



Public Participation Plan

**Caton Landfill
1500 Naches-Wenas Rd
Naches, WA**

Solid Waste Management Program



Washington State Department of Ecology
Central Region Office
Union Gap, Washington
Publication 26-09-004, May 2026

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Caton Limited Purpose Landfill - \(11536\)](#).¹

Cover photo credit

- Ecology, April 2025

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 11536
- Facility site ID: 4504

Contact Information

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Language Access

The Department of Ecology offers free translation and interpretation services. If you need help in your preferred language, please call Monica Martinez at (509) 208-4602 and request an interpreter, or email monica.martinez@ecy.wa.gov.

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/11536>

² <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

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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Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this Public Participation Plan in collaboration with Caton Landfill and Recycling, LLC, the party responsible for cleanup actions and costs. The goal of this plan is to ensure meaningful community involvement throughout the investigation and cleanup of the Caton Landfill (Site).

This plan outlines how Ecology will keep the public informed about contamination investigations and cleanup options at each stage of the process. Please review Appendix A for more information about the investigation and cleanup process. The plan also details when and how the community can participate in the investigation and cleanup process. We encourage the public to engage with the decision-making opportunities and provide input.

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

Central Region Office
1250 Alder Street
Union Gap, WA 98903

Luke LeMond, site manager
luke.lemond@ecy.wa.gov
509-379-3961

Eric Foss, public involvement coordinator
rhonda.luke@ecy.wa.gov
509-654-8830

Responsible party

Caton Landfill and Recycling, LLC
1251 Humphrey Road
Tieton, WA 98947
509-673-3832

If you are unable to reach these contacts, please visit the [Caton Limited Purpose Landfill - \(11536\)](#)³ for up-to-date contact information.

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 process is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in the decision-making for the investigation and cleanup.

How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the investigation and 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. However, the list will at least include addresses within a 1-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.

Comment period notices will be available online and at document repositories (for example at the library closest to the site). Notices may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, or post offices).

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 print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Postal mailing and email contact list

Ecology maintains a mailing list that includes addresses within a 1-mile radius of the site and relevant local, state, and federal government contacts. People on the mailing list receive public comment notices when draft documents are available. We also maintain an email list of affected residents within the proximity that do not have USPS mailable addresses.

³ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/11536>

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 Rhonda Luke at 509-406-6931 or rhonda.luke@ecy.wa.gov.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).⁴ To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),⁵ 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 for this site in ads or notices published in the *Yakima Herald-Republic*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).⁶

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the [Caton Landfill](#) site.⁷ 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](#).⁸

Printed documents can be requested

During public comment periods, print documents are available and can be mailed to your address by requesting them from Ecology at eric.foss@ecy.wa.gov or by phone at 509-654-8830.

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 you can share information with us

We hold public comment periods and sometimes public events to learn your thoughts, opinions, and concerns about cleanup at a site. We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/site-register>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/11536>

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News>

and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Luke LeMond at 509-379-3961 or luke.lemond@ecy.wa.gov.

Public comment periods

At a minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 8 for more information) requires 30-day comment periods to allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed investigations and cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, Ecology may extend the public comment period.

When Ecology oversees State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determinations (see page 9 for more information), we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other investigation and 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, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the investigation and cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, the documents will become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings based on community interest. At meetings, workshops, and open houses, attendees can ask questions, learn more about the site, and submit written comments when a comment period is open. At a public hearing, verbal comments are transcribed for the record, and Ecology responds to them after the comment period in our response to comments.

If we have not scheduled an event, we will hold one if 10 people request it. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the event occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public events are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

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
- 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](#).⁹

Site Information

Historical use

The Caton Landfill was first permitted in 1997 as an unlined construction and demolition debris landfill. Prior to operation of the landfill, the property was used for dryland wheat farming. The landfill was originally permitted under Chapter 173-304 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) by the Yakima Health District (YHD). In 2008, following promulgation of Chapter 173-350 WAC, the facility obtained a permit from YHD for the operation of a Limited Purpose Landfill (LPL).

In June 2023, YHD denied the renewal of the Caton Landfill's operating permit and ordered the facility to cease operations by June 30, 2025. The Caton Landfill appealed YHD's decision. A hearing was held in August 2023 and the Hearing Officer ruled in favor of the YHD's decision to deny permit renewal. The Caton Landfill appealed the decision to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB). On April 10, 2025, the PCHB ruled in favor of the YHD's decision to deny permit renewal. The Caton Landfill ceased accepting waste on April 14, 2025.

⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG>

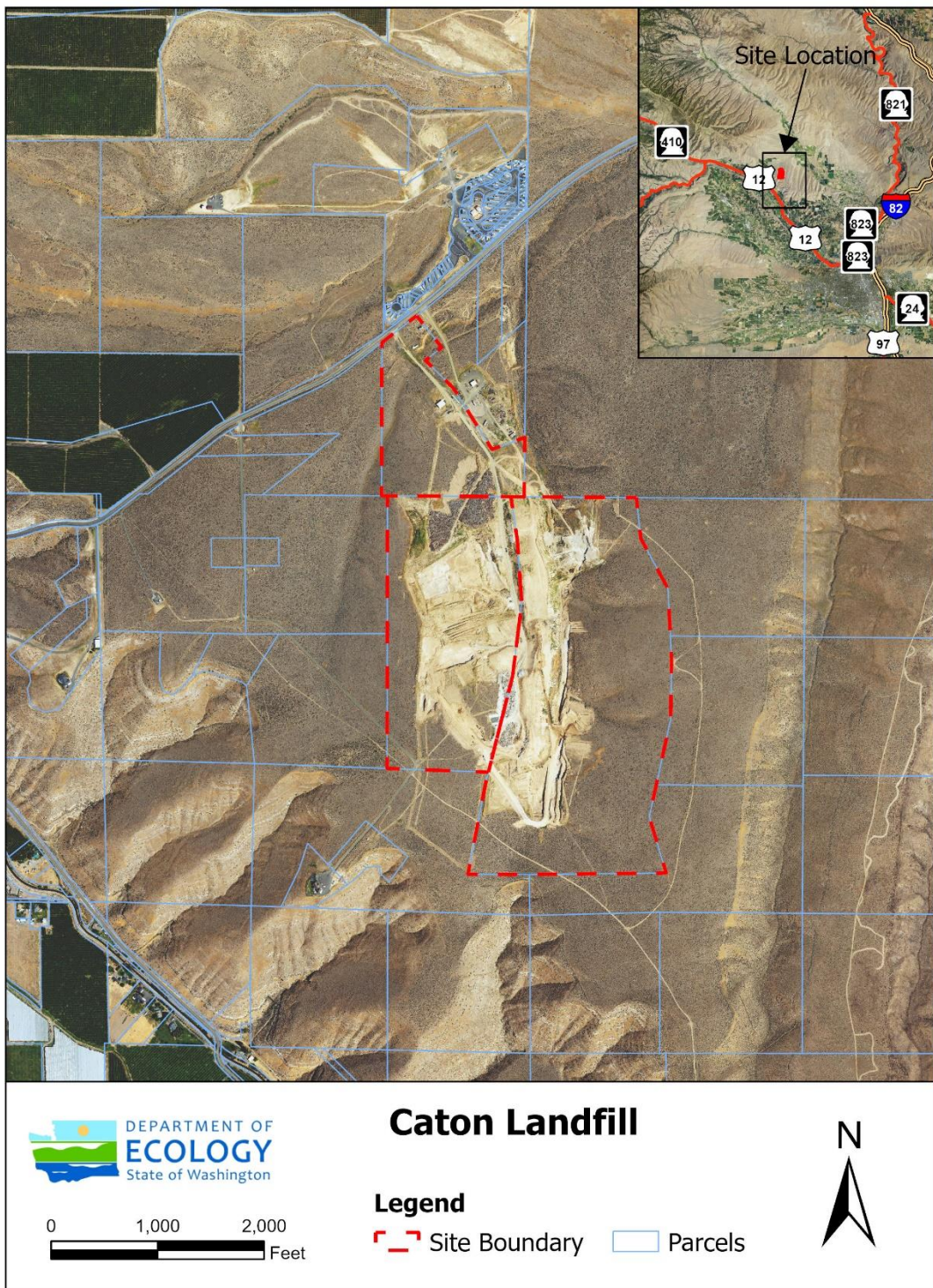


Figure 1. Site map

How the site became contaminated

Ecology staff believe that disposal practices may have resulted in the release of hazardous materials to the environment at the Caton Landfill, including potential disposal of vehicles, campers, boats, and tires. In addition, air samples collected over the landfill in February 2023 contained concentrations of benzene greater than MTCA Method B levels for ambient outdoor air. Benzene is a hazardous compound used to produce many products which can also be produced by combustion and partial combustion of waste within landfills alongside other volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds many of which are hazardous.

In November 2022, a fire occurred within the waste beneath the surface of the landfill. The fire was first reported based on visible smoke emissions, and open flames later broke through the surface on the east flank of the landfill. The Caton Landfill placed soil on waste over the fire to smother and extinguish the fire. In March 2023, the Caton Landfill determined that the fire was extinguished.

In February 2026, visual observations by Ecology staff and reports by Caton Landfill operators indicate that a fire may still be burning or smoldering beneath the surface of the landfill.

Contamination

Due to historic land use as a waste disposal facility and the historic waste combustion from the 2022 fire, soil and groundwater may be contaminated with:

- Solid waste outside previously permitted areas;
- Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) from diesel, gasoline, and oil;
- Metals (arsenic, barium, chromium, and zinc);
- Semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs);
- Per and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Cleanup plans

Ecology and the Caton Landfill have signed an Agreed Order to complete a Remedial Investigation (RI) at the Site. The RI will be conducted in two primary phases. The first phase will focus on performance of an Initial Site Assessment (ISA) that will include delineation, characterization, and extinguishment of any subsurface fire. The second phase will include investigation of potential releases of hazardous substances to soil and groundwater.

Area community

The Site is located on a plateau east-northeast of Naches, Washington. The Site is zoned rural (10/5). A significant portion of the surrounding area is zoned agricultural, primarily used for livestock grazing and orchards. Properties to the west and north have been subdivided for single family homes. An RV resort is located to the north.

