



# **Public Participation Plan**

## **Stillwater Holdings Chevron site**

---

**7 E. Rose St., Walla Walla, Walla Walla County**  
**Facility Site ID: 70525886, Cleanup Site ID: 16913**

**Toxics Cleanup Program**

Washington State Department of Ecology  
Spokane, Washington

June 2024

# Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site page](#).<sup>1</sup>

## Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 16913
- Facility site ID: 70525886

# Contact Information

## Toxics Cleanup Program

Eastern Regional Office  
Erika Beresovoy  
Public Involvement Coordinator  
509-385-2290, [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov)

Beth Kercher  
Site Manager  
509-385-5443, [Beth.Kercher@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Beth.Kercher@ecy.wa.gov)

4601 N. Monroe St.  
Spokane, WA 99205-1295  
Phone: 509-329-3400  
Website: [Washington State Department of Ecology](#)<sup>2</sup>

# ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

To request an ADA accommodation, contact the Ecology ADA Coordinator by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at [ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov). For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit [Ecology's website](#)<sup>3</sup> for more information.

---

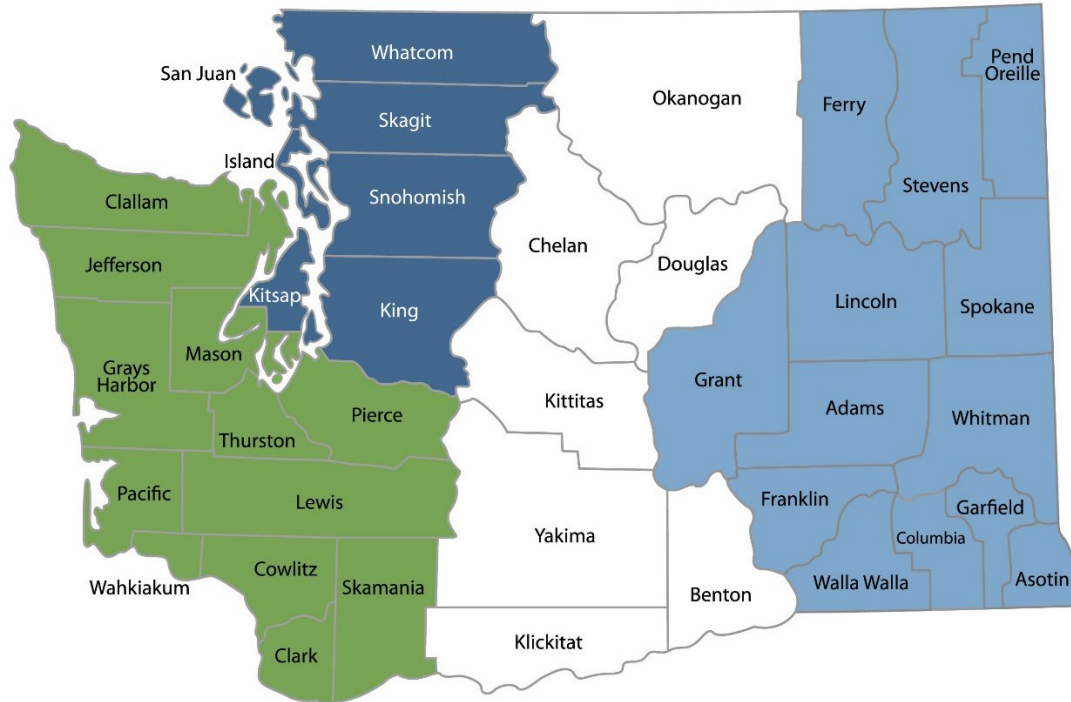
<sup>1</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/16913>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Toxics-Cleanup>

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

# Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

## Map of Counties Served



<b>Southwest Region</b> 360-407-6300	<b>Northwest Region</b> 206-594-0000	<b>Central Region</b> 509-575-2490	<b>Eastern Region</b> 509-329-3400
---	---	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

