Victoria to Esquimalt Cable Replacement Project – Community Construction Report #14

June 2026

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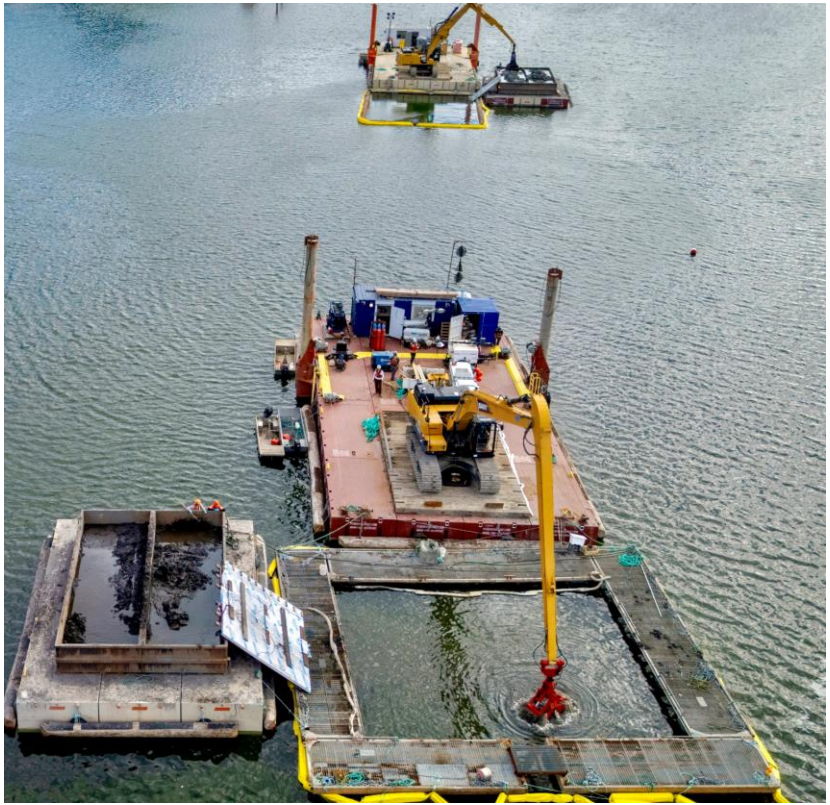
Project status

- Esquimalt Substation: Completion of cable duct bank placed around the perimeter of the site. Power cable pulled through underground conduit. New safety fence placed along E&N Trail.
- Banfield Park: Banfield Park Trail closure and detour delayed from June 15 to July 2. Crews will begin building an access road for the foreshore trench work. A Request for Proposal for the saltmarsh construction (by barge) along the southern portion of the Banfield Park shoreline will be issued in July for construction in December. More details will be provided in the July report.
- Gorge Waterway marine work: Excavation of trench within the marine area, only accessible by barge, has proceeded well and nearing completion. Will be preparing the trench for the conduit placement in August. Tentative start date of full marine closure to the west side of the Selkirk Trestle, for up to ten days, is August 19.
- Viaduct Park: There was a delay in construction and crews began June 25 to build the access road into the foreshore area. Excavation of the trench in the foreshore area may begin next week. Galloping Goose Regional Trail detour continues.
- Topaz Avenue: Crews completed work around the concrete vault and duct bank.
- Cable pulling: Four of six cable pulling sections along the project route are complete. Final two sections of cable pulling planned for September.



June 3: Barges and equipment removing sediment for the marine trench to place the conduit for the power cables.

Construction photos: Esquimalt Substation

June 11: Work on the fence along the edge of the substation facility and the E&N Trail. Inset photo: ongoing cable duct bank work.

Cable pulling photo: Esquimalt Substation

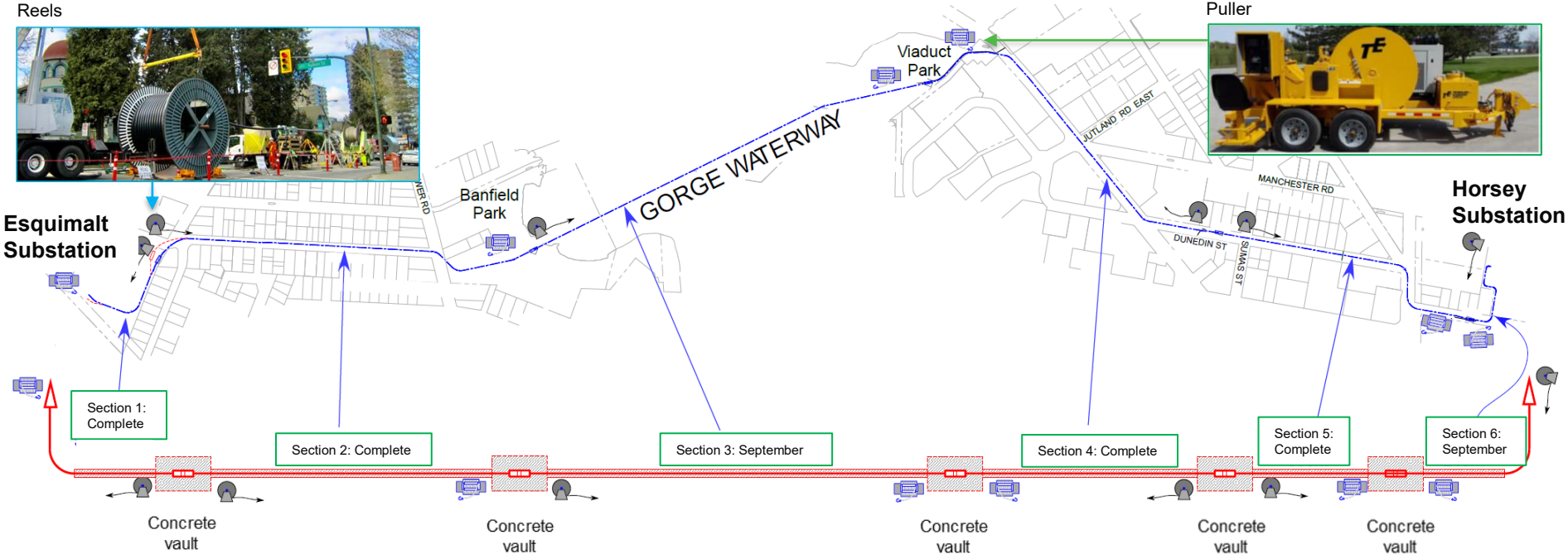
June 23: Cable reel on Devonshire Road and preparing to pull cable through the new duct bank within the Esquimalt Substation.