Ecology will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our outreach and provide information in other languages according to federal guidance.¹⁰ The non-English language most widely spoken in the area is Spanish. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Spanish. To request information in another language, call 360-870-1689 and wait on the line while we connect an interpreter.

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 Yakama Nation relies on resources that could be affected by the contamination. This Tribe has hunting and gathering rights in the area. The cleanup process may also uncover cultural resources.

We will reach out to Tribes to offer opportunities to engage in the cleanup process that are separate from the public involvement process. This engagement is described in a site-specific Tribal Engagement Plan, as required by [WAC 173-340-620](#).¹¹ We invite Tribal members and other indigenous peoples to engage in the public involvement process as well.

Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the [Model Toxics Control Act \(MTCA\)](#)¹² and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. Passed in 1989, MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington state. This law sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects people and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this public participation plan.

Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began in 1988 as a citizen-led effort to clean up contaminated sites in Washington state. The law holds property owners or operators responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property.

Ecology carries out MTCA, making sure cleanups happen according to state rules and regulations. These rules are found in [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#).¹³ Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and contaminated property is placed

¹⁰ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2004/06/25/04-14464/guidance-to-environmental-protection-agency-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi>

¹¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340-620>

¹² <https://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca>

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

on the [Contaminated Sites List](#)¹⁴ if the pollution is determined to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. This starts the cleanup process at the site.

The cleanup process under MTCA includes several steps (Appendix A). Public involvement is a key part of MTCA's [cleanup process](#).¹⁵ Nearby residents, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties can review and comment on documents related to steps that make crucial decisions or plans about the cleanup.

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#).¹⁶ 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.

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 Luke LeMond at 509-379-3961.

We intend for this plan to provide the public with information on opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed reflect Ecology's current plans to keep the public informed. It also provides ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms found in this plan are insufficient or would like to modify them in some way, please contact us. We will work to find solutions. We can implement new activities or outreach tools right away, with or without amending this plan.

