

Whatcom Waterway Site



Whatcom Waterway

Comments accepted

April 24 – May 23, 2023

Submit comments

Online at:

www.bit.ly/Ecology-WhatcomWaterway-Comments

Or by mail to:

Lucy McInerney, Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
PO Box 330316
Shoreline, WA 98133-9716
425-410-1400
Lucy.McInerney@ecy.wa.gov

Document review

www.bit.ly/Ecology-WhatcomWaterway

Bellingham Public Library
210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225

Site info

Facility Site ID: 2899
Site Cleanup ID: 219

Documents ready for public review

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites you to review an amendment to the existing Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) for the in-water Whatcom Waterway Site (Site) on the Bellingham waterfront.

The CAP amendment is part of a legal agreement between Ecology, the Port of Bellingham (Port), the City of Bellingham (City), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The CAP amendment:

- sequences design and construction activities to prioritize early cleanup at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST).
- documents a possible future change to the cleanup action at the head of the Whatcom Waterway to provide habitat benefit.
- revises the cleanup action for the Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB), including dredged material disposal, due to changes in land use plans.
- adds a cleanup standard for dioxin and furan compounds due to regulatory changes.

An updated Public Participation Plan for the Site will also be available for review. This removes the Public Participation Plan as an exhibit to the legal agreement and makes it a standalone document.

For document review assistance, please contact:

Ian Fawley, Outreach Planner; Ian.Fawley@ecy.wa.gov; 425-324-5901

For outreach event information, see Page 2 →

Outreach events

Ecology and RE Sources will host consecutive outreach events to provide project information and answer questions. RE Sources will host a walking shoreline tour of the Site followed by an open house hosted by Ecology. Ecology and Port site managers will join both the walking tour and open house.

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Walking Tour: 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

- Meet outside Granary Building next to Whatcom Waterway
- For details visit: www.re-sources.org/events
- This walking tour is funded by a Public Participation Grant from Ecology.

Open House: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

- Meet inside Granary Building in blu.ink Collective Multipurpose Room

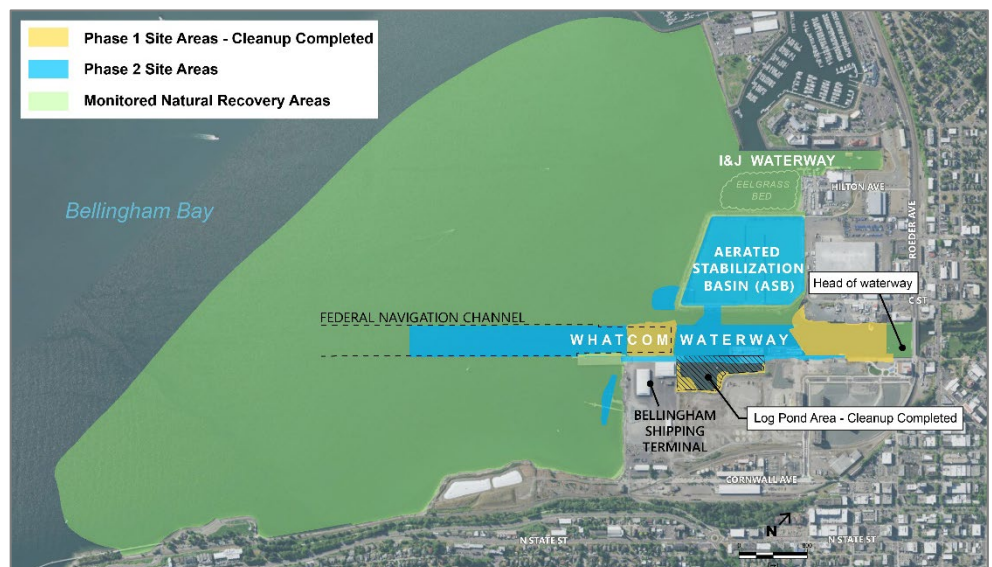


Granary Building on Whatcom Waterway and location of walking tour and open house events

Site information

The over 700 acre Site is located within Bellingham Bay south of the Holly Street bridge in Bellingham, Washington. Most of the Site is owned by the State of Washington.

The cleanup of the Log Pond Area (6 acres) was completed in 2001, and Phase 1 Site Areas (18 acres) was completed in 2016. Monitoring of these areas and natural recovery areas (636 acres) continues. The cleanup of Phase 2 Site Areas (71 acres) remains to be performed.



