



Public Participation Plan

**Eastern State Hospital Landfill
Maple & Pine, DSHS Medical Lake
Campus, Spokane County**

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Eastern Region Office
Spokane, Washington

October 2024



Document Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Eastern State Hospital Landfill cleanup site page](#).¹

Cover photo credit

- Washington Department of Ecology, June 2024

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 16994
- Facility site ID: 51358721

Contact Information

[Toxics Cleanup Program](#)²

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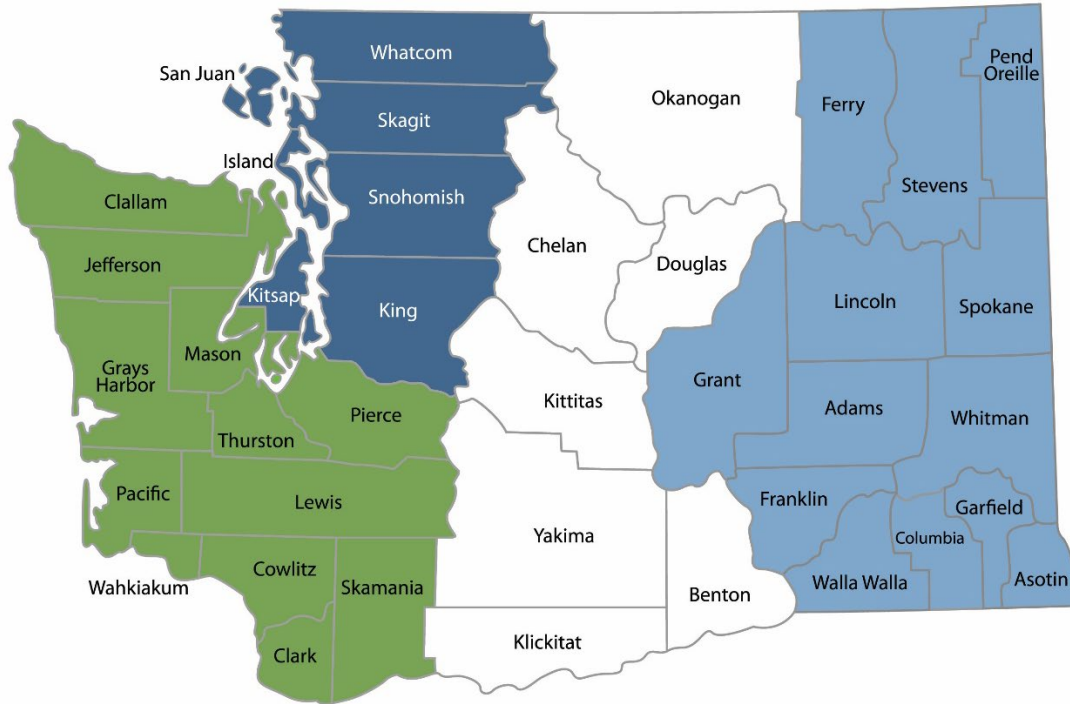
¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/16994>

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

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/ADA>

Department of Ecology's Region 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
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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 47600 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

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Figure 1: Steps in Washington's Cleanup Process 4

Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this public participation plan (plan) in cooperation with the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which owns the Eastern State Hospital. The purpose of the plan is 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 putting out an underground fire and completing a remedial investigation and feasibility study for the Eastern State Hospital Landfill (site).

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

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360-628-2426

Public Participation Grants

Grants 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.⁴
- 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 and Jill Krumlauf at 360-790-5771 or jill.krumlauf@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the [Public Participation Grant webpage](#).⁵

Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the Model Toxics Control Act (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 \(WAC\)](#).⁶ Ecology investigates reports of property contamination, and if the

⁴ 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.

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG>

⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/publications/9406.pdf>

contamination is seen as a significant threat to human health or the environment, the contaminated property is placed on the Hazardous 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 have the opportunity to get involved by commenting on the cleanup process.

Under MTCA, Washington's cleanup process includes multiple steps (see 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. The public is provided an opportunity to review and comment on planned interim action work as well.