Cable pulling photo: Esquimalt Substation

June 23: Cable crews getting ready to pull cable into the substation.

Cable pulling through underground conduits: schedule

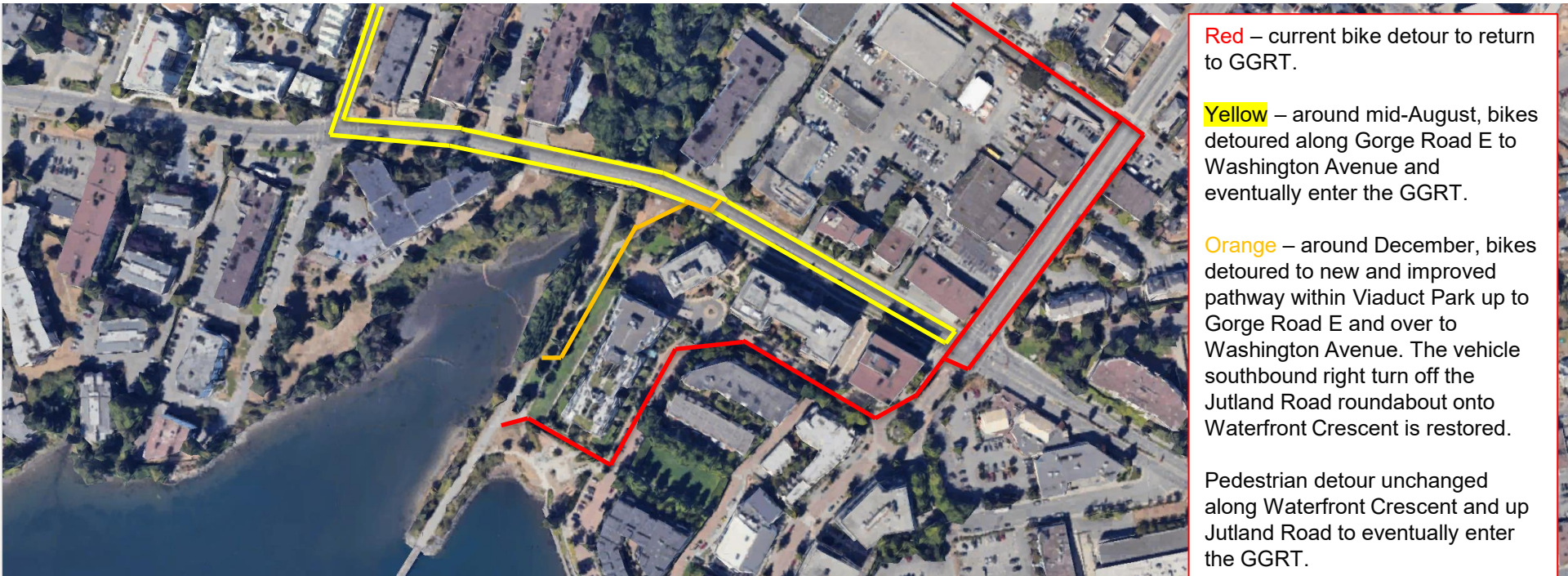
There are six cable pulling sections and they are shown below.



In June, Section 1 was completed. The final two of the six cable pulls are planned in September. The power line in-service date is early fall 2026.

Viaduct Park – Galloping Goose Regional Trail (GGRT) detour

BC Hydro, City of Victoria and Capital Regional District are closely coordinating on the detour routes and the three separate capital upgrade projects. The GGRT detour is planned to be in place to spring 2027. The bike detour will adjust around mid-August and again around December as these three capital projects progress. See bike map below and two detour adjustments to come. Please follow signage and the CRD website. We thank you for your patience and please be safe.



Red – current bike detour to return to GGRT.

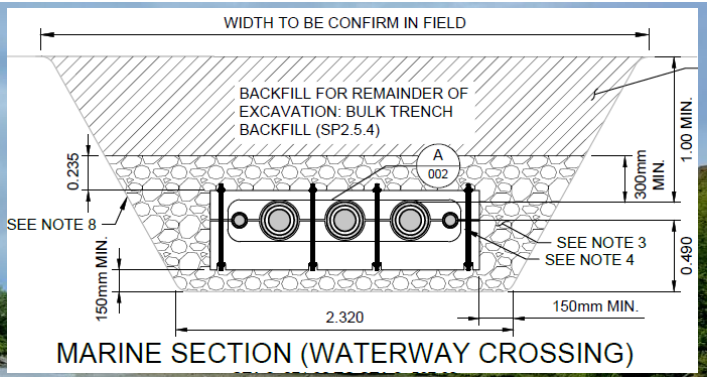
Yellow – around mid-August, bikes detoured along Gorge Road E to Washington Avenue and eventually enter the GGRT.

Orange – around December, bikes detoured to new and improved pathway within Viaduct Park up to Gorge Road E and over to Washington Avenue. The vehicle southbound right turn off the Jutland Road roundabout onto Waterfront Crescent is restored.

Pedestrian detour unchanged along Waterfront Crescent and up Jutland Road to eventually enter the GGRT.

Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: A low ocean tide and the visible trench excavation progress. The trench is 1.5 metres deep and up to 10 metres wide at the top. The inset diagram shows the trench configuration and conduit placement. The three large pipes are for the cables and the two smaller pipes are for BC Hydro's fibre-optics/communications. The marine work got off to a good start with the sediment being compact, almost clay-like, versus muddy and loose. The surrounding compact sediment has maintained the trench form.