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

# Table of Contents

Figures.....	iii
<b>Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public Participation Activities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
How we share information with the community.....	4
How to share information with us .....	6
Site contacts.....	7
Public participation grants .....	7
<b>Site Information.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Land use.....	7
How the site was discovered .....	9
Contamination .....	10
Cleanup plans.....	10
Area community .....	12
Tribal engagement .....	12
<b>Washington’s Cleanup Laws .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Model Toxics Control Act.....	13
State Environmental Policy Act.....	13
<b>Plan Amendments.....</b>	<b>15</b>

# List of Figures

## Figures

Figure 1. Stillwater Holdings Chevron area map. ....	8
Figure 2. Vapor intrusion occurred in buildings around the Stillwater Holdings Chevron. ....	9
Figure 3. Estimated cleanup timeline. ....	11
Figure 4: Steps in Washington's Cleanup Process .....	14

# Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this public participation plan (plan) to promote meaningful community involvement during cleanup.

The plan describes ways Ecology will inform the public about contamination investigations and cleanup options throughout the cleanup process. Ecology encourages the public to learn about and get involved in decision-making opportunities. This plan identifies how and when the public can get involved during different stages of the investigation and cleanup of contamination.

This plan is for the Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site (site). Stillwater Holdings Chevron is responsible for paying for and conducting cleanup, called the potentially liable person (PLP) under Washington's environmental cleanup law.

## Public Participation Activities

Members of the public may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. Interested parties do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact Ecology.

However, to be included in the formal site record, comments about the site investigation, cleanup alternatives, or cleanups must be submitted during formal comment periods. In addition, the public is invited to review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in the cleanup's decision-making.

## How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the cleanup, Ecology will mail notices about public comment periods to addresses surrounding the site. The mailing list area will vary depending on the type of contamination and where it's located, but the list will at least include addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals upon request. These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings or how to request one if not yet scheduled.

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the site's status. These informational documents will be available online and at document repositories. Print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Comment period notices and other site announcements may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, libraries).

## Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the [Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site](#).<sup>4</sup> The website provides site information, and you may download cleanup documents.

We may also share information about cleanup sites through [news releases, our blog, and social media](#).<sup>5</sup>

## Postal mailing list

Ecology maintains a mailing list that includes addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site.

Walla Walla County's parcel data also provides us mailing addresses for property owners who do not receive mail at their physical address and may live elsewhere. If renters are at the physical address, the owner and renter should both receive notification by mail.

These people receive public comment notices in the mail when draft documents are available.

We will add individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list as requested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov).

## Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events in ads or notices published in the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).<sup>6</sup>

## Places to see print documents

Washington Department of Ecology  
Eastern Regional Office  
4601 N. Monroe St.  
Spokane, WA 99205

To schedule an appointment, please contact Miriam Robbins at 509-329-3415 or [Miriam.Robbins@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Miriam.Robbins@ecy.wa.gov).

If you would like to be mailed print documents, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov).

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/16774>

<sup>5</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News](https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News)

<sup>6</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing](https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing)

## Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).<sup>7</sup> To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),<sup>8</sup> or contact Sarah Kellington at [sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov) or 360-280-3167.

## How to share information with us

At minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 13 for more information) requires 30-day public comment periods for draft cleanup documents and 14-day comment periods for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA, see page 13 for more information). SEPA documents are often made available for public review with other cleanup documents. In that case, we combine the comment periods, and they last at least 30 days. We may hold comment periods longer than 30 days.

We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov) or 509-385-2290.

## Public comment periods

Formal 30-day comment periods allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, Ecology may extend the public comment period. When Ecology oversees SEPA determinations, we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other cleanup documents are concurrently available for review.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, then they become final.

## Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and public hearings based on community interest. If we have not scheduled a meeting, we will hold one if 10 people request it, and this may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the meeting occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

---

<sup>7</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data](https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data)

<sup>8</sup> [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=WAECY\\_118](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_118)



## Site contacts

To be included in the site record, comments about the cleanup process must be submitted during comment periods. Questions and informal comments or information about the site's history are welcome anytime.

