

BRIEFING MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 10A
Meeting Date: 1/17/24

DATE: January 9, 2024
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Jason Jordan, Director, Environmental & Planning
Project Manager: Robert Simcox, CWO, USCG
SUBJECT: USCG Marine Environmental Protection Industry Training

A. **BRIEFING PURPOSE**

Provide briefing to the Port of Tacoma Commission regarding time spent with the Port by Chief Warrant Officer Robert Simcox, USCG.

Strategic Plan Initiatives:

- **EV-4** - Partner with Regional organizations to facilitate career development and business growth in Pierce County.
- **CC-2** - Strengthen, build, and maintain strategic relationships with federal, state and local governments, and with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

B. **BACKGROUND**

The US Coast Guard provides members with the opportunity to apply for a program known as Industry Training. This program allows active-duty Coast Guard members to conduct a free internship with industry within their job specialty to gain experience with industry operations while providing a Coast Guard perspective to the host company and/or agency.

I was selected for the USCG Marine Environmental Protection Industry Training program in conjunction with my Permanent Change of Station assignment to USCG District 13 in Seattle, WA. I am an active-duty Coast Guard member of 22 years. My work and educational experience include commercial vessel inspections, waterfront facility inspections, environmental response, and emergency management.

C. **SCOPE OF WORK**

My primary assignment at the Port of Tacoma was with Environmental, Permitting and Habitat, under the direction of Tony Warfield. Working with the Port biologist, Kristin Evered, I conducted habitat monitoring and invasive species management on the Clear Creek and Lower Wapato habitat sites and Parcels 86 and 117. Additionally, I conducted community outreach by volunteering at the Puyallup Tribe Historical Hatchery. Working with Water Quality, I assisted with acquiring aerial imagery waterfront shoreline and logistics for derelict vessel removal and spill response.

Working with Alisa Praskovich, I assisted in the Port's emergency preparedness initiative to train over 25 Port of Tacoma and NWSA leaders in the Incident Command System. In addition, I supported the planning efforts for the Port's upcoming tabletop exercise in June of 2024 which included creating the incident scenario, developing exercise planning team, and creating the virtual command center using Microsoft Teams.

D. TIMEFRAME/PROJECT SCHEDULE
30 August 2023 – 12 January 2024

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Cost – Port of Tacoma expended \$125.25 for CWO Simcox to acquire a Transportation Worker Identification Credential and \$50 for a pair of chest waders.

Source of Funds - All salary and benefits remained the responsibility of the US Coast Guard.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue initiative to plan and prepare for all-hazards contingencies and adopt a cycle of training and exercising.
- Adopt a notification system that alerts employees and key stakeholders of important messaging to enhance public safety.
- Establish a story board and observation deck at Lower Wapato Habitat Site.
- Purchase a new Port of Tacoma work/response boat. Something bigger with more power.

G. TAKE AWAYS

- An understanding of the Port's initiatives in habitat compensatory mitigation.
- An understanding of the Port's role in responding to marine incidents.
- Continued relationships to enhance future initiatives and objectives.

H. NEXT STEPS

I intend to remain involved with the planned Tabletop Exercise the Port of Tacoma is hosting in June 2024. I will be interning with Resolve Marine from January until June 2024 and then report to my next duty station at USCG District 13 in Seattle, WA.