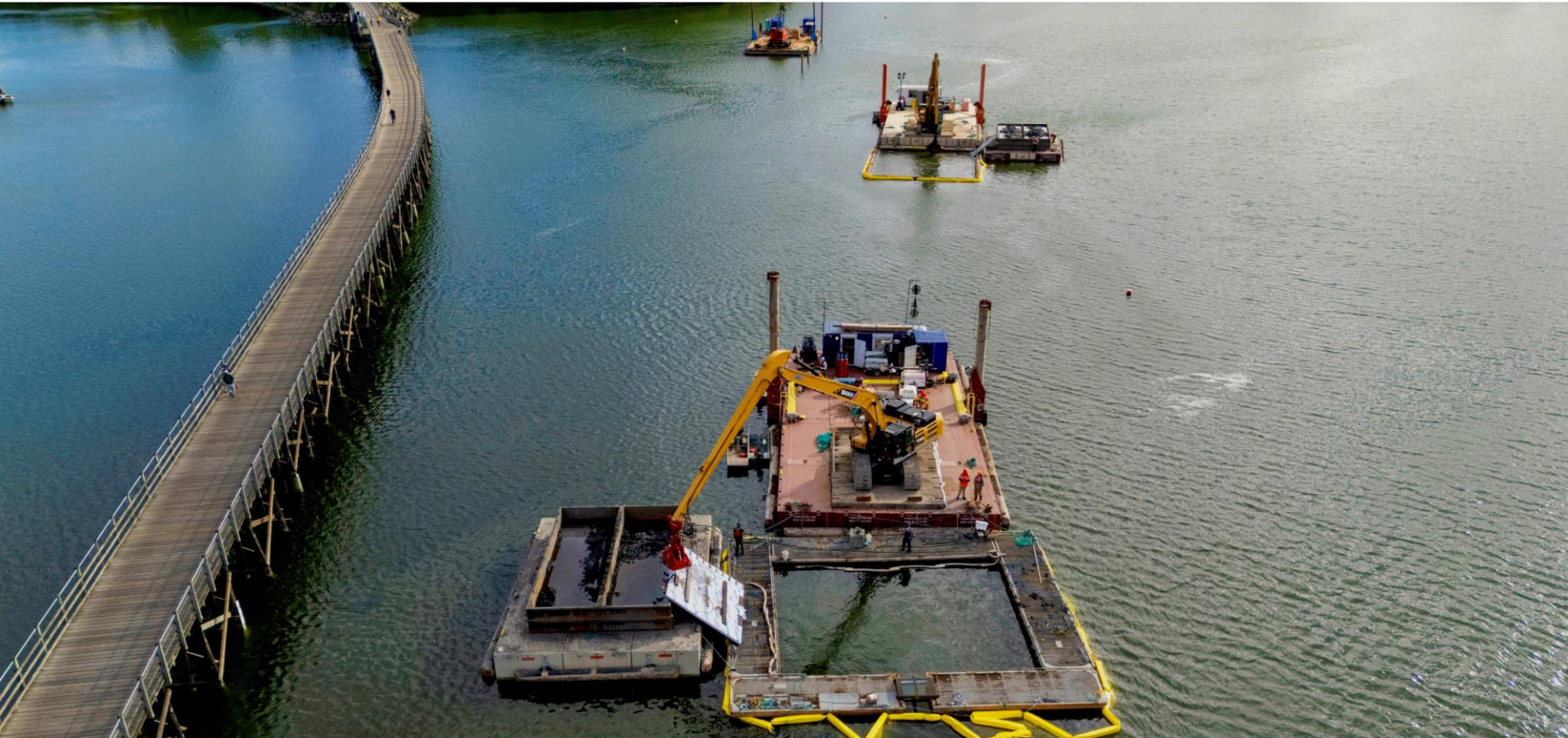


Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: High tide and the barges in place and working. Two barges and excavators operating to remove sediment for the trench. An archaeology monitor, with a Songhees First Nation member supporting, watch the removed sediment. No archeological material has been found to date.

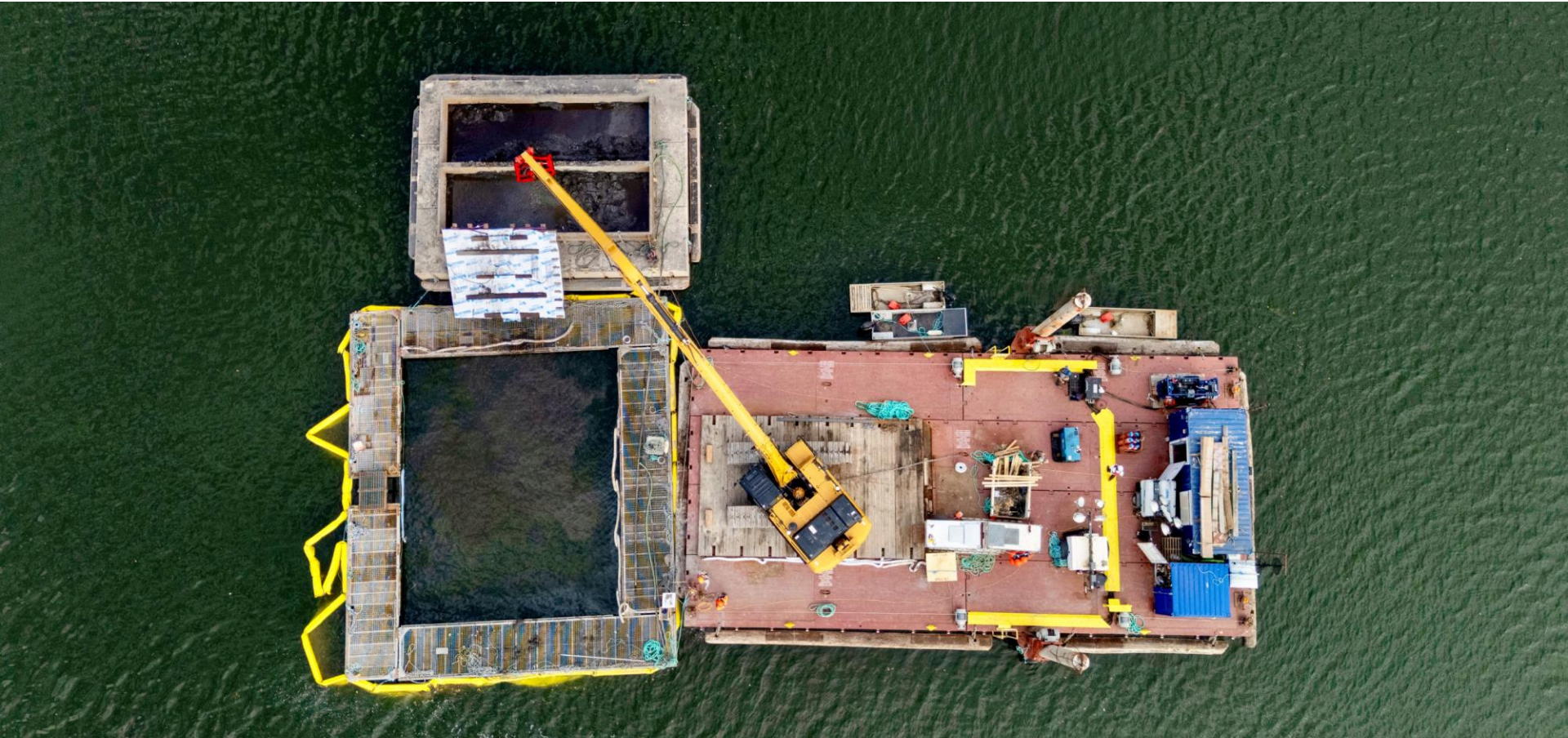
Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: Another angle of the working barges near the Selkirk Trestle / Galloping Goose Regional Trail. For trail users, mainly e-bikes and one or two-wheel segways, please be mindful of pedestrians watching the construction activities.



