



Questions and Answers Sheet Unocal Edmonds Bulk Fuel Terminal 0178

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington State Department of Ecology

Northwest Regional Office

Shoreline, Washington

January 2024

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Unocal Edmonds Bulk Fuel Terminal 0178 cleanup site page](#).¹

Cover photo credit

- Image courtesy of Chevron

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 5180
- Facility site ID: 2720

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¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/5180>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Contact-us>

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Southwest Region 360-407-6300 | Northwest Region 206-594-0000 | Central Region 509-575-2490 | Eastern Region 509-329-3400 |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

| Region | Counties served | Mailing Address | Phone |
|---------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Southwest | Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum | PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504 | 360-407-6300 |
| Northwest | Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom | PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133 | 206-594-0000 |
| Central | Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima | 1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903 | 509-575-2490 |
| Eastern | Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman | 4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205 | 509-329-3400 |
| Headquarters | Across Washington | PO Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504 | 360-407-6000 |

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Background

Union Oil Company of California (Unocal), a subsidiary of Chevron Corp, owned and operated a former asphalt plant (operating 1953 to late 1970s) and bulk fuel terminal (operating 1923 to 1991). The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) entered into an Agreed Order with Unocal to conduct remedial activities at the [Unocal Edmonds Bulk Fuel Terminal 0178 Site](#)¹ (the “Site”) under the [Model Toxics Control Act \(MTCA\)](#)³, Washington’s environmental cleanup law. MTCA provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect human health and the environment. Ecology enacts MTCA and oversees cleanups. The [MTCA site cleanup process](#)⁴ is completed in steps over a variable timeline.

The majority of the Site has been cleaned up through Interim Actions (early partial cleanups), including several excavations and a groundwater treatment system. Cleanup work at the Site continues as an Interim Action. Ecology is negotiating the final Cleanup Action Plan and Consent Decree (settlement) with Unocal/Chevron.

In 2005, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) signed a Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase property from Unocal, which includes part of the Site. As part of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, transfer of the property to the State cannot occur until certain remediation work has been completed.

Although the property is zoned for mixed use/commercial, the City of Edmonds and community groups have expressed interest in using a portion of the Site for a marsh restoration project to daylight tidal connections between Edmonds Marsh (not part of the Site) and Puget Sound. By doing so the marsh would become accessible to migrating salmon, including the endangered juvenile Chinook. Ecology recognizes these potential future land use interests and has therefore revised the [Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation \(TEE\)](#)⁵ to match this.

More information

To learn more about this site and review related documents visit the [Unocal Edmonds Bulk Fuel Terminal 0178 cleanup site page](#).¹

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Rules-directing-our-cleanup-work/Model-Toxics-Control-Act>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Cleanup-process>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Terrestrial-ecological-evaluation>

Questions and Answers

Site Overview

1) How is the site defined?

The Site is where contamination (primarily petroleum products) from former operations at the property had come to be located. For this Site, contamination was found in soil, groundwater, and sediments.

2) Who is responsible for cleaning up the site?

Unocal is a Potentially Liable Person (PLP) for the Site as the current owner of property at the Site and as an owner/operator at the time that contamination was released. Unocal is a subsidiary of Chevron Corporation, and Chevron Environmental Management Company is conducting the cleanup under Ecology's oversight.

3) What is Ecology's role in the cleanup of the Site?

Ecology is overseeing cleanup work at the Site under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) to ensure the contamination released from operations at the property is not a risk to human health or the environment.

4) What is Ecology's position on the community's proposal to restore salmon habitat?

Ecology supports habitat restoration projects that actively preserve, restore, and enhance existing wetlands throughout the state. Nevertheless, Ecology does not dictate how property is used by the property owner – so long as that use does not impact the cleanup.

5) What cleanup work has been completed at the Site to date?

A number of Interim Actions (early partial cleanups) have been conducted over the years to clean up oil floating on groundwater, remove arsenic-contaminated soil, and remove petroleum-contaminated soil.

The Site was divided into two parts – an Upper Yard and Lower Yard. Ecology certified that the Upper Yard was suitable for residential use in 2003 and the Point Edwards Condominiums were subsequently constructed.

6) What is the current status of the property transfer of the Lower Yard?

Unocal currently owns the Lower Yard. In 2005, Unocal and WSDOT entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement that provides for WSDOT to assume ownership of the Lower Yard upon the issuance of a Cleanup Action Plan and the completion of "capital remediation work," as that term is defined in the Agreement. Ecology is not a party to this agreement and cannot enforce this agreement.

7) What are the next steps in the site cleanup?

Ecology is currently in discussions with Unocal/Chevron to enter into a Consent Decree to implement the Cleanup Action Plan for the entire Site.