¹⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated>

¹⁵ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process>

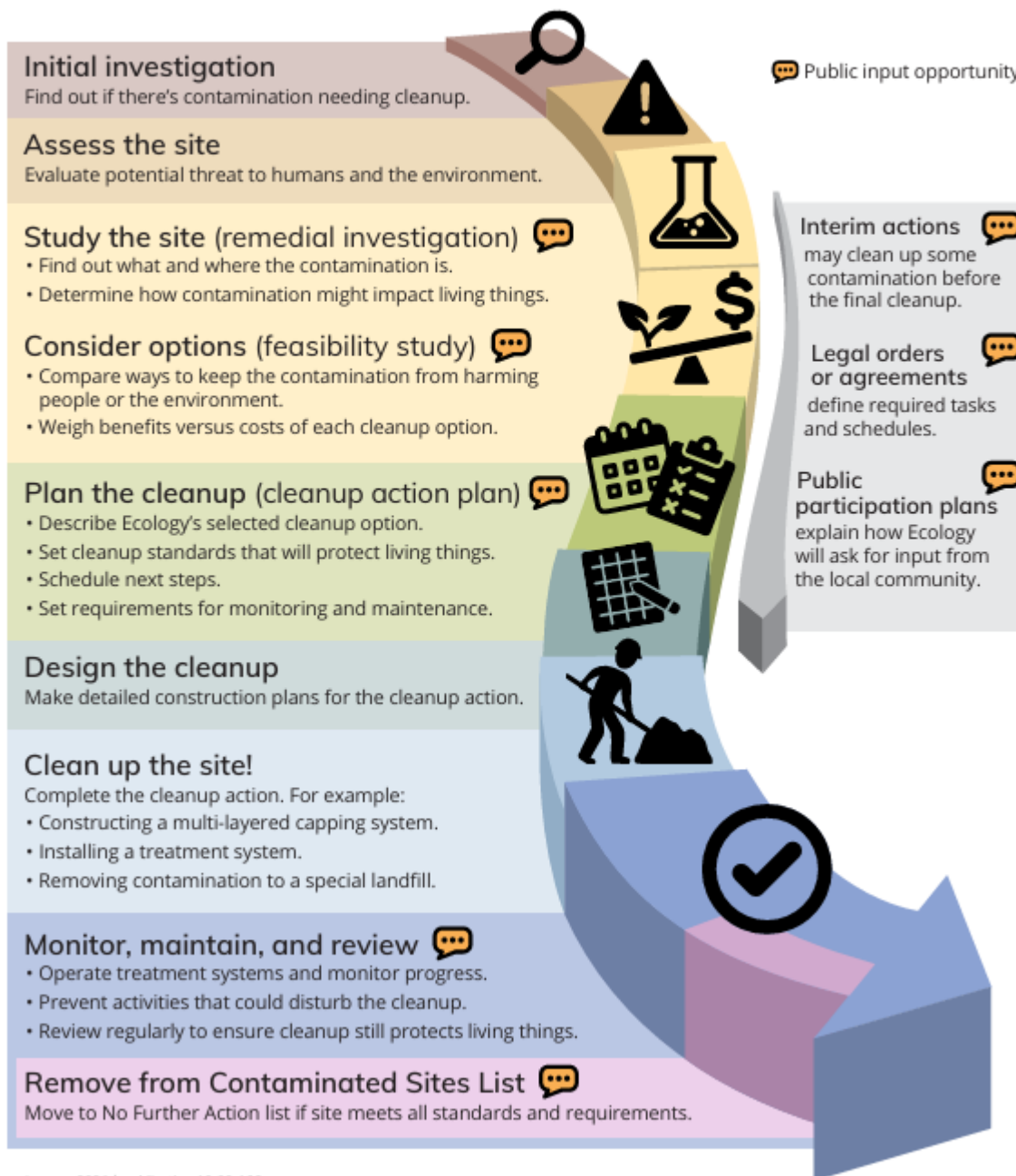
¹⁶ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

Appendix A. Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law.

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