State Environmental Policy Act

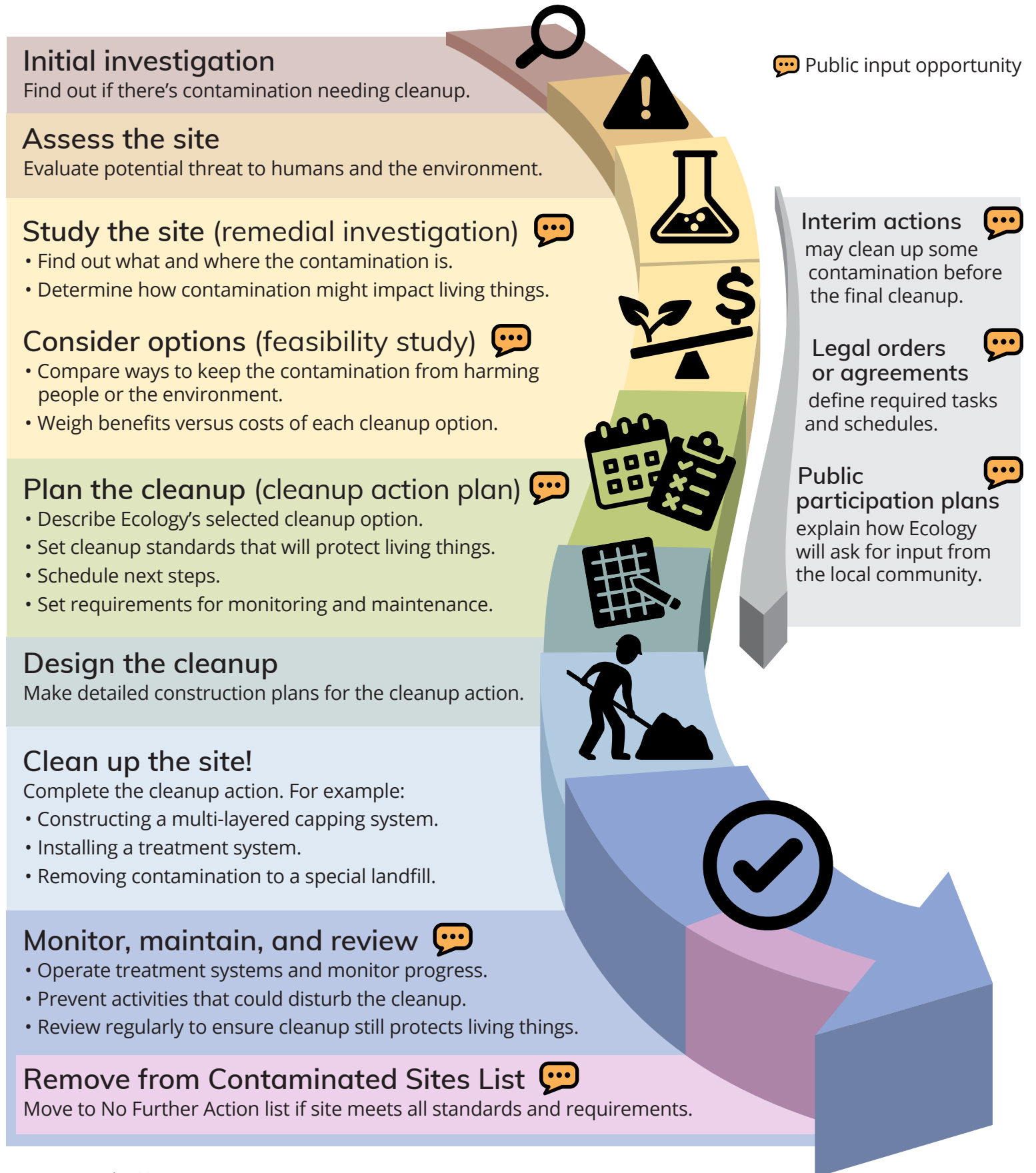
MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA; [Chapter 197-11 WAC](#)⁷). Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

⁷ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

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.



Site Information

Land use

Washington state has operated the state-funded [Eastern State Hospital](#)⁸ since around 1891. Eastern State Hospital is a 375-bed adult facility for in-patients who receive evaluation, therapy, and treatment for mental illness. The hospital includes the Eastlake and Westlake campuses.

How the site became contaminated

Sometime before 1975, buildings at Eastern State Hospital were demolished and buried on the property, about 100 feet from West Medical Lake. The landfill appears to mostly contain tiles, concrete, insulation, and other building debris.

When the demolished buildings were buried, there were no solid waste regulations in Washington that applied to this material, and landfilling was standard practice when buildings were torn down.

Contamination

Contamination in soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment at the site has not been defined. That is the purpose of the remedial investigation. Preliminary testing of the debris indicates it includes asbestos-containing materials.

