will be spent on the remediation project; after that, the city will begin to restore the boat building.

Some of the bigger expenditures, such as the \$1.2 million cost of planning the park, won't be underway until next year.

Park project timeline

The Eddon Boat Park Project will likely not be complete until 2011, when the small brick house next to the property is restored. In the meantime, here is breakdown of what the city and contractors are working on:

August through December 2008: Sediment remediation and dock removal/restoration

January through June 2009: Restoring the Eddon Boathouse, which includes community programs created by the Gig Harbor BoatShop

2010: Develop and create the public access park, located next to the yard

2011: Restore the Eddon Boat Brick house, although use of the house has yet to be decided by the City of Gig Harbor Parks Commission.

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