



Response to Comments

Draft Periodic Review, and proposed Hazardous Sites List and groundwater covenant removal for the BNSF Parkwater Railyard

Public comment period held May 16 – June 15, 2022
Facility Site ID: 676, Cleanup Site ID: 1318

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Spokane, Washington

June 2022

Document Information

This document is available on the Washington Department of Ecology's [BNSF Parkwater Railyard cleanup site page](#).¹

Related Information

- Facility site ID: 676
- Cleanup site ID: 1318

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¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/1318>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Cleanup-sites>

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Accountability-transparency/Our-website/Accessibility>

Toxics Cleanup in Washington State

Accidental spills of dangerous materials and past business practices have contaminated land and water throughout the state. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Toxics Cleanup Program (TCP) works to remedy these situations through cleanup actions. TCP cleanup actions range from simple projects requiring removal of a few cubic yards of contaminated soil to large, complex projects requiring engineered solutions.

Contaminated sites in Washington are cleaned up under the [Model Toxics Control Act](#)⁴ (MTCA, Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code), a citizen-mandated law passed in 1989. This law sets standards to ensure toxics cleanup protects human health and the environment and includes opportunities for public input.

Public Comment Period Summary

Ecology held a comment period May 16 through June 15, 2022, for the draft [Periodic Review Report](#)⁵ and our proposal to remove the BNSF Parkwater Railyard from the Hazardous Sites List and the restrictions on groundwater use. More information is available in the [public notice](#)⁶ we mailed to the surrounding community.

Ecology appreciates the comments we received from one person. We address them in the Response to Comments section that begins on Page 4. We finalized the draft Periodic Review without further changes and are removing the site from the Hazardous Sites List and the groundwater restrictions.

Site Background

The site is an active railyard covering about 130 acres. BNSF Railway Company and other railroads have run the railyard since the early 1900s. Until 1959, it supported railyard operations including fueling, maintenance and repair, intermodal operations, and switching. When the roundhouse was demolished in 1959, these activities continued in a lesser capacity until 2004 when most fueling moved to a new facility in Hauser, Idaho.

From 2004 through today, refueling, maintenance, and switching operations continue. Western Fruit Express Company's maintenance facility is also on site. The facility is used for rail car and equipment storage and maintenance. About 3 acres of the site were leased to other industries, including Koch Materials, Tri-State Oil, Continental Coal Company, Service Asphalt, and Blackline.

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Rules-directing-our-cleanup-work/Model-Toxics-Control-Act>

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/111492>

⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/111848>

Petroleum products were found in groundwater and a variety of contaminants were found in soil: construction debris, metals, naphthalene, petroleum products, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and polychlorinated biphenyls.

Some contaminated soil was covered with protective caps and a treatment system decreased groundwater contamination, but unsafe levels of contaminants remained, so environmental covenants (an institutional control) were filed for soil and groundwater. The covenants restricted groundwater use and prohibited disturbing contaminated soil.

Ecology reviewed six years of monitoring data and found soil and groundwater now meet state standards. No further cleanup is required, except maintaining soil caps.

Response to Comments

The comment letter is printed verbatim. Ecology's response follows the comments.

Debbie Burkett, received online May 30

I'm not an engineer or an expert on toxic clean up but your pamphlet on the BNSF Parkwater Railyard cleanup made absolutely no sense to me. It sounds like you either capped it, causing the pollutants to remain where they were, or dug them up and reburied the contaminated soil at another location. How does either of those options make any sense to you? What was gained by either operation? Please explain.

Ecology's response

Thank you for your comments. I apologize that our mailing wasn't clear on the cleanup that took place.

The soil cleanup involved several activities. Most of the contaminated soil was excavated and disposed at a landfill. In a few areas, the area of contaminated soil was quite large, or it was between buildings so couldn't be excavated without affecting the building foundations. So, in those areas, we capped the soil in place. The caps protect the contaminated soil from wind or erosion, so that it remains on site and no people or animals can be exposed. There is an environmental covenant that is filed to make sure that the caps remain in place and stay protective. An environmental covenant is a legal document recorded with the property deed that requires or prohibits certain actions to ensure that everything stays safe.