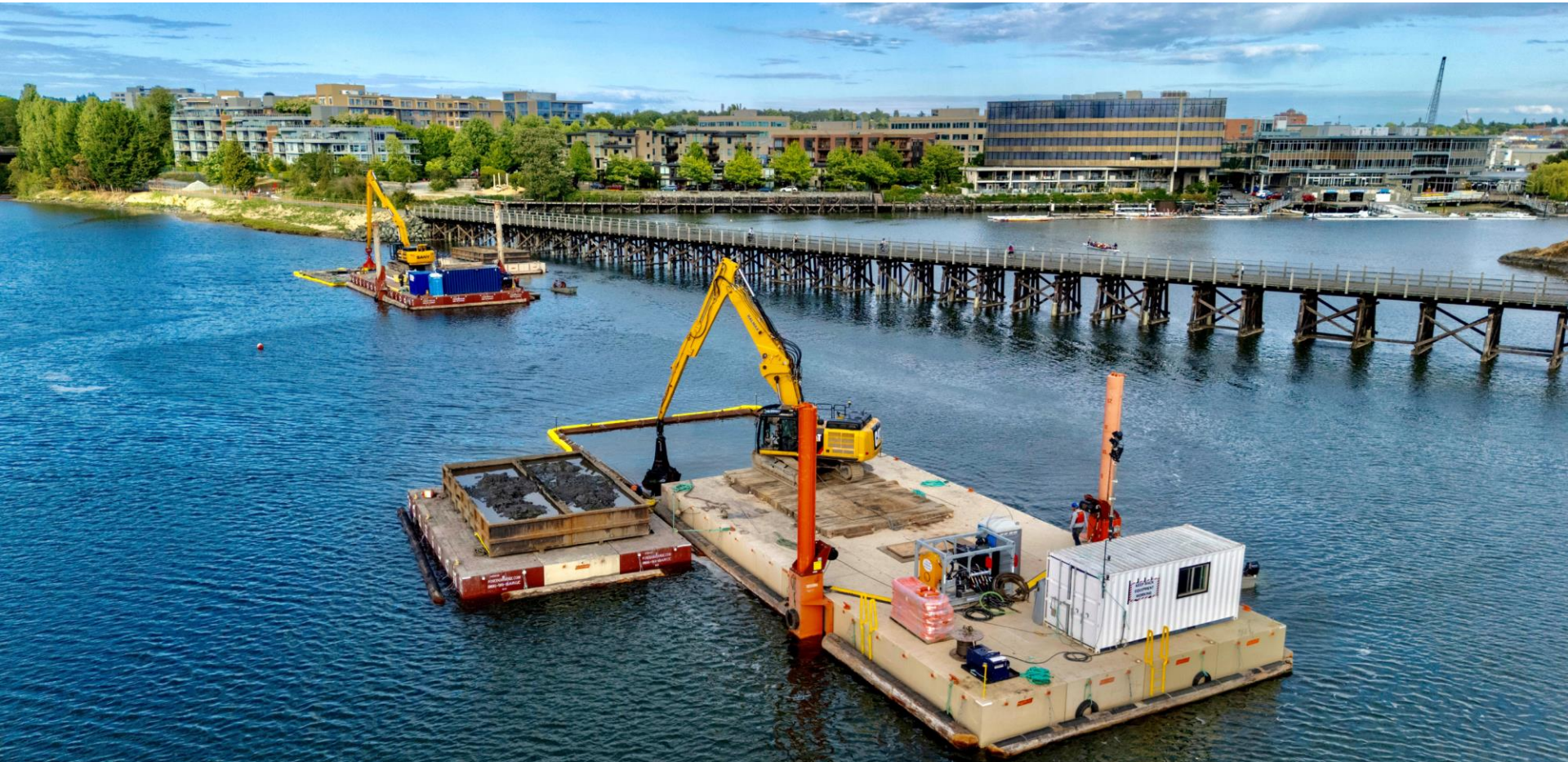
Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: A large wood plank with a white sheet is placed between the silt curtain work area and the loading barge to keep any material that may drip from the moving bucket to stay within the silt curtain area.



