

Gas Works Park



Public comment sought on consent decree amendment & Ecology review of site cleanup performance

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites public comment on an amendment to the consent decree for the upland portion of Gas Works Park site. As a result of the amendment, the public will have access to the northwest corner of the park which has been closed off with a wall and fencing. Information about the first 5-year periodic review of the effectiveness of cleanup actions at the site is available in a report that is also available for your review. You are welcome and encouraged to comment on these documents through **June 2, 2005**.

Site location and background

Gas Works Park is located at 2101 North Northlake Way, in Seattle, Washington. The 20-acre park is on the north shore of Lake Union, approximately 5 miles north of downtown Seattle (see figure). The park juts into Lake Union (the lake lies to the east, west, and south sides of the park). The Park's north end is bounded by Northlake Way.

From the early 1900s until 1956, gas companies operated a plant at the site that converted coal and oil into manufactured gas. The American Tar Company operated nearby, processing tar from coal by-products. Leaks and by-products from the gas works and tar production facilities contaminated the soil and groundwater.

After the gas plant closed in 1956, the site was used for equipment storage by Puget Sound Energy. In 1962,

the City of Seattle purchased the site. By the mid-1970s, most of the old equipment was removed, park landforms were created, and by-products of the original gas plant were covered with soil. In 1976, the park was opened to the public.

In 1984, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency collected soil and water samples from the site and identified several contaminants including petroleum compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and benzene. The park was temporarily closed during an investigation into risks to park visitors. The park was later re-opened after it was determined that no significant health risks exist as long as park visitors do not come into contact with soil in the park or wade, swim, or fish in adjacent Lake Union.

In 1985, an approximately 1-foot-thick clean soil cover was placed over the most contaminated areas of the park. In 1996, under oversight by Ecology, the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy started to evaluate the extent of contamination.

The park was closed for cleanup work between November 2000 and June 2001. Cleanup activities focused on reducing contamination in the park to protect park visitors, reducing contamination seeping into Lake Union, and preventing contaminated soil or groundwater from moving off site. Cleanup work conducted by the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy included:

May 2005

**Public Comment Period:
May 4–June 2, 2005**

Questions & written comments:

John Keeling, Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
Toxics Cleanup Program
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008
(425) 649-7052
Email: jkee461@ecy.wa.gov

All other questions contact:

Justine Asohmbom
Public Involvement Coordinator
WA Department of Ecology
Toxics Cleanup Program
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008
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Documents can be reviewed at the following locations:

Seattle Public Library - Wallingford
1501 North 45th Street, Seattle

Seattle Public Library – Fremont
731 North 35th Street, Seattle
Fremont Neighborhood Service Ctr.
908 North 34th Street, Seattle

Seattle Public Library – Central
1000 4th Avenue, 5th Floor, Seattle

WA Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008
(425) 649-7190
(Call for an appointment)

Ecology's Web Site:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/gaswkspk/gaswks.htm>

- A 12-inch-thick soil cover placed on the north-central and southeast portions of the site, along with an irrigation system;
- An air sparging and soil vapor extraction system (SVE) was installed to remove benzene from the soil and groundwater (air was pumped through the soil and groundwater to force the benzene out; the benzene and other vapors were collected and burned). The SVE system is still in operation at the site.
- Monitored natural attenuation for the naphthalene plume near the Seattle Police Harbor Patrol Facility.

The northwest corner of the site was fenced off until data could be collected to determine whether that portion of the park was safe for public access. March 2004 data sampling showed that the protective measures being taken across the rest of the site also are appropriate for the northwest corner. The City of Seattle began the following work in the northwest corner of the site in August 2004:

- Adding a 15-inch-thick clean soil cap,
- Planting grass, and
- Installing an irrigation system to maintain the grass.

This cleanup work was completed in December 2004. This area was fenced off and was not accessible to the public during the cleanup and planting of the grass cover. A paved walking path through this area also was added to connect to North Northlake Way and the Wallingford Steps.

The amendment would allow the fence and portions of the wall to be removed for public access to this area.

Results of the 5-year review

Reviews of cleanup sites are conducted every 5 years after completion of cleanup work to assess the effectiveness of the cleanup actions in protecting human health and the environment.

Ecology is conducting the first 5-year periodic review of the upland portion of the Gas Works Park site. Ecology's review found that, the remedy is functioning as intended under the cleanup action plan. Exposure pathways that could result in unacceptable risks are being controlled, and studies to date indicate contaminants from this site have not entered Lake Union in concentrations that exceed standard cleanup levels for surface water.

The review has also determined that the concentration of both benzene and naphthalene in groundwater remain below standard cleanup levels for surface water but above groundwater cleanup levels. Cleanup measures will continue until the groundwater cleanup levels are met as described under the Cleanup Action Plan

The soil cap is being properly maintained and remains protective of human health and the environment. However, maintenance of the soil cap and irrigation will continue as provided in the Cleanup Action Plan.

Current activity

Ecology and the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy have negotiated a change, or amendment, to the existing consent decree for the site. This 1999 legal agreement is the mechanism that allowed for cleanup work at the site. The amendment would allow the fence and portions of the wall to be removed for public access to the northwest corner of the park.

