

Western Port Angeles Harbor site cleanup

Consent Decree, Draft Cleanup Action Plan, and SEPA Available for Public Review & Comment

Comments accepted

**Thursday, January 16th, 2025 –
Tuesday, February 18th, 2025**

Submit your comment

Online (preferred):

[https://go.ecology.wa.gov/
comment11907](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/comment11907)

or scan the QR code →



Or by mail or email:

Connie Groven, Site Manager
 WA Department of Ecology
 PO Box 47775
 Olympia, WA 98504-7775
Connie.Groven@ecy.wa.gov

Review the documents

Online review at the site webpage

[https://go.ecology.wa.gov/
11907](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/11907)

or scan the QR code →



In-person review

- Port Angeles Library
2210 South Peabody St
Port Angeles, WA 98362
360-417-8500
- Ecology Lacey Office
(by appointment only)
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503
PublicDisclosureSWRO@ecy.wa.gov
or 360-407-6365

Site information

Facility Site ID: **18898**
 Cleanup Site ID: **11907**

Public comments now welcomed on site documents

The Department of Ecology invites you to review and share your comments on three documents for the Western Port Angeles Harbor cleanup site. The documents are listed in the bullet points below.

Ecology worked with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe to develop and review these documents.

- **Consent Decree:** A court-approved settlement agreement between Ecology and the responsible parties, outlining the cleanup process. It requires these parties to carry out Ecology's Cleanup Action Plan. Responsible groups include the City of Port Angeles, Georgia-Pacific LLC, Merrill & Ring, Nippon Paper Industries USA Co., Ltd, the Port of Port Angeles, and Owens Corning.
- **Draft Cleanup Action Plan:** This plan proposes how the site will be cleaned up. It also includes the schedule, standards, and cleanup requirements.
- **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination and Checklist:** This checklist summarizes environmental impacts that may result from cleanup. Ecology determined the proposed cleanup is not likely to cause significant harm to the environment.

Learn more about the cleanup

We are planning a **public meeting** and **open house** during the public comment period. Meeting details are not yet final. When the meeting is finalized, you will be notified about meeting details. Notification will be sent by postcard, email, and updates on the site webpage.

This gathering will give people a chance to learn more about the site, ask questions, and submit written comments.

Next steps

We carefully review all comments we receive and may update documents based on public feedback.

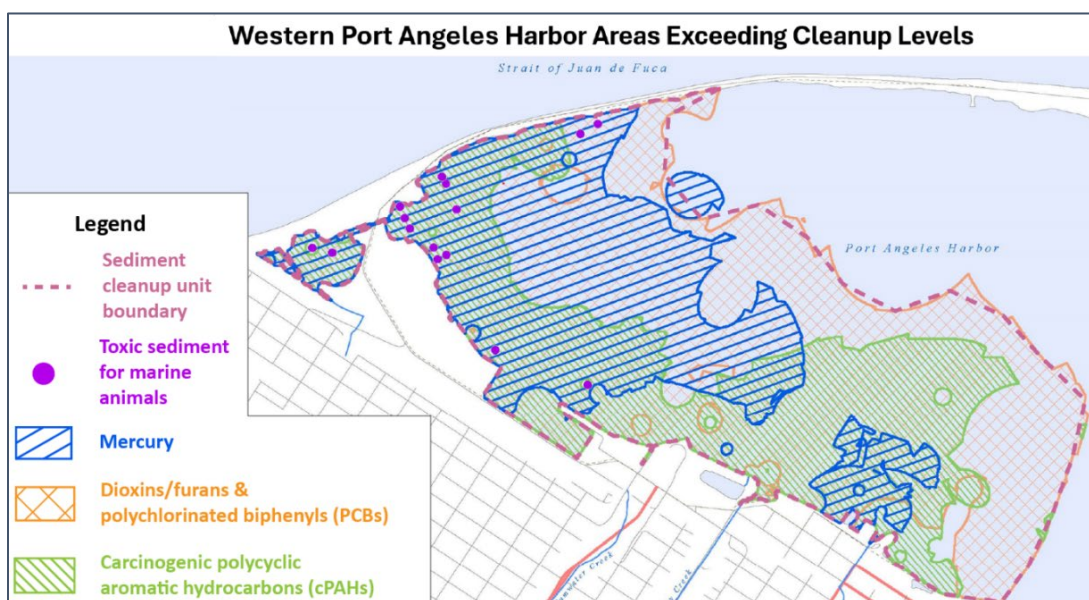
Detailed cleanup designs and construction will begin once we finalize the documents.

Site background

Port Angeles Harbor is located within the traditional territory of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, which retains treaty fishing rights today. Two major Klallam villages, l'e'nis and Tse-whit-zen, once stood along the shoreline. In the late 1800s, industrial development brought sawmills, pulp and paper production, commercial fishing, and marine transport to the harbor area. Some industries released liquid waste and contaminated stormwater into the harbor, causing contamination. Pulp mills burned wood debris soaked in saltwater. This process released hazardous substances, like dioxins, that entered marine sediment.

Sediment contaminants

Our investigation identified contaminants at the site and the areas where their levels exceed cleanup standards. The contaminants include **dioxins/furans**, **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**, **carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs)**, and **metals such as mercury**. These substances can pose a risk to human health through direct contact with contaminated sediment or by eating fish and shellfish exposed to these contaminants. They can also harm marine animals living in the sediment.

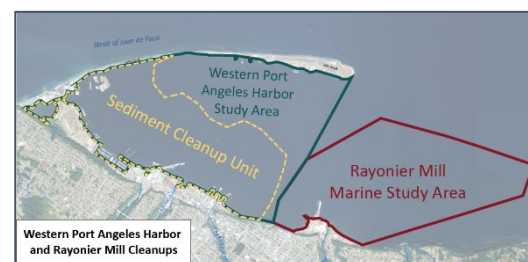


A map showing the areas where each contaminant exceeds cleanup levels.