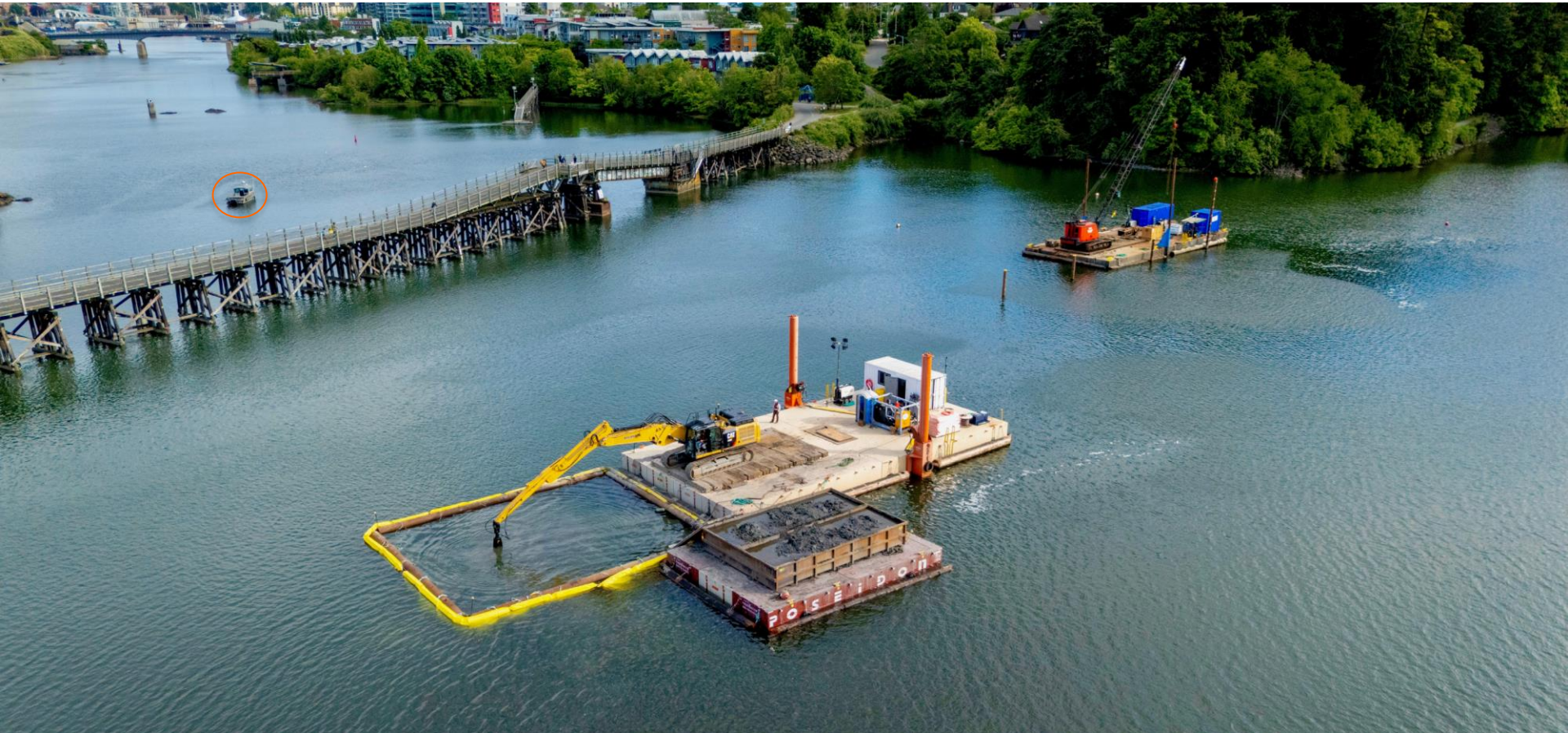
Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: Barges and equipment on the west side of the Selkirk Trestle. Viaduct Park is in the background.



Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 3: A project pilot boat, circled orange, coordinates marine traffic and barge traffic under the Selkirk Trestle. BC Hydro issues a weekly update to a distribution list of water users and business users of the Gorge Waterway for situational awareness.