Fire response and cleanup plans

In August 2023, the Gray Road Fire burned in and around the Medical Lake community, including parts of the Eastern State Hospital property and the area of the landfill. After the Gray Road Fire was out, DSHS staff discovered the landfill was burning underground.

Spokane County Fire District 3 attempted to put the fire out with water. After several months of failed attempts, Fire District 3 decided to leave the fire over the winter, hoping it would burn out in the cooler weather and snow. They reported the fire to Ecology and requested assistance with concerns about air quality and the fire being near West Medical Lake.

In spring 2024, the fire was still burning despite Fire District 3's continued efforts. DSHS removed trees, brush, and other ignitable material in the vicinity of the smoldering area.

DSHS put clean soil over the smoldering area. This action has been successful at controlling emissions and reducing the risks posed from open flames.

⁸ <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/division-state-hospitals/eastern-state-hospital-overview>

Fire District 3 continues to monitor the situation. We are working with our Air Quality Program to monitor air quality in the vicinity of the landfill. We are regularly monitoring surface temperatures with a drone (see cover page photo).

Further steps to put the fire out include:

- Continuing to restrict all public access to the site
- Identifying the extent of elevated temperatures or fire in the subsurface
- Developing a plan to excavate and hose down any burning material in metal boxes
- The following actions, if needed:
 - Properly disposing excavated waste and soil
 - Removing contaminated building or other structural material
 - Capping waste
 - Cleaning up groundwater
 - Installing systems to catch runoff to protect West Medical Lake and stabilize the shoreline

After confirming that the fire is out, DSHS will fully investigate the contents of the landfill and whether they have contaminated soil and groundwater. The feasibility study will evaluate options for cleaning up the landfill and any contamination it has caused.

Area community

The hospital is in a forested area west of the Lakes Memorial Cemetery and east of West Medical Lake, about 15 miles west of downtown Spokane in Spokane County. It is part of the City of Medical Lake, which had a population of 4,725 in the 2020 Census. An area map is in Appendix A.

Eastern State Hospital is about 3.5 miles southwest of one of the area's other major employers, Fairchild Air Force Base. Other area features include the Spokane International Airport and the communities of Airway Heights and Cheney, which houses Eastern Washington University.

Due to being in the channeled scablands that were carved by glacial flooding during the end of the last Ice Age, many lakes are in the area in addition to Medical and West Medical lakes: Silver, Clear, Granite, Ring, Willow, and others.

According to the 2020 Census, the Medical Lake population was 89% White, 6% Hispanic, and 3% Black, with a small number of people reporting as American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or some other race. The population is 51% male and 49% female. The majority of people (79%) are over 18, with 16% being over 65. Twenty-one percent are under 17, with 3% being under 4. Fifty percent of households make \$75,000 or more per year, and 73% own their homes.

Ecology will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our outreach and provide information in other languages as appropriate following federal guidance.⁹ Language data from the Census is limited. The non-English language most widely spoken in the Medical Lake area is only identified as “other Indo-European,” which may be Ukrainian. Ecology has encountered Ukrainian speakers at meetings for other sites in the area. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Ukrainian, or other languages if needed.

We strive to make our public participation efforts as inclusive as possible and welcome your input about how to best reach the nearby community.

Tribal engagement

The Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Kalispel Tribe are a federally recognized tribes that could be affected by the contamination. Ecology will ensure that the Tribes will be engaged with any decision-making process for this site and have ample opportunity to be involved throughout the process on a government-to-government basis.

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. 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.

We email public comment period notices to relevant local, state, and federal government contacts.

⁹ Guidance to Environmental Protection Agency Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 69 Fed. Reg. § 35602 (June 15, 2004).

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).

Postal mailing list

Ecology maintains a mailing list that includes addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site. These people receive public comment notices when draft documents are available.

We will add additional 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.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).¹⁰ To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),¹¹ or contact Sarah Kellington at sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events in ads or notices published in the *Spokesman Review*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).¹²

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the [Eastern State Hospital Landfill site](#).¹³ The webpage 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](#).¹⁴

¹⁰ ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data

¹¹ https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_118

¹² ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing

¹³ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/16994>

¹⁴ ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News

Places to see print documents

During public comment periods, you can find print documents at the following locations:

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

To schedule an appointment, please contact Miriam Robbins at 509-329-3415 or 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.

Signs around the cleanup site

We may also install signs displaying information about project status, traffic impacts, and health risks around the cleanup site.