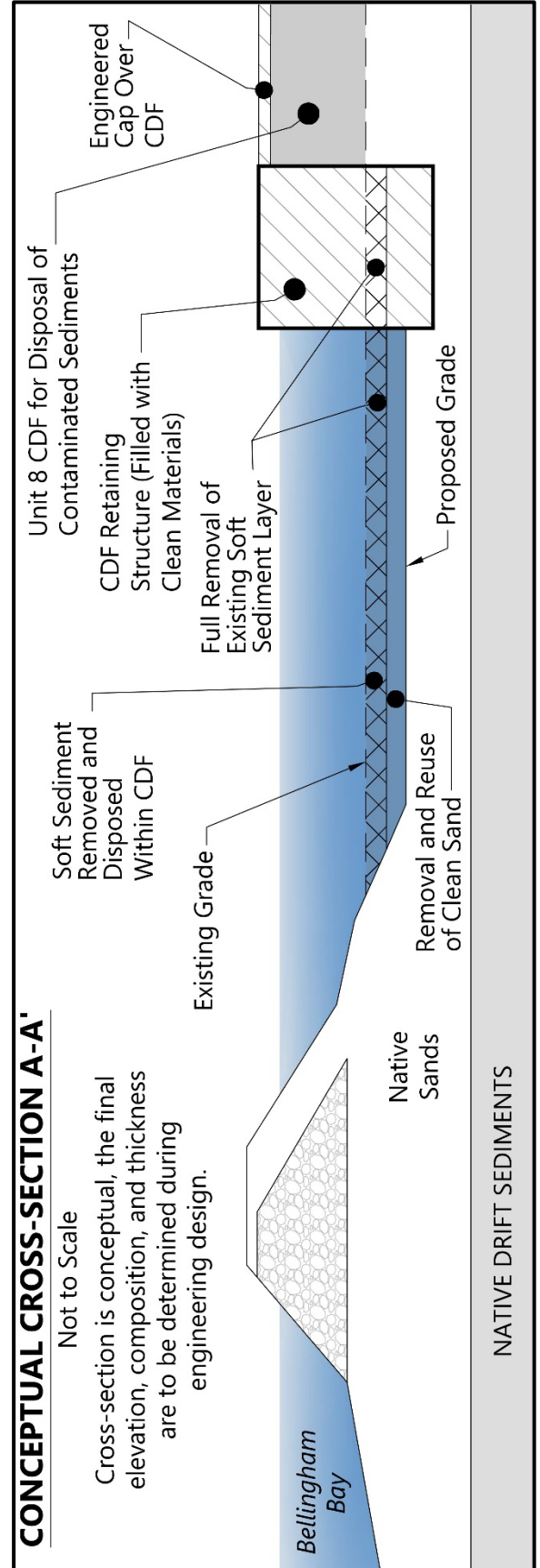
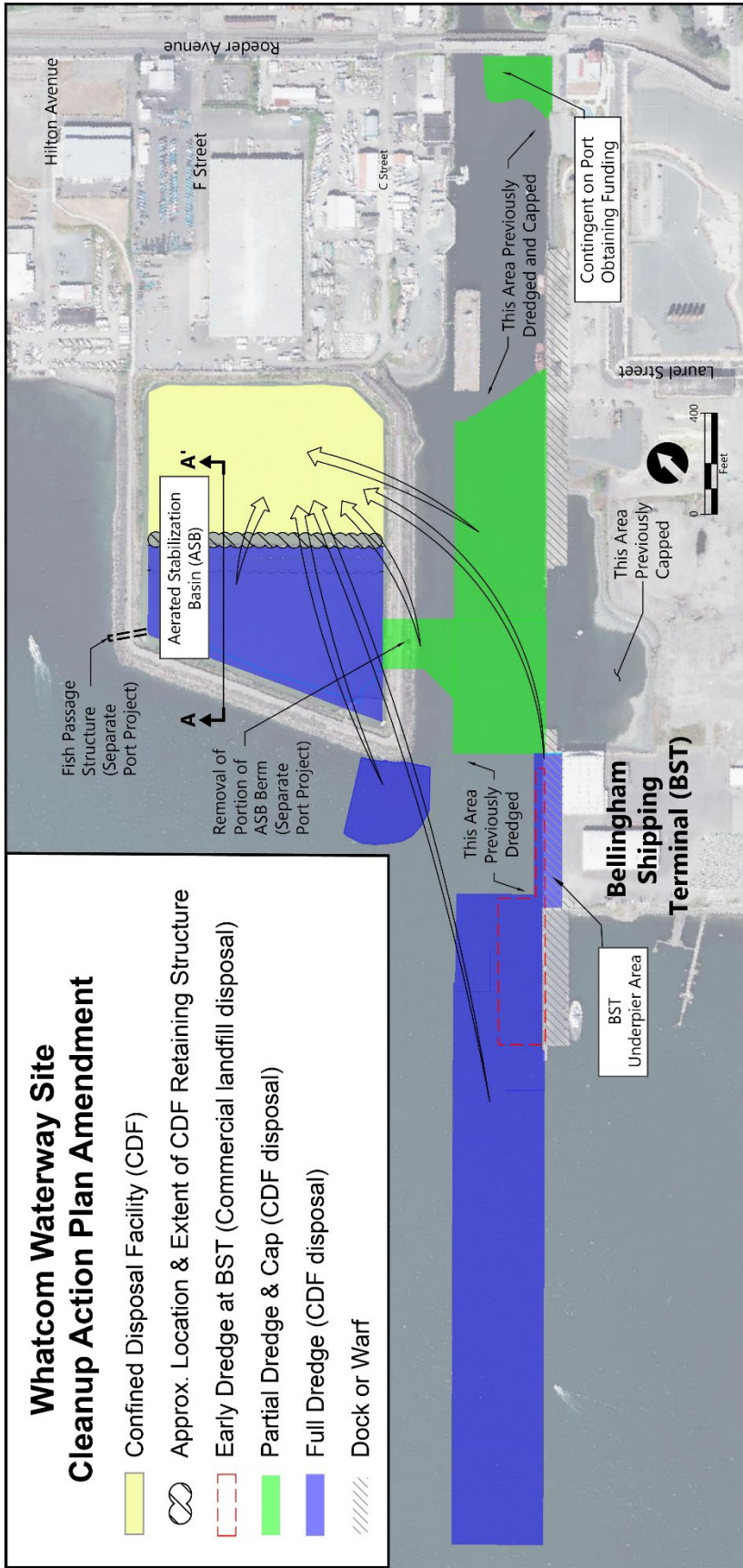
Aerial Map of Whatcom Waterway Site Areas