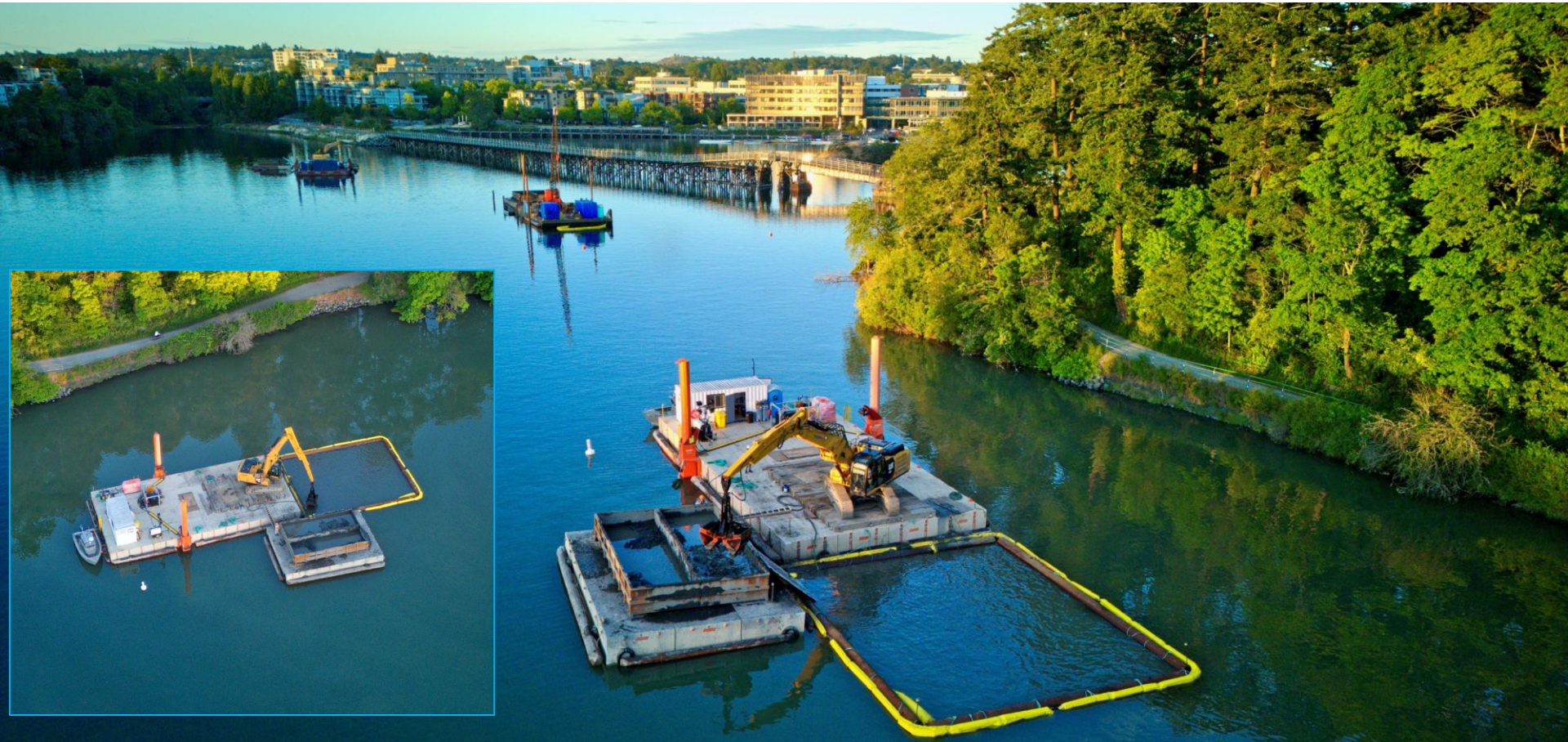


Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

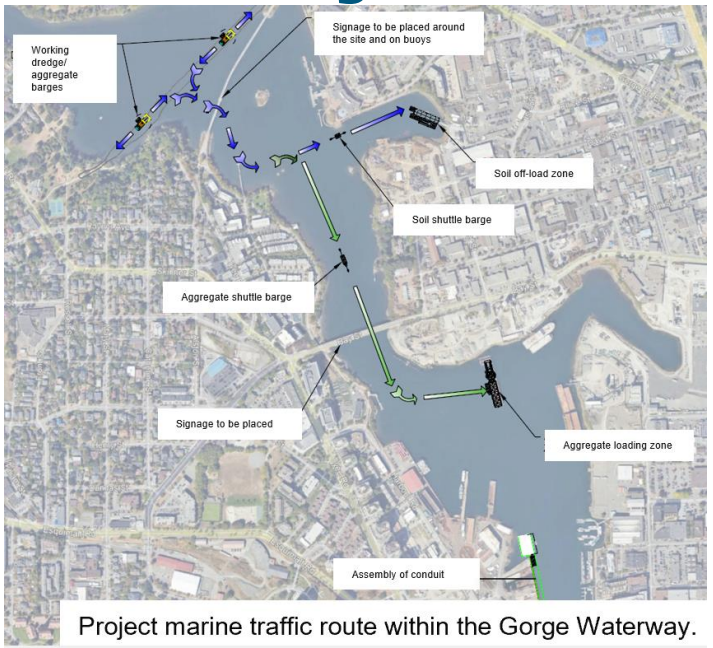
June 6: Banfield Park during the start of Vic West Fest (~2,500 people attended) with the Gorge Waterway and the construction barges in the background. BC Hydro was a sponsor of the festival and had a booth shown within the blue circle.

Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 11: Trench excavation work at Banfield Park during high tide.



Construction photos: Gorge Waterway



Project marine traffic route within the Gorge Waterway.

June 11: Sediment barge movements.

- Photo 1: A full barge moving towards the Selkirk Trestle opening.
- Photo 2: Thru the trestle opening and turning right to avoid a shallow rock outcrop
- Photo: Dusk, and another full barge moving past the Selkirk Trestle.

The blue arrows in the map above show the path of sediment barges for off-load and return.

Sediment quality: Gorge Waterway work area

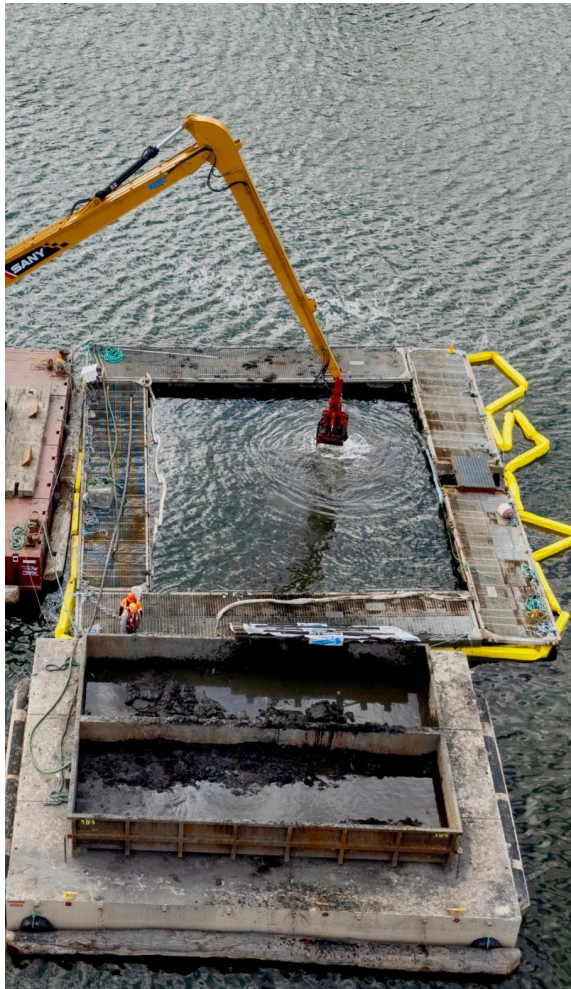
There is a long history of industrial use in and around the Gorge Waterway.

BC Hydro has qualified registered professionals to support marine project risks and application of mitigation measures to the overall environmental management for BC Hydro's shallow burial construction from the two foreshores and marine area. The sediment quality in the vicinity of Cecelia Creek is worse than sediment quality near Banfield Park. Dredge sediment on the Viaduct Park side has grey silts that are somewhat clay-like, with some organic-rich dark brown sand (possibly from historical sewage deposits) mixed with outwash from Cecilia Creek. These sediments have been heavily impacted by past industrial use.

BC Hydro is removing ~14,000 cubic metres of industrial land plus material from the Gorge Waterway for offsite disposal and replacing that material with clean fill and rock. Dredged sediments are being sent to a licensed waste soil treatment facility in the Lower Mainland. The dredge equipment removing the sediment for the trench is contained by a silt curtain. The barges transporting the sediment are sealed.

BC Hydro has a water quality monitoring program in place to support project construction. Water quality samples are taken daily for turbidity (NTU) and dissolved oxygen within the construction area by an Environmental Monitor for the contractor and audited by BC Hydro. There are also weekly samples taken for analysis in the wider Gorge Waterway area from Cecelia Creek, the trestle and Banfield Park for background measures. Samples were also taken prior to marine construction. The objective is to support whether water quality is impacted by project activities, and to date, the construction containment tactics are working as the surrounding water quality samples are in-line with pre-construction water samples.