Previous cleanup efforts

In 2008, Ecology investigated Western Port Angeles Harbor and found contamination. This started the cleanup process for the site.

In 2013, Ecology signed a legal agreement with the potentially liable persons (PLPs) responsible for the site's cleanup. The PLPs worked with Ecology to carry out investigations that would help choose a cleanup plan. These PLPs include the City of Port Angeles, Georgia-Pacific LLC, Merrill & Ring, Nippon Paper Industries USA Co., Ltd, and the Port of Port Angeles. Together, they are known as the Western Port Angeles Harbor Group. Owens Corning is another PLP that will work on the next phase of cleanup.



Overview of the Study Area and cleanup unit. Please note that the cleanup is separate from the Rayonier Mill cleanup, which is being handled through a separate process.

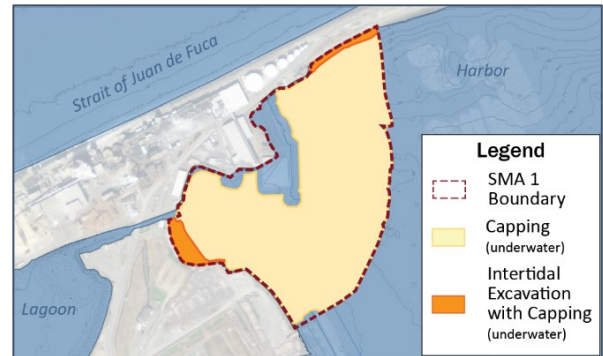
We are now planning the cleanup actions. To learn more about the site's cleanup history, please visit the site's webpage: <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/11907>.

Draft Cleanup Action Plan

We used information from earlier cleanup stages to create the Draft Cleanup Action Plan. Our plan divides the site into three sections called Sediment Management Areas (SMAs). Each SMA has unique characteristics. We propose cleanup actions for each SMA based on how well they protect human health and the environment, manage costs, and fit with the harbor's current and future uses.

Main actions of the Cleanup Plan

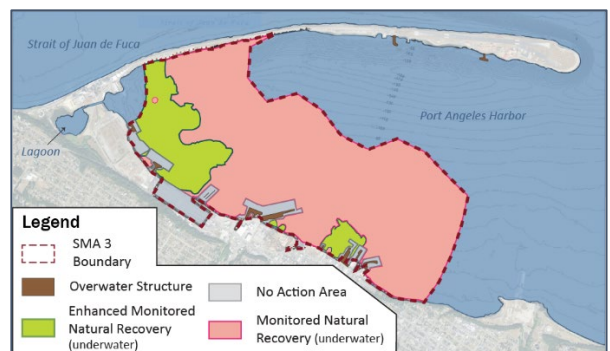
- **Excavate intertidal sediment** to remove contaminated material and replace it with clean fill. If deeper contamination remains, we will place a cap to protect human health and the environment (SMAs 1 and 2).
- **Excavate land** to remove the lagoon causeway, reshape the intertidal area, and create new aquatic habitats to replace lost ones (SMA 2).
- **Remove contaminated sediment the intertidal and subtidal areas** to help the area recover naturally over time (SMA 2).
- **Build a cap** over contaminated sediment. This contains contamination and prevents further spread (SMAs 1 and 2).
- **Implement enhanced monitored natural recovery** in over 180 acres. We will add a clean layer of sediment to speed up the area's natural recovery (SMAs 2 and 3).
- **Monitor the natural recovery** of more than 950 acres with low contamination to see how the sediment quality improves over time (SMAs 1, 2, and 3).



SMA 1: Inner harbor. This area is approximately 37 acres and is the most heavily contaminated.



SMA 2: Lagoon. This area is approximately 25 acres.



SMA 3: Industrial/commercial waterfront and outer harbor. This area is approximately 1,100 acres and has the lowest concentrations of contamination.

About 25,000 cubic yards of polluted soil and sediment will be removed and taken to an approved facility. To replace excavated materials, build a cap, and speed natural recovery, 280,000 cubic yards of new sand and gravel will be added. Construction of proposed cleanup actions will take about six years to complete. We should see immediate improvements in sediment quality and expect to achieve sediment cleanup goals within 10 years. Monitoring will occur to ensure the cleanup works. Capped areas will be protected through institutional controls, which we will review regularly to ensure effectiveness.



Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

Western Port Angeles Harbor cleanup site: **Public Comment Period and Public Meeting for the Consent Decree, Draft Cleanup Action Plan, and SEPA Determination and Checklist**

Public Comments Accepted

**January 16, 2025, 12:00 a.m. to
February 18, 2025, 11:59 p.m.**

Submit Your Comment Today!

<https://go.ecology.wa.gov/comment11907>

Ecology seeks public comment on the site's:

1. **Consent Decree** (the legal agreement that will power cleanup)
2. **Draft Cleanup Action Plan** (how cleanup will occur)
3. **SEPA Determination and Checklist** (determines environmental risks at the site)

Accommodation Requests

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-250-0561 or email at

abby.zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov, or visit

<https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>.

For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

Open House & Public Meeting

Ecology will be hosting an open house and public meeting to answer your questions.

Details are yet to be finalized. However, we will send an update on the gathering's details once everything is confirmed. We will notify people by sending out a postcard, emailing those on our notification list, and updating the site's webpage. Please visit the site webpage to be added to our email notification list.

¿Habla Español?

Si necesita esta información en español—contáctenos a abby.zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov.