

**Removal of River Encampment Debris Scheduled**  
Temporary Closure of Sections of the Greenway Trail Anticipated

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, September 28, 2022**

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YAKIMA – The Board of Yakima County Commissioners has announced that a helicopter airlift to remove over nine tons of debris along the Yakima and Naches rivers is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5th beginning at 9:00 A.M.

The debris, associated with six abandoned encampments on public properties in the 13-mile Selah Gap to Union Gap area, includes human waste, garbage, and syringes. The waste is located on islands in the Yakima River, along the floodways, and in other fragile riparian areas difficult to reach by foot or to access by heavy equipment. Airlifting out the waste protects the rivers, the ecosystem, and ensures that waste will not be washed downstream during the next high-water event.

“Abandoned camps pose serious public health and safety risks to our community, the environment, and the campers themselves,” stated County Commission Chair Amanda McKinney. “Hepatitis B among campers, wildfires, and risk to first responders who rescue campers during flooding events put our entire community at risk. Our goal is to encourage campers to avail themselves of sanctioned shelters, and to return the river areas to the public purpose for which they are intended.”

County staff has worked for several weeks to bag the debris and stage it for the airlift. An estimated 75 bags, each weighing approximately 250 pounds, has been collected thus far, with more waste anticipated to be bagged before Wednesday's removal.

Funding for the airlift is made possible by the Yakima Health District and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Yakima County Commissioners have committed funds to cover landfill tipping fees for community cleanups.

**Greenway Trail Closure.** The section of the Greenway between Boise Pond and the McGuire Playground will be closed to pedestrians and cyclists during the airlift to ensure public safety as loads are lifted from staging areas and deposited at pick-up locations. Trucks may also use the paved trails to move staff.

The airlift is anticipated to take up to six hours. Please see the attached map for the precise locations.

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YAKIMA COUNTY  
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

## Staging Areas for Airlift

### -Yakima River

1	120°29.3994007'W 46°37.1767693'N
2	120°29.4062845'W 46°37.0984148'N
Drop Area	120°29.4173833'W 46°36.8946347'N

0 0 100 200 400 600 800 Feet

Scale: 1:3,840  
1 inch equals 320 feet

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Last updated on Tuesday, September 27, 2022 by mikel.



# Staging Areas for Airlift

## -Naches River

- 1** 120°32.9300815'W  
46°37.4670539'N
- 2** 120°32.8196546'W  
46°37.4819639'N
- 3** 120°32.6984766'W  
46°37.4209729'N
- 4** 120°32.6332836'W  
46°37.4354668'N
- Drop Area** 120°33.6641077'W  
46°37.4935520'N



Scale: 1:6,000  
1 inch equals 500 feet

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