8) When is the next public comment period and what documents will be available?

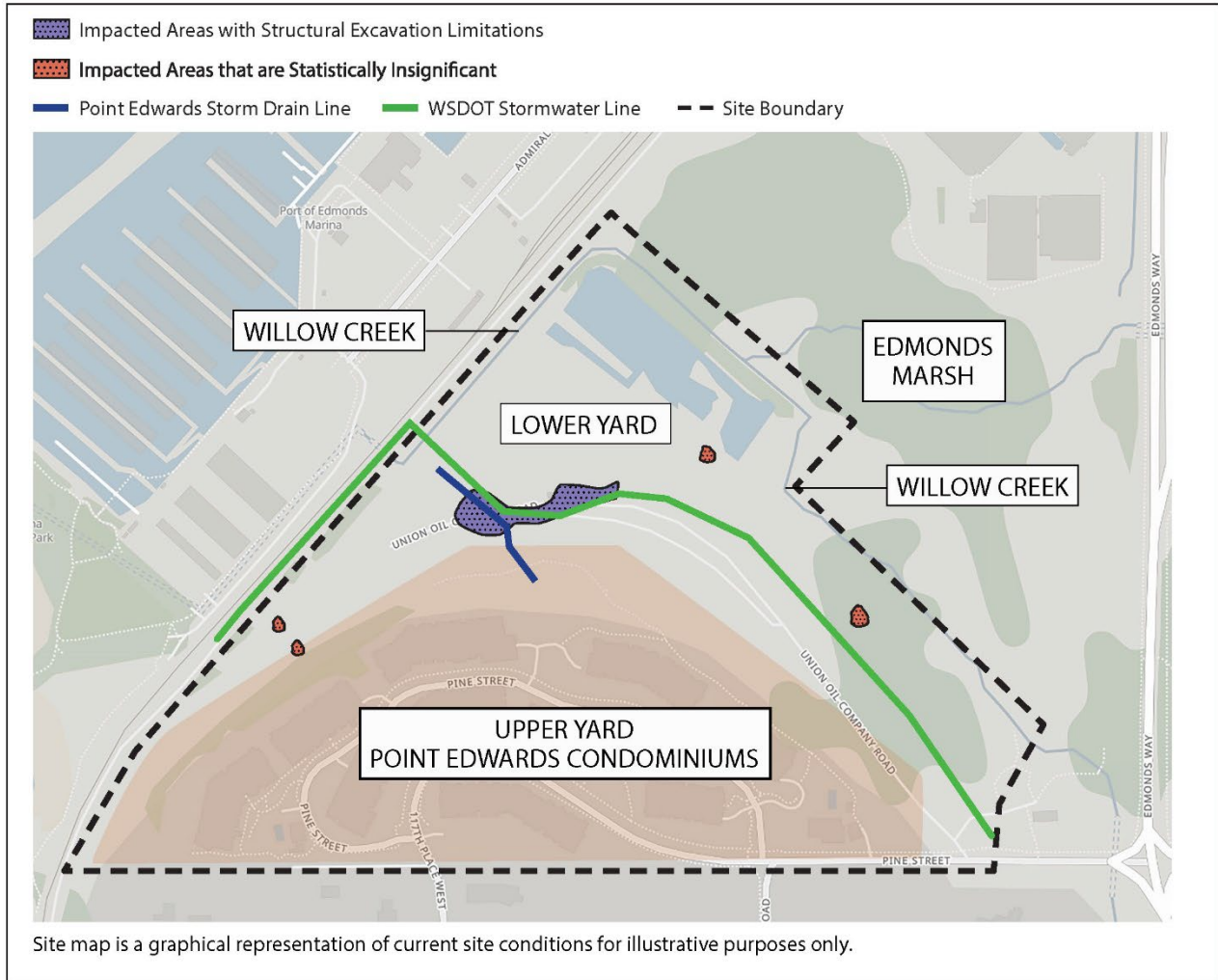
The public comment period will occur in Spring 2024 with the following documents available for review and comment.

- a) **Feasibility Study:** An evaluation of ways to clean up the Site, and a recommendation of a preferred remedial alternative. An addendum will be added to update the Disproportionate Cost Analysis table and include protections required by the [Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation \(TEE\)](#).⁵
- b) **Cleanup Action Plan:** Ecology's plan that describes the cleanup work to address contamination within the Site.
 - i) Including a redrafted site-specific Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation (TEE).
- c) **Consent Decree:** A legal agreement between Ecology and Chevron that requires Chevron to complete cleanup actions at the Site.
- d) **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Nonsignificance:** Ecology's determination that the cleanup work is not likely to harm the environment.