### Ecology

Eastern Regional Office  
4601 North Monroe Street  
Spokane, WA 99205

Beth Kercher, site manager  
[Beth.Kercher@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Beth.Kercher@ecy.wa.gov)  
509-724-1164

Erika Beresovoy, public involvement  
[Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov)  
509-385-2290

### Potentially liable persons

Stillwater Holdings Chevron  
7 E. Rose St.  
Walla Walla, WA, 99362

Ben Kleban, project coordinator  
[ben@benkleban.com](mailto:ben@benkleban.com)  
504-756-5577

## Public participation grants

[Public participation grants](#)<sup>9</sup> may be available to neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site. For contaminated sites, these funds can be used to:

- Hire an expert to help interpret technical information.<sup>10</sup>
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process

For more information about public participation grants, please contact Laura Busby at 360-280-5088 or [Laura.Busby@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Laura.Busby@ecy.wa.gov) and Jill Krumlauf at 360-790-5771 or [Jill.Krumlauf@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Jill.Krumlauf@ecy.wa.gov).

## Site Information

### Land use

The site is in downtown Walla Walla just north of Mill Creek (Figure 1, page 8). The site was developed as a Chevron gas station in 1930. All the original underground storage tanks (USTs) were replaced in 1981 and upgraded in 1993.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Public-participation-grants>

<sup>10</sup> Ecology currently does not have a citizen technical advisor for providing technical assistance to citizens on issues related to the investigation and cleanup of the site.