Trench marine sediment removal is planned to be complete by the week of July 6. Marine work after that period will be placing clean material.



Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 11: Evening view of the work area by Banfield Park and an empty sediment barge moving into place to be refilled.

Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 11: A wide view of the work area and Victoria.

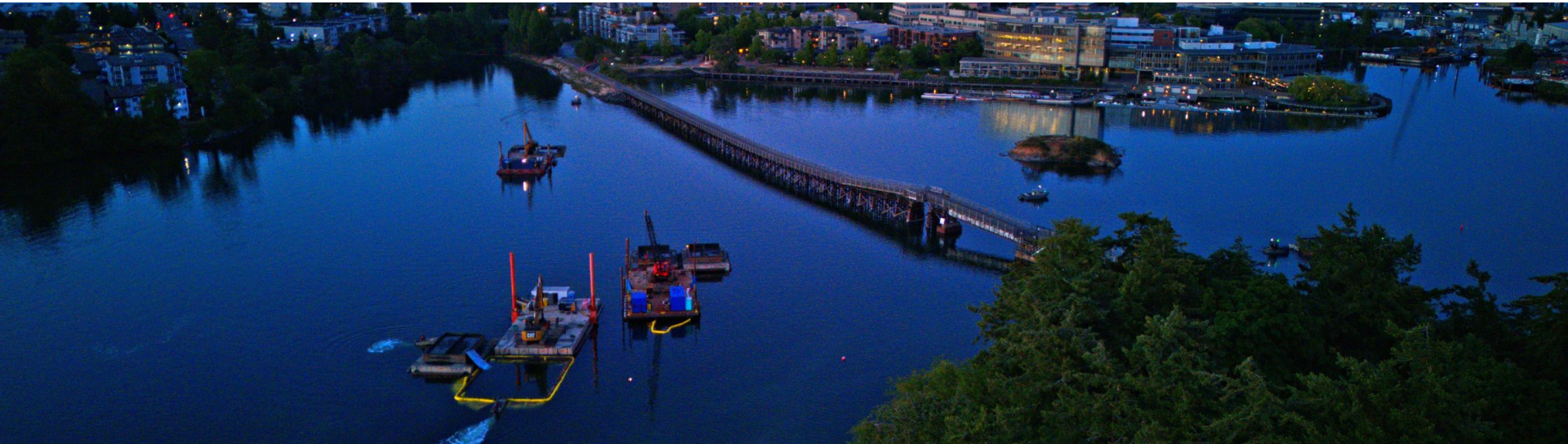
Construction noise: Gorge Waterway

We have heard from some residents around the Gorge Waterway about the nighttime construction noise. The challenge of the marine work is barge accessibility to the sediment along the cable duct bank route. Barges can only access most of the areas at high tide. In early June, crews were working at times until 4:00 am. The night work has reduced since then. Weekly excavation will continue Monday to Saturday with timing adjusted for ocean tides.

- Week of June 22: started around 12:00-2:00 pm and finish/demobilize from the site by about 9:30 pm.
- Week of June 29: start around 3:00-4:00 pm and finish/demobilize from the site by about 11:30pm-12:30am.
- Week of July 6: start around 1:00-3:00 pm and finish/demobilize from the site by about 9:30-11:30 pm.

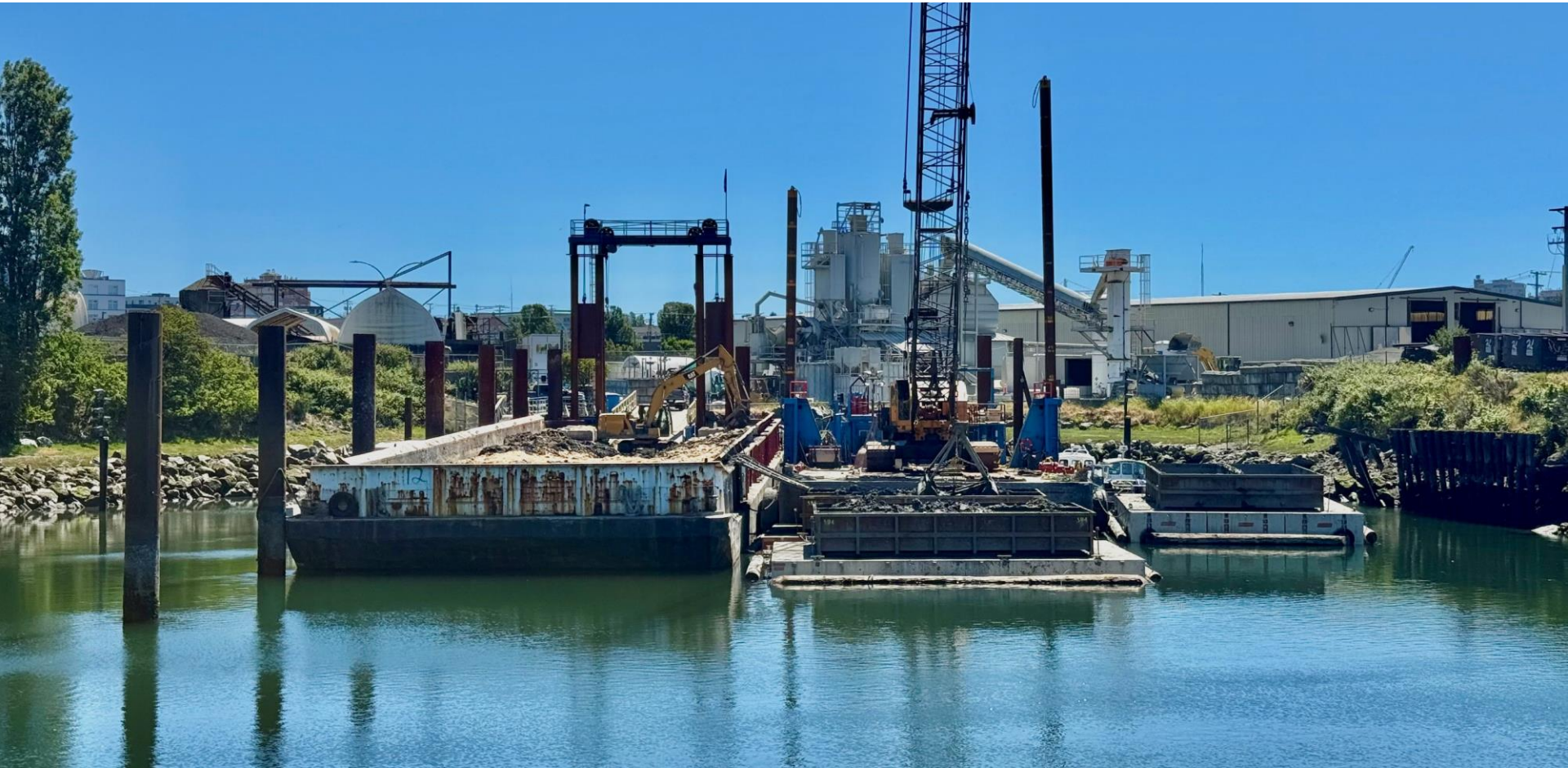
We have employed some sound mitigation measure though a challenge given the nature of the work.

