



Portage Bay Beaver Lodge – Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

As part of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project, crews working for WSDOT will work in the water in Portage Bay to replace the old, structurally vulnerable Portage Bay Bridge with two parallel, seismically resilient bridges. The project also will build a landscaped lid over SR 520 between 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East, complete the highway’s transit/HOV system between the Eastside and Seattle, and extend the regional SR 520 Trail across Portage Bay to the lid and local trail networks.

A beaver lodge is currently located in Portage Bay near the construction area. During the project’s planning and design phase, the community expressed concerns about the beavers’ safety. Neighbors emphasized the importance of the beavers and beaver lodge to the local ecosystem.

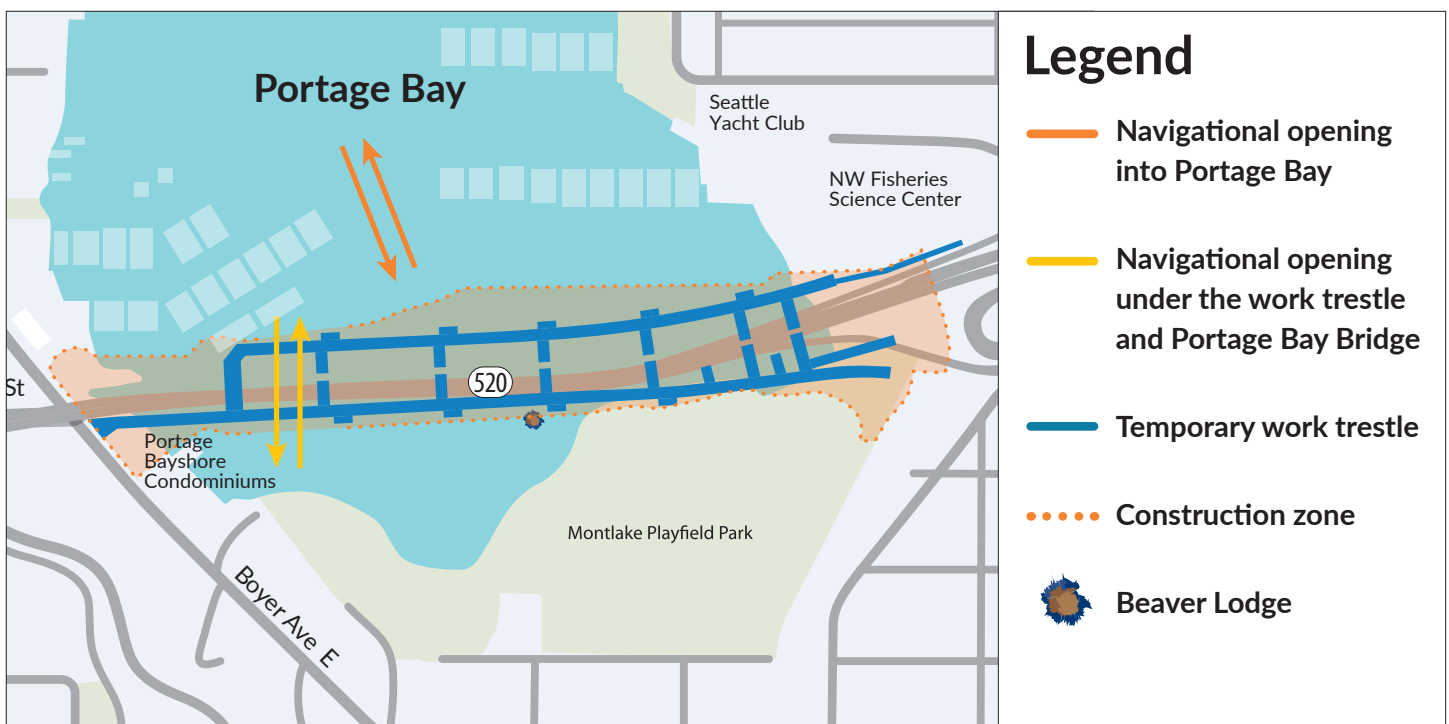
We are committed to respecting the beavers’ habitat and minimizing damage or disruption to their lodge during construction. After consulting with state and federal agencies, we decided that the best way to keep the beavers safe is to leave their lodge untouched and

work around it during construction. Relocating the beavers to another area could result in unintended consequences or even death.

Keep reading to learn more about the beaver lodge and how we plan to protect this part of the Portage Bay ecosystem.

Where is the beaver lodge in Portage Bay located?

The beaver lodge is located approximately 200 feet away from the shoreline at Montlake Playfield Park, between the shoreline and the existing Portage Bay Bridge



What will happen to the beaver lodge during construction?

The beaver lodge will stay in place during the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project construction. The contractor will use best practices to protect the environment. These include:

- Maintaining a safe distance away from the beaver lodge and keeping crews within the work zone boundaries.
- Using innovative construction methods to reduce noise and vibration in the water.
- Instead of pounding piles (bridge support structures) into the ground with an impact hammer, crews will use a vibration method to "wiggle" the piles into place. Some impact pile driving will still be needed, but the vibration method will reduce the amount of noise and vibration from pile installation.
- Installing an underwater "curtain" around the beaver lodge to cut down on noise and vibrations underwater.



Beaver lodge located in Portage Bay, July 2024. Photo: Dakota Lind

Why did we decide to keep the beaver lodge in Portage Bay?

WSDOT and Skanska worked with the Tulalip Beaver Project, a certified Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) program, to study the beaver lodge and decide the best way to protect the beavers. The WDFW evaluates risks to beaver survival and only grants a permit to move them under certain conditions.

After examining the beaver lodge, our partners decided that moving the beavers to a different location could be riskier than maintaining their lodge and

letting them stay in Portage Bay. For that reason, we decided to keep the lodge in its current spot.

What is a beaver lodge?

A beaver lodge is a home built by beavers. Lodges are typically built in ponds, lakes, or slow-moving streams as shelters. They provide a safe place for beavers to raise their young, keep them warm during cold winter temperatures and offer protection from predators.

Lodges help contribute to a healthy ecosystem, providing a safe habitat for many plant and animal species. The wood used to build the lodge provides food and shelter for insects, and other animals may use the lodges for shelter.