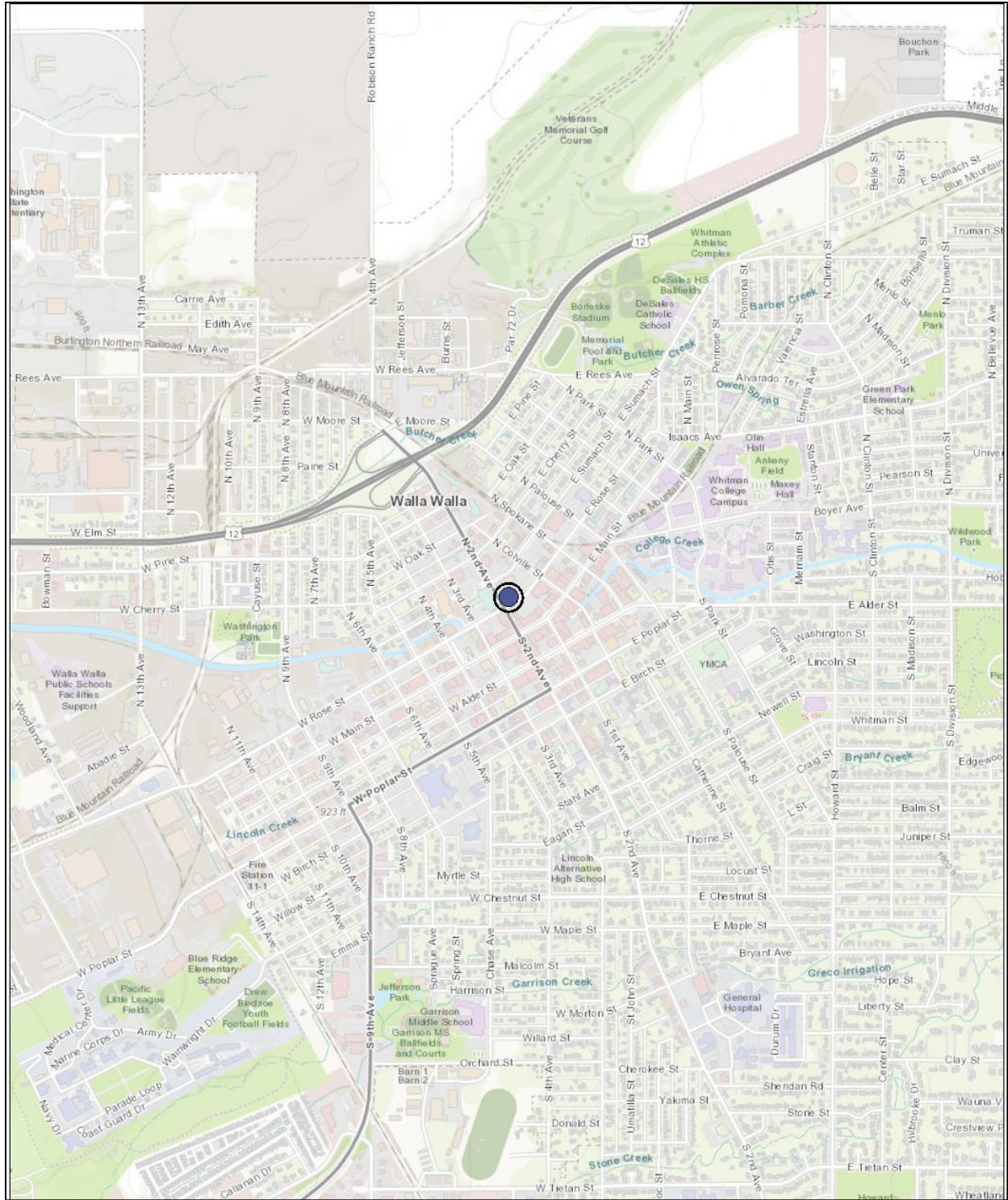


Figure 1. Stillwater Holdings Chevron area map.

## How the site was discovered

On September 14, 2023, the Marcus Whitman Hotel was evacuated due to volatile organic vapors from gasoline entering the building, called vapor intrusion (Figure 2). The Walla Walla Fire Department called in Ecology's Spill Response Team to help assess the situation and identify the source. The hotel and two other impacted buildings were ventilated to eliminate the risk of an explosion.

Gasoline was collecting in adjacent buildings' drainage systems, called sumps, which were pumped to help reduce vapor concentrations and removed contaminated water. The nearby Circle K and Stillwater Holdings Chevron gas stations performed tank and line tests of their UST systems, and issues were found on the regular unleaded gasoline UST system at the Stillwater Holdings Chevron, also known as the Wine Country Store. Analysis of the gas collected from the building sumps showed it matched the regular gasoline at Stillwater Holdings Chevron. The tank was taken out of service and has been emptied.