9) How much contamination remains at the site?

The following five, small, isolated areas of contamination remain at the Site. See map below.

- a) An area along the storm water line
- b) An area near the rail line (on the western extent)
- c) An area adjacent to the steep slope along Point Edwards
- d) An area adjacent to DB-1
- e) An area on the eastern extent



10) Are there similar cleanup sites in the state of Washington that compare to this site?

The [North Marina West End site⁶](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/934), [Great Northern BNRR Tank Farm site⁷](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/2781), and [Golden Gardens Park site⁸](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/4753) are a few examples of similar cleanup sites. More similar sites can be investigated through the [What's In My Neighborhood⁹](https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/neighborhood) interactive map. The upper yard of the Unocal Edmonds Bulk Fuel Terminal Site, now Point Edwards, is also a good example of a successful cleanup.

⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/934>

⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/2781>

⁸ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/4753>

⁹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/neighborhood>

Cleaning up contamination

11) What are cleanup levels (CULs)?

CULs are defined as the concentration of a hazardous substance in soil, water, air, or sediment that is determined to be protective of human health and the environment under specified exposure conditions.

12) How are CULs determined?

CULs for the Site are set by considering the potential exposure pathways and selecting the lowest acceptable concentration from all pathways assessed. Washington law requires the responsible party to conduct a disproportionate cost analysis to select a cleanup approach. It is possible that the selected remedy includes leaving some contamination on Site with controls to restrict access to those locations. Potential liable persons (PLPs) have the option to set Site specific CULs or use predetermined levels that are part of the MTCA rule.

To confirm CULs were protecting aquatic receptors, bioassays were conducted with media from the Site. Fathead minnows, daphnids, topsmelt, and mysid shrimp, were exposed to contaminated groundwater from the Site. Amphipods, bivalve larvae, and juvenile polychaete were exposed to sediment from the Site.

13) What is a Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation?

A [Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation \(TEE\)](#)⁵ works to protect native plants, soil biota, and wildlife at contaminated sites cleaned up under the state's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA).

14) How does the TEE affect remediation and CULs?

The TEE is still being drafted, so no specifics are available now. In general, CULs based on the protection of plants, soil biota, and wildlife are quite low. Due to the expected future use of this Site as open space available as ecological habitat, some of the CULs will be based on ecological receptors. The majority of the Site has been cleaned up and does not pose a risk to receptors, including ecological receptors. There are small areas that do still pose a risk. Controls will be put in place to restrict contact with those areas. Controls put in place to protect ecological receptors will also protect human receptors.

15) What CULs are being used for this Site?

CULs will consider direct contact with soil and surface water and environmental receptors. Terrestrial organisms including plants, animals, and soil biota, as well as humans were considered in the assessment.

We are still working with the PLP on the TEE for the Site, which will determine the final

CULs. See the soil biota column in Tables 749-2 and 749-3 of [WAC 173-340-900](#),¹⁰ as potential CULs for petroleum.

16) Have the CULs changed?

Yes, in 2022, the previously used preliminary CULs for total petroleum hydrocarbons (gasoline, diesel, and oil contamination) were lowered due to ecological receptors.

The groundwater cleanup level for benzene is based on the EPA's Water Quality Criteria, which was updated in 2016. The new Water Quality Criteria for benzene is 1.6 µg/L.

17) Could CULs change in the future if the use of the property changes?

Yes, but changes would require an amendment to the Cleanup Action Plan, which would include a public review and comment period. The points of compliance are currently being drafted in an updated TEE, which will likely include a soil buffer along surface water.

18) Have there been cleanup level exceedances in wells installed in excavated areas?

Monitoring Well 518 appears to be the only well installed in an excavated area to exceed a CUL post excavation. Gasoline related impacts have intermittently exceeded CULs since the well was installed in 2008.

Addressing existing contamination

19) What is the issue surrounding the contaminated soil adjacent to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) stormwater pipe?

In the 1970s WSDOT installed a 6-foot diameter stormwater pipe extending from highway 104 to Puget Sound. Contamination from the Site exists directly adjacent to the stormwater pipe. The presence of the stormwater pipe has complicated complete removal of contamination.

20) How is the dual-phase extraction system removing contamination to CULs around the WSDOT stormwater pipe?

Dual Phase Extraction is a remedial technology that uses pumps and a large vacuum to depress the water table in areas of soil and groundwater impacts. The extracted groundwater is treated above ground and clean water is discharged. With the water table depressed, a vacuum is induced on the same wells creating air movement through the impacted soil and removing the volatile constituents in the soil gas. The air is then treated prior to discharge above ground.

21) Has the contaminated soil been excavated above the WSDOT stormwater pipe?

