

RG Haley International Site



RG Haley International Site on Bellingham waterfront, October 2017

Comments accepted

February 12 – March 12, 2024

Submit comments

Online at:

<https://www.bit.ly/Ecology-RGHaley-Comments-2024>

Or by mail or email 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

<https://www.bit.ly/Ecology-RGHaley>

Bellingham Public Library
 210 Central Avenue
 Bellingham, WA 98225

For document review
 assistance, please contact:

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

Site info

Facility Site ID: 2870
 Site Cleanup ID: 3928

Legal agreement ready for public review

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites you to review a legal agreement for the cleanup of the RG Haley International Site (Site) on the Bellingham waterfront.

The legal agreement, called a **Consent Decree**, is between Ecology, the City of Bellingham (City) and the Port of Bellingham (Port), and it requires the City and Port to implement the cleanup action plan for the Site. It includes an updated version of a cleanup action plan finalized by Ecology in 2018.

On-site walking tour

RE Sources, a local nonprofit organization, will host a shoreline walking tour of the Site to provide project information. Ecology, City, and Port staff will be available for questions.



Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Meet at the end of Cornwall Ave by the pocket beach (Bellingham, WA)

<https://www.re-sources.org/RGHaley>

This tour is funded by a Public Participation Grant from Ecology.

En español

El Departamento de Ecología le invita a comentar sobre un reporte ambiental para el sitio que está contaminado RG Haley 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.

Site location and units

The Site is located at the south end of Cornwall Avenue, in Bellingham, Washington. It consists of an Upland Unit (about 6 acres) and a Marine Unit (about 60 acres). See map on page 3.

The City owns most of the Upland Unit and the State of Washington owns most of the Marine Unit.

Portions of the Site overlap the neighboring Cornwall Avenue Landfill and Whatcom Waterway sites.

Cleanup Action Plan

In April 2018, following public review and comment, Ecology finalized a Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) for the Site. The CAP was part of a legal agreement (agreed order) which required the City to design the cleanup action described in the CAP. Through the design work required by the agreed order, the extent and types of caps necessary to address contamination were refined. An engineering design report reflecting these refinements was finalized in May 2022, following public review and comment.

The legal agreement (consent decree) currently available for public review includes an updated CAP and requires the City and Port to implement the cleanup action described in the CAP. The updated CAP incorporates the design refinements described in the 2022 engineering design report and includes new sediment cleanup levels for dioxins/furans and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons due to regulatory changes. The new cleanup levels do not modify the cleanup action for the Site. The updated CAP includes the following (see figure on page 3 for context):

Upland Unit (on land)

- **Soil solidification:** An area of approximately 0.75 acres of contaminated soil along the shoreline will be treated by solidification resulting in approximately 13,400 cubic yards of solidified soil.
- **Low-permeability capping system:** An area of approximately 9 acres of contaminated soil will be capped with clean soil and a plastic liner, including areas that overlap with the adjacent Cornwall Avenue Landfill site. The capping system also includes a drainage layer to manage stormwater runoff and a gas collection layer to capture and safely vent subsurface vapors.
- **Permeable capping system:** An area of approximately 0.33 acres of contaminated soil along the northern shoreline will be capped with clean soil and a geotextile separation layer.

