



West Point Capital Improvements

United Indians of All Tribes Seafair Powwow

Date: July 21 – July 23

Location: Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, 5011 Bernie Whitebear Way, Seattle, WA 98199

Attendance:

West Point staff engaged with over 200 Powwow visitors during the event between Friday and Sunday.

Purpose of the event:

King County was a United Indians of All Tribes Seafair Powwow and hosted an information booth to promote West Point with the public and share information about the plant's work. Community members were able to ask questions and take information about career opportunities, projects, and learn about our sewer system.



Key topics included:



- The scope, benefits, and costs of the West Point Power Quality Improvement, Grit Classifier Replacement, Raw Sewage Pumps Replacement, Passive Weir Construction, Primary Sedimentation Roof Seismic Upgrade projects among others
- Career opportunities offered by WTD workforce development and the Operator-In-Training (OIT) Program
- General education about how our sewer system works and what is okay to flush down our pipes.

Event Format:

Visitors to the County booth were able to participate in a “What to flush” experiment, review a WTD sewer map, and receive flyers for the OIT and Workforce Development program as well as materials with the QR code to the King County jobs page.





Summary of Feedback:

More than 100 of the booth visitors that visited the table were aware of West Point Treatment Plant being nearby, and expressed thanks for the service that the plant provides.

Booth visitors appeared pleased and surprised that one of the largest wastewater treatment facilities in the country is right next to the Daybreak Star Center. Most community members were not aware of the large amount of capital projects taking place at West Point over the next decade.

Questions and comments we received include:

- Why is the treatment plant in Discovery Park?
The land West Point sits on was purchased from the U.S Army when the area was still Fort Lawton. The City of Seattle obtained the land for Discovery Park after West Point was constructed. Additionally, the Fort Lawton Tunnel was finished in 1912 to transport Seattle's sewage into the Puget Sound instead of Lake Union and Lake Washington. With the previous infrastructure already in place and undeveloped land available, King County saw this as a good location for a county-wide treatment plant.
- Why is King County investing so much money into West Point?
Beginning operations in 1966 and upgrading to secondary treatment in 1990's, many of the machines and equipment at West Point are at the end of their service life. Furthermore, a growing population, climate change, and stricter environmental regulations require West Point treatment components to be upgraded, refurbished, or replaced. This will allow West Point to continue serving King County, protecting public health and the environment, for the next 50 -70 years.
- Where can I learn more about job opportunities at King County?



You can go to <https://kingcounty.gov/jobs> or email wtdworkforceprogram@kingcounty.gov to begin your search for career opportunities with King County. To learn more about the Operator-In-Training program, you can look on our webpage here: <https://kingcounty.gov/oit>.

- Why is there an odor when I go down to the Lighthouse by the treatment plant?

There can be a lot of reasons for odors by the Lighthouse. When during low tide, the beach area can smell like the wastewater at the plant at times. Another reason is the roof on the primary sedimentation tanks is currently being replaced to ensure it is seismically sound. Once, the roof is finished, the new ducting and structure will contain more of the odors from the plant.

- Why does King County allow rain water to go into the same pipes as wastewater?

When a sewer system was first built in Seattle around the turn of the 20th century, it was more efficient and cost effective to build one set of pipes instead of two. Many older cities in the U.S. constructed their sewers the same way. 100 plus years later, development and cost have made it difficult to create a sanitary sewer system and stormwater system in the Seattle area. Projects like the Ship Canal Project and programs like RainWise are cost effective approaches that will help reduce capacity problems on our sewer system. King County will continue to work with local agencies to improve our sewer system, making sure we are protecting public health and the environment for years to come.