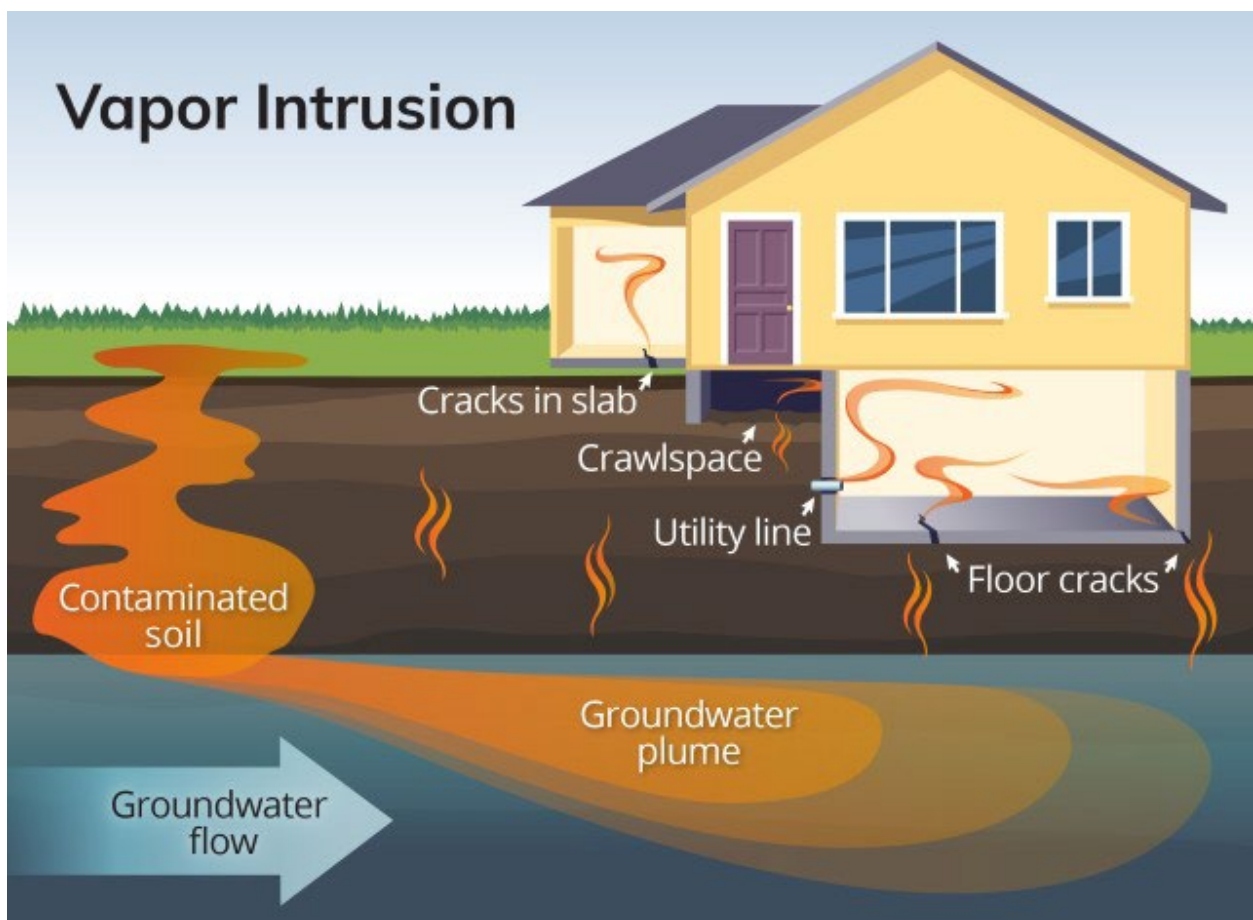


Figure 2. Vapor intrusion occurred in buildings around the Stillwater Holdings Chevron.

For the next month, ventilation was required to reduce dangerous fumes, and gasoline-contaminated groundwater was pumped from the affected buildings. Once the threat to the community lowered in October, the response shifted to clean up.

## Contamination

[Petroleum](#)<sup>11</sup> is in soil and groundwater around the gas station. The contaminated area will be fully defined during the remedial investigation (Figure 4, page 14).

Local, state, and federal agencies, along with third-party contractors, have deemed the area safe for residents and visitors after implementing interim engineering controls and monitoring air quality at the Marcus Whitman Hotel and 106 N 2nd Ave office building. Monitoring and testing of Walla Walla's municipal water and wastewater systems and in nearby Mill Creek show no evidence of contamination.

## Cleanup plans

The Stillwater Holdings Chevron owner hired an environmental consultant and UST contractor to complete an investigation and develop a plan for cleanup. The owner began negotiating an agreed order with Ecology in early 2024 to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater.

## Funding issues

Stillwater Holdings' insurance policy includes up to \$1 million to cover potential spills and leaks. Last November, the owner informed Ecology and local officials that they were working with their insurance company to fund and remove the leaking tank, and then clean up the contaminated soil.

Then in May 2024, Stillwater Holdings told Ecology that insurance funds were almost gone. They said they could pay for little or no more work. And they expected Ecology to take on the remaining cleanup, including removing the leaking tank and other equipment.

As of June, Stillwater Holdings has not provided evidence they have exhausted all financial means for conducting the cleanup. Ecology generally does not use taxpayer funds to pay cleanup costs for private companies when they still have money available.

## Taking over the cleanup

Ecology is preparing to take over and fund cleanup when Stillwater has exhausted all its funds because the site poses significant risks to the community. Ecology has started an emergency contracting process to continue cleanup after Stillwater Holdings' insurance is depleted.