A portion of the soil has been excavated...Soil above the western 100' of the WSDOT

¹⁰ <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-340-900>

stormwater pipe on the Site was excavated in 2001, exposing the top of the pipe. Removal of overburden soil in 2001 resulted in damage to the stormwater pipe that required repair.

22) Was excavation of all contaminated soil above the WSDOT stormwater pipe considered?

Yes, this is included as part of Alternative 4 of the [2017 Draft Feasibility Study](#).¹¹

23) Will the remaining contaminated soil along the WSDOT stormwater pipe be excavated and replaced with clean fill?

The Cleanup Action Plan is still being developed, but under its current form, the risk of moving the contaminated soil adjacent to the storm line to a different location makes it a less favorable option than leaving it in place. The current thought is that excavation of all the soil above the stormwater pipe is high risk. At low tide the stormwater pipe is empty and could float if overburden is removed and groundwater isn't dewatered sufficiently. While at high tide the stormwater pipe is frequently full.

24) Will the WSDOT stormwater pipe be replaced?

The storm line is owned and maintained by WSDOT, and we are unaware of any plans to replace it.

25) Given that contaminated soil exists along the WSDOT stormwater pipe and that water flows through and around the site and presumably around the stormwater pipe, why do the wells not indicate that the contamination exists?

The detectable contamination remaining in the stormwater pipe area is adsorbed to soil and immobile. The Dual Phase Extraction system has successfully removed and degraded mobile contamination from groundwater in that area.

26) Is WSDOT still a participant in discussions on how to remediate the contaminated soil next to the stormwater pipe?

Yes.

Monitoring the site following cleanup

27) How many years will groundwater monitoring continue?

Quarterly groundwater monitoring is ongoing at the Site. Samples are collected and analyzed for contamination every three months. Monitoring will continue on a quarterly basis throughout the cleanup of the Site to measure cleanup performance. Following the completion of cleanup activities, monitoring will continue for an additional two years to confirm the cleanup was successful.

28) How will soil be monitored?

Soil compliance testing has been conducted throughout the cleanup of the Site. The last soil sampling at the Site was conducted in 2018 to assess the performance of the dual phase

¹¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/64911>

extraction system. Future compliance testing may consist of only groundwater monitoring, although we have not determined if further soil sampling will be required to meet the requirements of the Terrestrial Ecological Evaluation.

29) What are Environmental Covenants and how could they be used at this site?

Environmental Covenants are legal documents issued in accordance with Ecology guidance and in compliance with MTCA regulations. They are used to manage remaining contamination exceeding CULs. At this Site, the Environmental Covenant would restrict excavation in areas of known contamination and require a soil cover to allow public use of the Site.

An Environmental Covenant is attached to the property deed and informs the owner of the contamination and how to manage it. They are typically reviewed every 5 years through a periodic review, in which monitoring may be required.

30) Is there a process for ending an Environmental Covenant?

Yes. Ecology’s guidance and covenant template provides a process by which an Environmental Covenant could end: “If the conditions at the Site requiring a Covenant have changed or no longer exist, then the Grantor may submit a request to Ecology that this Covenant be amended or terminated. Any amendment or termination of this Covenant must follow the procedures in MTCA and UECA and any rules promulgated under these chapters.” See the following links:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1509054.pdf>

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1509057.pdf>

Future landowners

31) Will future landowners be restricted from restoring the marsh to a saltwater estuary (through excavation and flooding)?

- a) First, Ecology recommends that restoration efforts at a contaminated site be supported by a MTCA attorney.
- b) Second, ground disturbing work must meet the requirements of the Environmental Covenant and be consistent with the remedial actions in the Cleanup Action Plan. If not, the party responsible for the work could be named a Potentially Liable Person by Ecology to correct the violations.
- c) Entering into an Agreed Order with Ecology may be required to ensure exposure risk is not increased.
- d) A Soils Management Plan will be needed for excavations both within and outside of the contaminated areas.

32) Would existing monitoring wells prevent restoration of the marsh (through excavation and flooding)?

Removal of monitoring wells requires Ecology approval. Many wells have been removed at the Site for the purposes of excavation under Ecology approval and oversight.

33) If contamination from historical Unocal activities was found on the site in a location previously undetected by Ecology, who would be responsible?

Ecology could reopen the Consent Decree and require Unocal to perform additional remedial actions at the Site if information about previously unknown contamination became available. If contamination from historical Unocal activities was found on the Site as a result of ground disturbing activities that were inconsistent with the Environmental Covenant, the Consent Decree, or the remedial actions in the Cleanup Action Plan (which is attached to the Consent Decree), the persons responsible for the work could be named Potentially Liable Persons and become responsible for the contamination.