

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Port of Woodland Commission approved moving forward on studying mitigation, wetland restoration, environmental conditions and developing public access at Austin Point beginning this fall. Earlier this summer, the Commission limited the access to the Point due to several factors. A long-standing agreement between the Port and multiple agencies for the welfare of the Point's wetland area resurfaced during a land transaction. This along with the damage that occurred immediately following the beach clean-up, several homeless camps and illegal campers and accumulation of illegal dumping at the site.

The work will be completed by Ecological Land Services through an addendum to a contract that began in 2016 but halted pending legal action between the Port and Department of Natural Resources filed by the Columbia Riverkeepers. This summer, that legal challenge for the acquisition finalized allowing the Port to move forward with the purchase of 154 acres of property and begin planning for its future and repairing the site.

Over the next year, the Port will receive plans for restoration of the wetland area for potential mitigation credits as well as working with agencies and the Cowlitz Tribe on salmon habitat potentially using ruts as fish spawning routes on the Point.

One of the other elements for the public access will be to combined education of environment, Cowlitz Tribal historical land use, and the Columbia River Navigation Channel as an economic engine through a trail system from the south access parking area to the Lewis River mouth of the Columbia River.

"Preparing the Point for reopening the public access while planning development and meeting our obligations to the restoring damaged wetlands is a critical balance for the Port while allowing the public to use it for recreational purposes," stated Commissioner Bob Wile.

The Port will continue to provide updates to the public on this project through the Port's website at [www.portofwoodland.com](http://www.portofwoodland.com).

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About the Port of Woodland- the Port was established in 1961 and has 425 acres of industrial and agricultural property. There are 18 companies and farms at the Port creating over 300 jobs. The Commission is committed to attracting and retaining family wage jobs, supporting the industrial development and providing recreational opportunities to the region.



President Paul Cline

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