

# BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Railyard



BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Site

## Comments accepted:

July 15, 2022 – August 15, 2022

## Submit comments:

### Online:

<https://tcp.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=bhB8U>

### Or by mail to:

John Mefford, Site Manager  
 1250 W. Alder Street  
 Union Gap, WA 98903-0009  
 (509) 731-9613  
[John.Mefford@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:John.Mefford@ecy.wa.gov)

## Site info:

[https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/clean\\_upsearch/site/230](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/clean_upsearch/site/230)

**Facility Site ID:** 1625461

**Cleanup Site ID:** 230

## Document review locations:

Goldendale Community Library  
 131 W. Burgen Street  
 Goldendale, WA 98620  
 (509) 773-4487  
 Mon. – Sat. 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Department of Ecology  
 1250 W. Alder Street  
 Union Gap, WA 98903-0009  
 (509) 575-2490  
 Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## Feasibility Study Available for Review and Comment

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is providing an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the draft Feasibility Study (FS) for the uplands portion for the BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Railyard site, located at 500 Main Street in Wishram.

Ecology is asking for your comments on the uplands Feasibility Study.

You are invited to:

- Review the *“Uplands Feasibility Study Report, BNSF Wishram Railyard (Ecology Site Name BNSF Track Switching Facility), Wishram, Washington”* dated May 26, 2022.
- Send your comments to Ecology for consideration. Comments will be accepted July 15, 2022 through August 15, 2022

A Remedial Investigation (RI) shows what types of contamination exist and how far the contamination has spread (nature and extent of contamination). A Feasibility Study (FS) outlines a variety of cleanup options to address contamination by reducing or eliminating the risk to human health and the environment. A Draft Cleanup Action Plan (DCAP) describes the final cleanup action selected for the site from the alternatives presented in the FS and will be available for public review and comment.

A public comment period on the RI was held in early 2021 after Ecology approved the uplands RI in late 2020. No comments were received.

Following approval of the FS, the uplands DCAP will be prepared for public review and comment after the final draft is complete.

During the RI, the investigation revealed sediment contamination. Currently, the investigation of the sediments continues and a separate RI will describe the in-water portion of contamination. The overall process for the sediment cleanup unit will follow the same sequence as described above for the uplands. The existing AO incorporates the in-water portion of the investigation.

## Site Background

The Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railway developed the site in the early 1900s and an Engine House, turntable, and several smaller outbuildings were constructed. Historically, actions at the site were engine and railcar repairs, fueling and watering locomotives, and railcar switching. Over time, additional features were added to the facility including a concrete sump, a railcar repair shop, a 30,000-barrel oil aboveground storage tank (AST), an elevated oil service 28,000-gallon AST, an oil-unloading trough, as well as the associated connections and piping. These structures have since been decommissioned. Currently, the major activity at the railyard is railcar switching.

From 1912 to 1956, steam locomotives were fueled using Bunker C heavy oil. In 1949, a fueling island was constructed, including two underground storage tanks (USTs): one 15,000-gallon and one 20,000-gallon. By the late 1950s, the Bunker C oil ASTs were removed and two 100,000-gallon diesel ASTs were constructed for the transition to diesel locomotives. Underground piping to and from the tanks transported the diesel fuel. From the early 1950s to the 1970s, diesel fueling occurred at the facility. By the late 1970s, the facility operators decommissioned the two diesel ASTs since fueling activities ceased. SPS removed the railcar repair shop in 1960 and the Engine House in the 1980s.

In 1957, after the completion of The Dalles Dam, the impounded water level of the Columbia River rose by approximately 40 feet and engulfed a portion of the shoreline. Currently, the in-water portion of the shoreline is a reserved fishing area for the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation whose members exercise their rights under the treaty.

In 1970, a merger between several railroads, including the Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railway created the Burlington Northern Railroad, now known as BNSF Railway (BNSF). BNSF currently owns the site.

## What Has Been Done?

In the early 2000s, BNSF performed a UST site assessment. The report revealed heavy oil and diesel in soil at concentrations above state cleanup levels. Since then, BNSF investigated other areas of concern, most of which are associated with former process areas.

In 2015, Ecology and BNSF entered into an Agreed Order to complete an RI/FS and DCAP. Portions of the monitoring well network continue to show heavy oil and diesel contamination in upland areas at concentrations above state cleanup levels. Investigation continues for the in-water portion of the site.

## Why This Matters?

Diesel and oil (petroleum products) are hazardous substances and cleaning up the site will help reduce or eliminate the potential harmful effects of the contaminants and protect human health and the environment.

## What Happens Next?

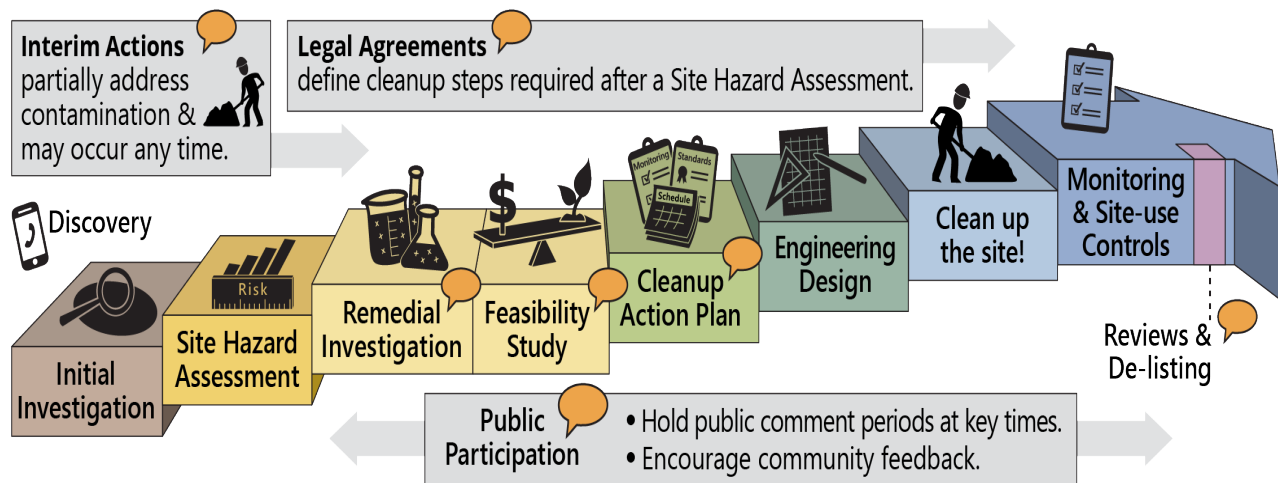
After the public comment period ends, Ecology will review and respond to comments received and will hold a public meeting if 10 or more people request one.