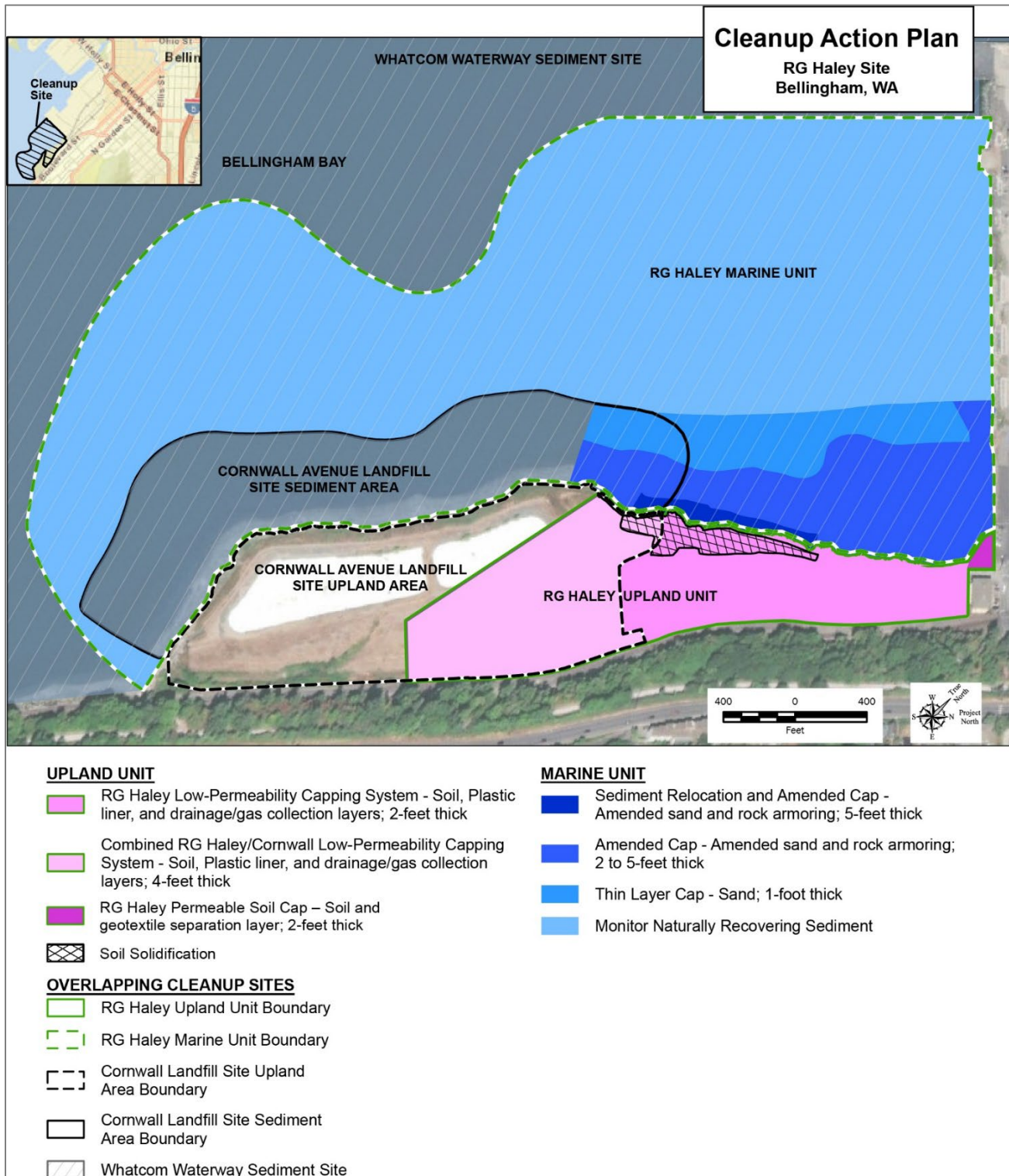
Solidification and low-permeability capping will isolate the contaminated soil, provide a barrier between contaminated soil and humans and ecological receptors, reduce the amount of rainwater flowing through the contaminated soil, and will reduce contaminant transfer from soil to groundwater. Permeable soil capping will isolate contaminated soil and provide a barrier between contaminated soil and humans and ecological receptors.

Marine Unit (in-water sediment)

- **Sediment relocation:** Approximately 2,300 cubic yards of contaminated shoreline sediment will require excavation and relocation to beneath the upland low-permeability capping system.
- **Capping:** Approximately 9.5 acres will receive a clean sand cap to isolate contaminated sediment. In areas where groundwater flows through subsurface contaminated sediment, the sand cap will be amended with clay or activated carbon to treat groundwater.

