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Logs away

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You may have seen the helicopter lifting logs on the Land Bank's Spit Preserve, Oct. 19. Many people stopped to get a good look and ask questions. The operation was a huge success, removing approximately 45 tons of creosote logs from both the Spit and Weeks Wetland. The helicopter was soon gone, but work was not over as logs from Weeks Wetland, Shaw County Park, Odlin County Park, and the Tombolo Preserve were removed the following week.

Creosote logs are toxic in several ways. The lighter compounds in creosote evaporate or dissolve in water, killing smaller organisms outright that provide food for fish. While fish can ingest the lighter compounds with minimal harm, the heavier compounds tend to cause cancer. The logs removed from Lopez and Shaw will be transported to a hazardous waste landfill where they can be safely buried.



This program is funded by oil and gas taxes, and administered by the Department of Ecology. Another partner is the Washington Conservation Corps, which provided the hard working crew who prepped the logs and moved anything small enough to be picked up by hand. The Department of Natural Resources runs the program, through its able administrator Lisa Kaufman. Lisa has worked on this project for several months, getting all the pieces to work together without a hitch. The result of this collaboration may be difficult to see if you don't spend your time looking for creosote, but cleaning up these miles of beaches will have positive effects for a long time. San Juan County owes a debt of gratitude to these folks for providing this service.

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