For information about other opportunities for public involvement, such as meetings, hearings, open houses, and workshops, please visit Ecology’s Public Involvement Calendar at <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>.

## Ecology’s Cleanup Process

The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is Washington’s environmental cleanup law. It provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect human health and the environment. Ecology enacts the MTCA and oversees cleanup.

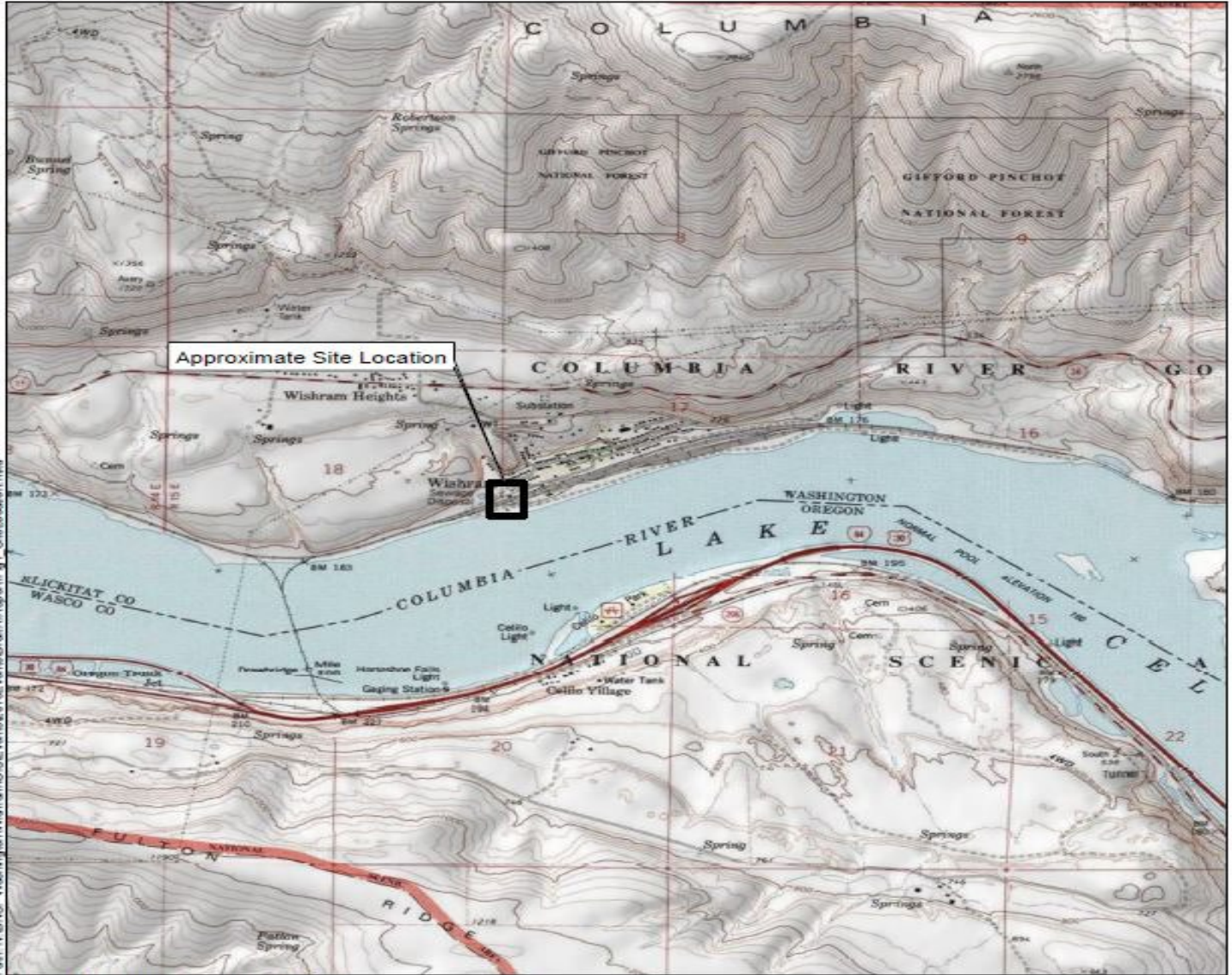
The MTCA site cleanup process is completed in steps (see below) over a timeline. Timelines may change from project to project.



Steps in the cleanup process under Washington’s cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA).



## BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Railyard Site Map



### **BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Railyard Feasibility Study Available for Review**

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#### **Contact information**

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509-731-9613

#### **ADA accessibility**

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 509-406-6931 or email at Rhonda.Luke@ecy.wa.gov, or visit [ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility](http://ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility). For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.