Mitigating potentially harmful vapors in the hotel and nearby building remains the highest priority, which is why Ecology issued an enforcement order so it will continue until we take over. Because the leaking tank has been emptied, removing the underground tanks will be postponed.

An estimated cleanup timeline is in Figure 3.

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=423&toxid=75>



Figure 3. Estimated cleanup timeline.

## **Area community**

Early inhabitants included several Tribes who named the area “Walla Walla,” which means “many waters.” Walla Walla is home to more than 33,000 people. According to the 2017–2021 American Community Survey, 67% of Walla Walla residents are White, 23% are Hispanic, 4% are two or more races, 2% are Black, and 2% are Asian.

We will provide information in other languages as appropriate following federal guidance. The non-English language most widely spoken in the Walla Walla is Spanish. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Spanish.

Walla Walla lies at the foot of the Blue Mountains in a community rich in agricultural lands, rivers, and streams. The soil is fertile from past volcanic activity, and the county holds some of the oldest farms in Washington. Crops farmed include wheat, asparagus, strawberries, and peas. But Walla Walla is primarily known for its sweet onions and an increasing number of wine vineyards and wineries.

Skiing, golfing, fishing, and camping are just a few of the outdoor activities found in the region. The area has a community college, two four-year colleges, several historic sites, museums, and the Walla Walla State Penitentiary. Employers in the region range from state and local governments to food processors, machinery and irrigation manufacturers, local farmers, and other business interests.

## **Tribal engagement**

Ecology is inviting the federally recognized Yakama Nation, Umatilla Confederated Tribes, and Nez Perce Tribe to engage with all decision-making processes for this site, and we will ensure these Tribes have ample opportunity to be involved throughout the process on a government-to-government basis.

# Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the [Model Toxics Control Act](#)<sup>12</sup> (MTCA) and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. This plan is required under MTCA, a law that passed in 1989. MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington State and sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects human health and the environment.

## Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began as a grassroots citizen's initiative in 1988 and started the process of systematically cleaning up contaminated sites in Washington. Under MTCA, a current or past property owner or operator may be held responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property to standards that are safe for human health and the environment.

Ecology enacts MTCA and oversees cleanups in the state and issues regulations and guidance governing those cleanups. The regulations are found in [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#).<sup>13</sup> Ecology investigates reports of property contamination, and if the contamination is seen as a significant threat to human health or the environment, the property is placed on the Contaminated Sites List, and the cleanup process begins.

Public participation is an important part of cleanup under the MTCA process. Participation needs are assessed at each cleanup site according to the level of public interest and the degree of risk posed by the contamination. Individuals who live near the site, community groups, businesses, government, other organizations, and interested parties can get involved by commenting on the cleanup process.

Under MTCA, the cleanup process includes multiple steps (Figure 1), with opportunities for the public to review and comment on cleanup documents. A partial cleanup (called an interim action) can occur at any time during the cleanup process.

## State Environmental Policy Act

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is followed during review and development of cleanup plans.

Ecology held a public comment period for the draft [SEPA documents](#) for the underground storage tank system replacement at the Stillwater Holdings Chevron April 1–15, 2024. We [responded to comments](#) from four people, and we thank them for their input.