Lights shining into residential areas has also been raised. The barge lights are not on poles like a stadium or sports field, as they are near the back of the barge and shine forward, at a slight angle, along the elongated area of the barge, excavator, and moon pool. The lighting is for worker safety so they can see all the work areas and prevent slips/trips/falls.



Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 18: Marine sediment off-loaded from the smaller barges into a large barge for transport to a disposal facility in the Lower Mainland.



Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

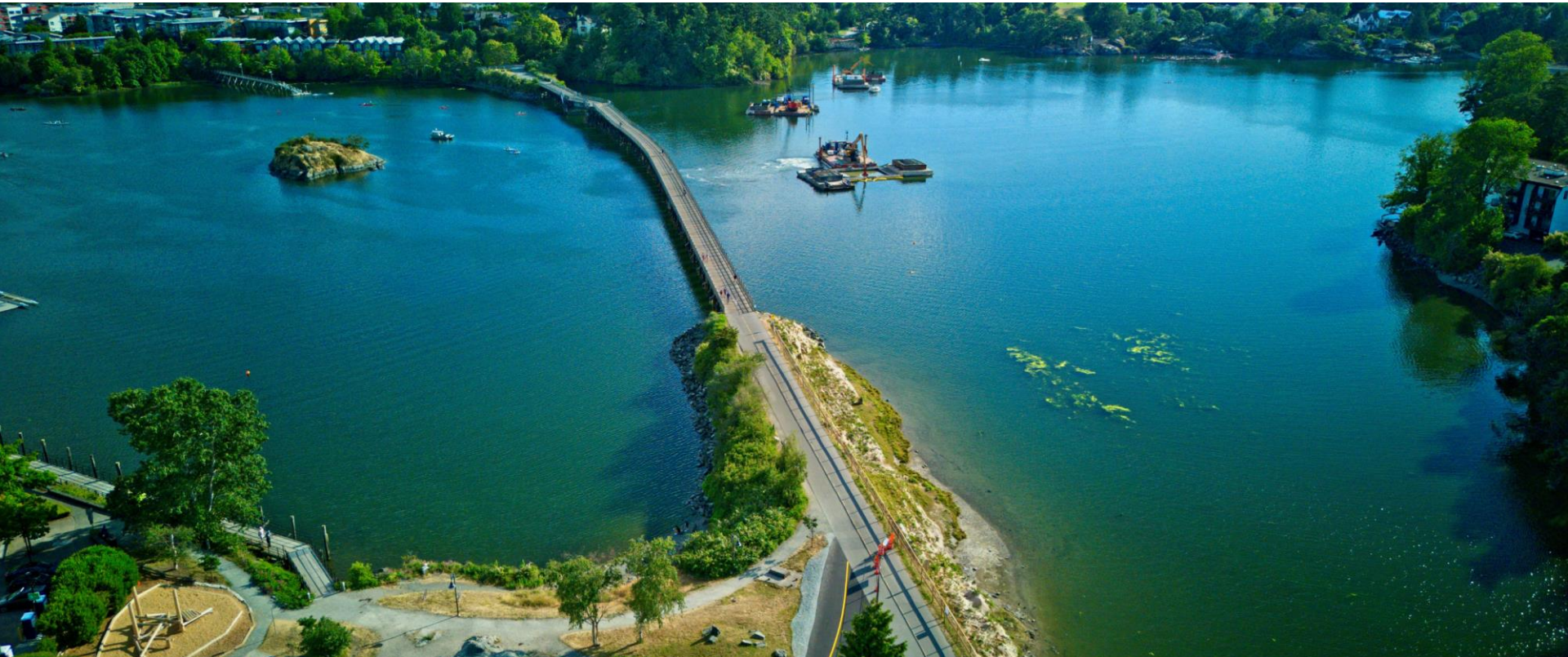
June 23: Barge and equipment moving into place at Banfield Park to continue with the trench work. In addition to buoys, there is often verbal communication from crews to recreation users, in this case paddle boarders, on what direction to go when barges are moving.

Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 23: Barges and equipment working during the higher ocean tide. A busy Banfield Park Dock in the foreground during a warm evening. The inset sign is posted on the dock walkway and around Banfield Park. No swimming within 50 m of work area signs are also posted on buoys.

Construction photos: Gorge Waterway

June 23: Two barges and excavators working at two sites, with Viaduct Park in the foreground.
By the end of June, about 5,800 cubic metres of sediment had been removed. The marine trench excavation accessible by barge only is nearly complete. The total 660-metre-long trench length including foreshore to foreshore is 65% complete. Barge work will continue as crews place bedding material in the marine trench to prepare for the conduit placement in August. The full marine traffic closure for up to 10 days to allow for the sinking of the conduit, to the west side of the Selkirk Trestle, may begin around August 19.



Community engagement

The project attended and had booths at three recent community events to engage with people in two-way communication on the project and to hear feedback or suggestions about project community impacts to trails, roads and marine watercraft and swimmers.

Photo 1: May 31 – Gorge Narrows Rowing Club event (30 engagements).
Photo 2: June 6 – Vic West Fest 2026 at Banfield Park (42 engagements).
Photo 3: June 21 – Point Hope Maritime Open House (~150 engagements).

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