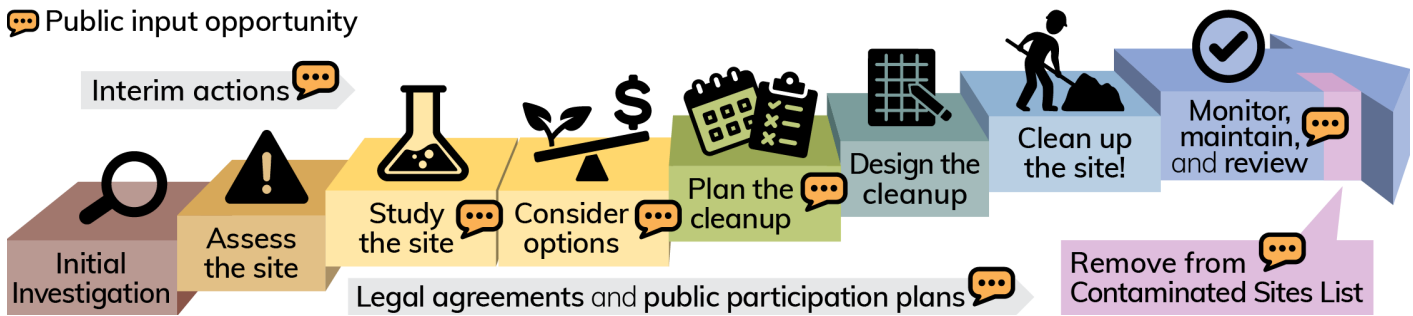
- **Natural recovery:** Approximately 50 acres of contaminated sediment is recovering due to natural deposition of sediment. This area will be monitored to ensure contaminant levels continue to decline.

The cleanup action plan also includes post-construction monitoring and legal restrictions on how the property is used to ensure the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment over time.



What happens next?

Public input opportunity



Washington’s formal [cleanup process](#)¹ is shown in the graphic above. The Site is in the cleanup step of the process. The timeline is outlined below:

- **February 12 – March 12, 2024:** Public comment period on legal agreement.
- **Spring 2024:** Ecology responds to public comments received.
- **Late 2024:** Obtain permits for construction of the cleanup action.
- **Early 2025:** Begin construction of the cleanup action.

Construction of the cleanup action is expected to take about three years.

Cost and funding

Construction of the cleanup action is estimated to cost about \$21 million. The City and Port are funding partners for the cleanup, and they are eligible for reimbursement of up to half of their costs from Ecology through the state’s [Remedial Action Grant Program](#)², which helps pay for the cleanup of publicly owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

Background

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, the Site was used for industries including lumber, coal and wharf operations. RG Haley International Corporation was the last company to treat wood on the property (1955 –1985). The preservative used in the wood-treating operations was pentachlorophenol mixed with a diesel-like carrier oil. This mixture was released to the environment during operations.



Aerial view of RG Haley International site operations, 1953

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Cleanup-process>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Oversight-remedial-action-grants-loans>



Aerial view of RG Haley International site operations, 1963 – Whatcom Museum, X.4939.24 and X.4939.33

Contaminants are present in soil, soil vapor, groundwater, and sediment at concentrations that represent a potential threat to human and ecological health. Contaminants include the following:

- petroleum hydrocarbons
- polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
- pentachlorophenol
- dioxins/furans

In addition, a plume of potentially mobile light non-aqueous phase liquid is present near the shoreline.

Bellingham Bay Cleanup

Other contaminants from nearby overlapping sites are also present at the Site (see figure on Page 3). They include mercury in sediment from the Whatcom Waterway site, and municipal refuse, phthalates, metals, and polychlorinated biphenyls from the Cornwall Avenue Landfill site. Ecology is overseeing cleanup activities at these sites as well.

The RG Haley International site is one of 12 [Bellingham Bay Cleanup sites](http://www.ecology.wa.gov/BellinghamBayCleanup)³ 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.

³ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/BellinghamBayCleanup>

Toxics Cleanup Program
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101
Bellingham, WA 98225

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Información en español incluida (página 1)

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See page 1 for details.

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 view of RG Haley International cleanup site