The Site is one of 12 [Bellingham Bay cleanup](#)¹ sites coordinated through the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot. The Pilot is a bay-wide multi-agency effort to clean up contamination, control pollution sources and restore habitat, with consideration for land and water uses.

En español

El Departamento de Ecología le invita a comentar sobre un reporte ambiental para el sitio que está contaminado Whatcom Waterway en Bellingham. Si le gustaría recibir este documento en español, por favor llame a 425-324-5901 y espere que un intérprete se una a la llamada o envíe un correo electrónico a preguntas@ecy.wa.gov. Traducciones de avisos públicos para los sitios de limpieza de la Bahía de Bellingham se preparan bajo solicitud.

¹ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/BellinghamBayCleanup>



Cleanup Action Plan Amendment

Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST)

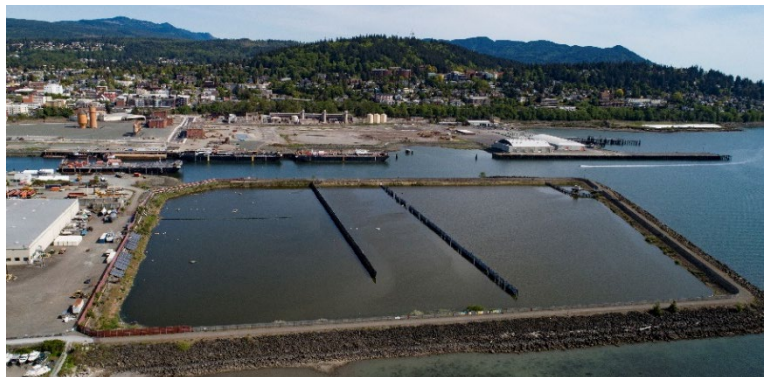
The Port has received a federal grant to dredge contaminated sediment and adjacent shallow areas at the BST. This work is an element of the existing CAP, and its early implementation is important to address potential vessel-related redistribution of contaminated sediment and ensure continued navigational safety. The CAP Amendment sequences design and construction activities for Phase 2 Areas of the Site to prioritize dredging at the BST. This work will remove about 19,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and dispose of it in an upland commercial landfill.

Head of Waterway

To restore habitat, and subject to funding availability, the Port may elect to take further action at the head of the Whatcom Waterway. Rather than relying on monitored natural recovery for this area, as required by the previously completed cleanup of Phase 1 Site Areas, the Port would remove about 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, dispose of the material in the upland disposal facility constructed in the Aerated Stabilization Basin (see below), and then place a clean sand layer to isolate remaining contaminated sediment.

Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB) and Dredged Material Disposal

Previously the Port planned to convert the ASB into a marina, and the existing CAP was consistent with, and protective under, this planned use. However, based on recent input from the Marine Trades community, the Port has updated its land use plans and now intends to provide new upland and in-water areas within the ASB to support marine trades uses. Given this change in planned use of the ASB, the CAP amendment calls for the following to protect human health and the environment:



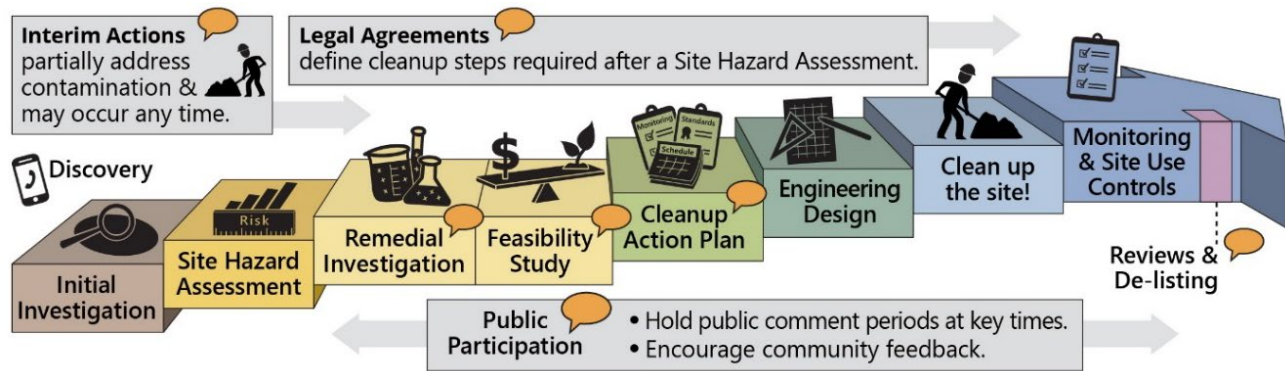
Aerated Stabilization Basing (ASB) and Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST) on opposite sides of Whatcom Waterway

- **Construct an Upland Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) in the ASB:** Construct a containment wall down the center of the ASB to provide about a 14-acre upland confined disposal facility or CDF for disposal of contaminated sediment. The CDF will provide new upland property for Marine Trades uses in accordance with the Port’s updated land use plans.
- **Dredge the Remainder of the ASB:** Deepen and remove all contaminated sediment (about 196,000 cubic yards) from the remaining 14 acres of the ASB and dispose of it in the upland CDF. The Port will then reconnect the dredged area to Bellingham Bay, providing commercial navigation, public access, and aquatic habitat in accordance with the Port’s updated land use plans.
- **Dispose of Dredged Material in the CDF:** The capacity of the upland CDF provides a cost-effective disposal option for contaminated sediment removed from other Phase 2 Site Areas. Approximately 430,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment removed from other Phase 2 Site Areas will be disposed of in the upland CDF.

Cleanup Standards

Due to regulatory changes the CAP amendment adds a cleanup standard for dioxin and furan compounds. The required cleanup action meets this cleanup standard.

What happens next?



Washington’s formal [cleanup process](#)² is shown in the graphic above. The Phase 2 Areas of the Site are in the Cleanup Action Plan (amendment)/engineering design step. The timeline to complete these steps and the anticipated timeline for future steps is outlined below:

- **April 24 – May 23, 2023:** Public comment period
- **May 3, 2023:** Walking Tour (hosted by RE Sources); Open House (hosted by Ecology)
- **July 2023:** Public comments addressed and amendment finalized
- **September 2023:** Begin construction of BST dredging project
- **February 2024:** Complete construction of BST dredging project
- **2023 – 2025:** Complete engineering design of cleanup action for remaining Phase 2 Site Areas
- **2025:** Begin construction of cleanup action for remaining Phase 2 Site Areas
- **2028:** Complete construction of cleanup action for remaining Phase 2 Site Areas

Cost and funding

The Port is leading the cleanup in coordination with the City and DNR. The cleanup action is currently estimated to cost about \$160 million but may change following completion of engineering design and permitting. The Port is eligible for reimbursement of up to half of their costs from Ecology through the state’s remedial action grant program. This funding helps to pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

Background

The Site includes in-water sediment impacted by contaminants released from past industrial waterfront activities, including discharges from the former Georgia-Pacific chlor-alkali plant, wood waste and degradation products from historic log rafting activities, and pulp mill wastewater discharges.

As a result of these past industrial activities, studies conducted as part of the cleanup process have shown mercury, 4-methyphenol, and dioxin and furan compounds in sediment at concentrations that exceed the requirements of the state’s cleanup law, the [Model Toxics Control Act](#)³, and must be addressed.



Former Georgia-Pacific operations

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

³ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca>

Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 330316
Shoreline, WA 98133-9716

Whatcom Waterway Site

Documents ready for public review

Información en español incluida (página 2)

Public comment period

April 24 – May 23, 2023

www.bit.ly/Ecology-WhatcomWaterway-Comments

Outreach events – See page 2 for details

May 3, 2023

Walking Tour: 3:30 – 5 p.m.; Open House: 5 – 6 p.m.

ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 425-324-5901 or email at ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.



Aerial map of Whatcom Waterway site