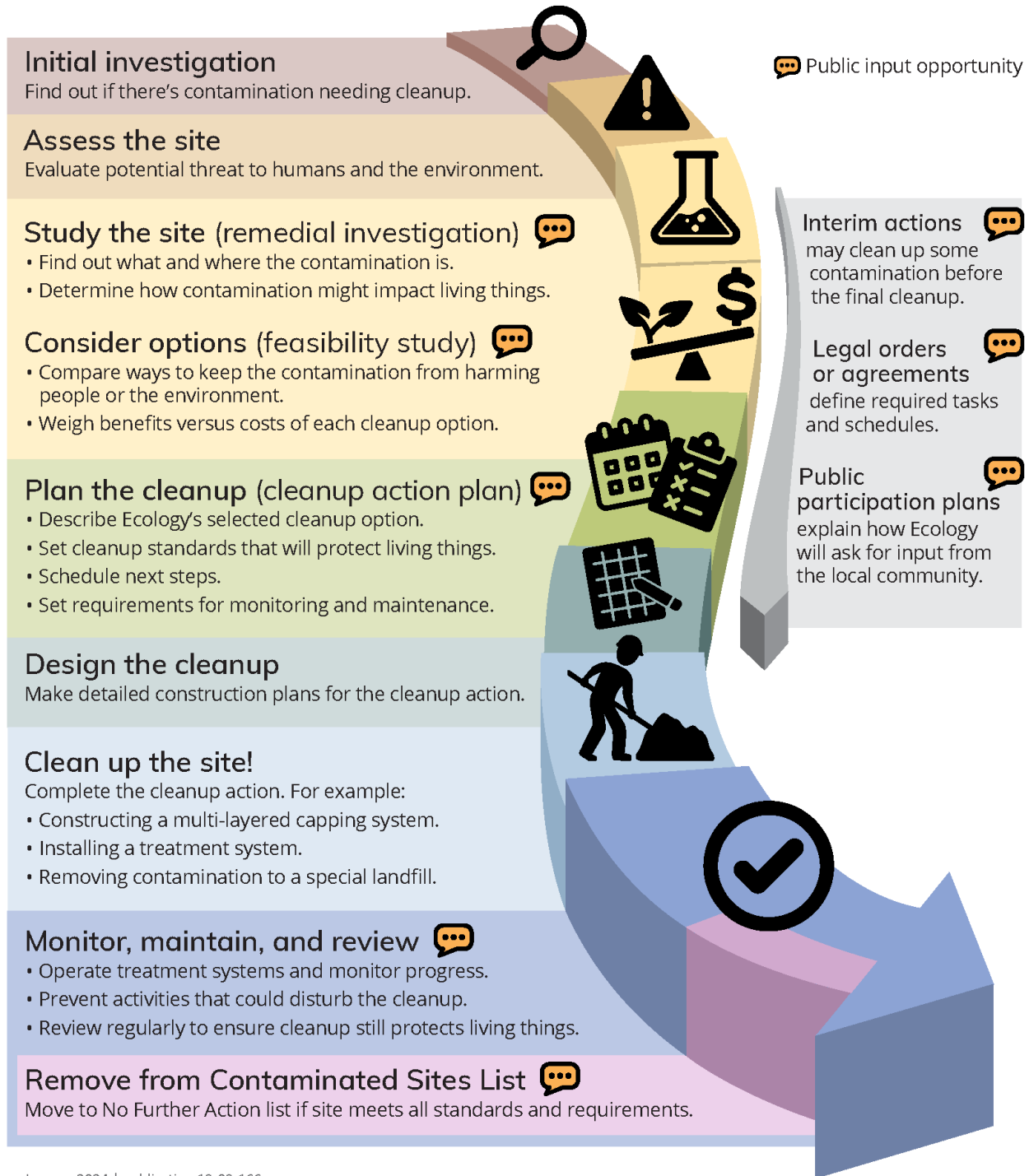
---

<sup>12</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Rules-directing-our-cleanup-work/Model-Toxics-Control-Act>

<sup>13</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

# Washington's Cleanup Process

Public participation plans and comment periods are only required for cleanups under a legal agreement with Ecology. Otherwise, all cleanups follow the same steps. The steps are defined by Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.



January 2024 | publication 19-09-166

Figure 4: Steps in Washington's Cleanup Process<sup>14</sup>



## Plan Amendments

Ecology developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Erika Beresovoy at [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov) or 509-385-2290.

This plan includes information for the public regarding opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed in this section reflect Ecology's current plans for keeping the public informed and providing ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms described in this plan are insufficient, or should otherwise be modified, we will work to find solutions. New outreach activities or outreach tools established as a result can be implemented right away, with or without amending this plan.