

Walla Walla gasoline spill and cleanup

Stillwater Holdings Chevron cleanup site: September 2024 update



Contract ensures mitigation will continue

To continue protecting people and nearby businesses from the aftermath of the Stillwater Holdings Chevron gas spill, the Washington Department of Ecology has signed a contract with a new environmental services company to ensure mitigation efforts will not be interrupted. The new contract will transfer mitigation operations from Clean Harbors to NWFF Environmental and will be in effect until the final treatment systems can be put in place. Ecology will coordinate with companies and property owners during the transition to ensure continuous operations and minimized risk.

Progress on permanent sump and vapor systems

Ecology Director Laura Watson authorized emergency contracting for procurement of design and installation of permanent sump treatment systems and vapor mitigation at the site, as well as underground storage tank removal. The final stages of negotiations for this contract are underway and should be ready for approval once costs and scope are refined in October.

Additional funding request

Ecology has requested an additional \$3.5 million for this cleanup effort as part of our Eastern Washington Clean Sites Initiative. The Legislature will consider this request during the 2025 legislative session. The [2025–2035 Capital Budget request¹](#) is available online and begins on page 451 with the project listing for this site on page 465.

Enforcement order updates

On June 18, Ecology issued an enforcement order that requires Stillwater Holdings LLC to complete emergency interim actions at the site to treat contaminated sump water and mitigate vapors. On Aug. 17, Ecology sent an Enforcement Order Amendment to Stillwater Holdings LLC requiring them to conduct a remedial investigation and feasibility study, and Ecology-required interim actions.

Stillwater Holdings LLC most recently responded on Sept. 20, saying that they don't have any resources to comply with this enforcement order, other than the activities that have already been completed or are now underway. Despite this response, Stillwater Holdings LLC remains responsible for the work in the enforcement order and legal action will be taken if they do not comply with the requirements. The enforcement order provides a legal basis for Ecology to continue to require the company's participation in the cleanup process, as well as to seek reimbursement for the state's costs connected to the spill.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/25-27capitalrequest>

Recent sampling results

On Sept. 5, 2024, Stillwater Holdings LLC had five soil samples collected on their property in coordination with removal of some of the old product lines and fuel pumps. Soil sample analytical results were provided on Sept. 24. Contaminated soil was identified near the southern fuel canopy at 10 times above cleanup levels.

Groundwater sampling analysis from August showed results above cleanup levels. Ecology's next round of groundwater sampling will likely occur during November or December 2024.

Stillwater Holdings station upgrades

Starting Sept. 3, Stillwater Holdings completed work to expose and remove some of the old product lines and fuel pumps. Soil samples were collected, and analytical results are pending.

The owner plans to install new product lines and pumps, with a goal of reopening the station to customers on Oct. 1. Stillwater Holdings is working with the City of Walla Walla on permitting requirements and Ecology on financial assurance requirements.

This work is not part of the requirements under Ecology's enforcement action.

Site history

The emergency response and cleanup operations in downtown Walla Walla began in September 2023, when Ecology spills staff responded to gas odors in the basement of the Marcus Whitman Hotel. Air quality testing identified potentially harmful gasoline vapors in the basement. The hotel was evacuated immediately. Vapors were also detected in two nearby buildings.

For the next month, ventilation was required to reduce dangerous vapors, and gasoline-contaminated groundwater was pumped from the affected buildings. Once the threat to the community lowered by October 2023, the response shifted from emergency to developing a mitigation plan to ensure the continued safety of nearby residents and businesses.

Based on sampling results, Stillwater Holdings Chevron was identified as the source of the release. Contamination from the spill continues to impact two neighboring properties. The gas station's owner, Stillwater Holdings, began negotiating with Ecology in early 2024 to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater.

What's next

Summer 2024 to early 2025

Contracting for structural assessment and design-level work for the permanent vapor and contaminated sump water mitigation; cost estimates for removal of underground storage tank system and contaminated soil.

2025

Redesign of vapor and water mitigation to remove equipment from Building 106 property. Public works contracting to conduct removal of storage tank system and contaminated soil. Additional contracting to design and install a groundwater pump and treat system.

2025-2026

Underground storage tank system removal, contaminated soil removal and disposal, groundwater pump and treat system installation.

2026-2036

Long-term operation and maintenance of vapor mitigation, sump water mitigation, and groundwater pump and treat system.

Questions?

Contact: Nick Acklam
Toxics Cleanup Program
nicholas.acklam@ecy.wa.gov
(509) 818-7457