How to share information with us

At minimum, MTCA requires 30-day public comment periods for draft cleanup documents and 14-day comment periods SEPA documents. 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 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

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.

Americans with Disabilities Act

To request ADA accommodation for disabilities, or printed materials in a format for the visually impaired, contact the Ecology ADA Coordinator at 360-407-6831 or ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov, or visit our [ADA website](#).¹⁵ People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

Plan Amendments

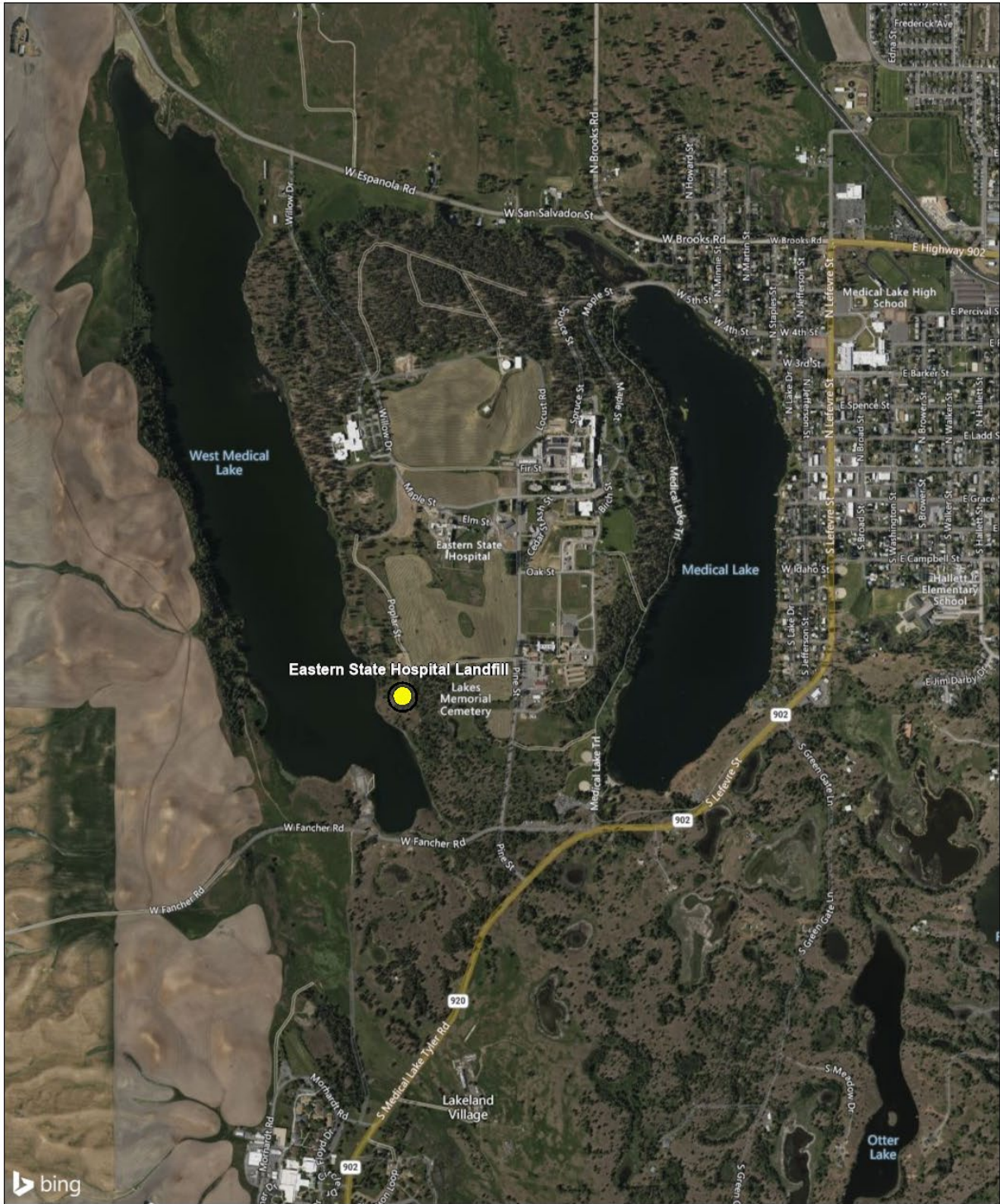
Ecology developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

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.

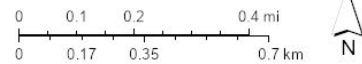
¹⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/ADA>

Appendix A. Area map



September 11, 2024

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