Public comment on the consent decree amendment & 5-year periodic review report

Ecology is holding a public comment period from **May 4** through **June 2, 2005**, during which you may provide comments on the consent decree amendment and 5-year periodic review report. These documents are available at the information repositories listed on the first page of this fact sheet. For ease of review, changes are underlined in the consent decree amendment.

Once the public comment period ends, Ecology will review all comments received and will make recommendations for any suggested changes to the consent decree amendment and 5-year periodic review report. If no significant changes are made, the documents will be considered final. If significant changes are made, an additional public comment period will be held.

A public meeting is not planned for this public comment period. However, one will be held if 10 or more people so request.

Ecology would like your input!

You have an opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft consent decree amendment and 5-year periodic review report. Please send your comments before **June 2, 2005**, to Ecology's Site Manager, John Keeling, at the address in the box on the first page of this fact sheet. Comments may be sent by mail or e-mail and should include "Gas Works Park" in the subject line.

For information about other Ecology public comment periods, meetings, hearings, workshops, and open houses, please visit Ecology's public events calendar at: <http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/pubcalendar/calendar.asp>. Read *Frequently Asked Questions about Effective Public Commenting* at this link to learn more about the public comment process.

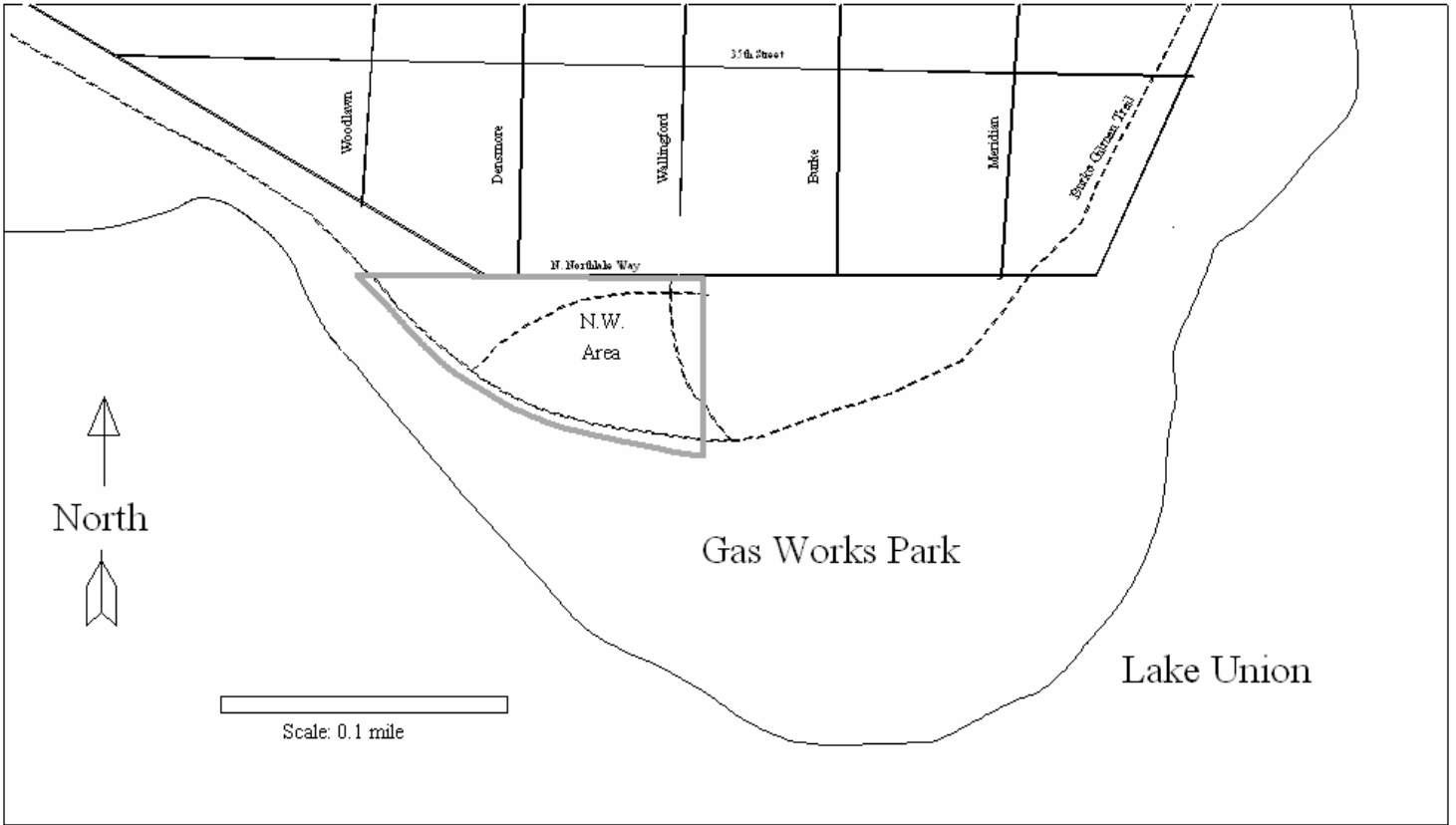


Figure: Gas Works Park and Northwest Area of the Park



3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

Gas Works Park Site

Ecology Seeks Public Comment
on Amendment to Consent Decree &
Results of 5-Year Periodic Review

Public Comment Period
May 4 – June 2, 2005

