



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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### **Western Port Angeles Harbor Port Angeles, Washington**

**Prepared by**  
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## INTRODUCTION

Public participation plans promote meaningful involvement during cleanups. This plan describes the tools the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) will use to inform the public about and gather input on the Western Port Angeles Harbor (Western Harbor) cleanup.

## SITE LOCATION

Port Angeles Harbor is located in Clallam County, on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, in the northern part of the Olympic Peninsula. The Western Harbor site is located in the western part of Port Angeles Harbor. The site boundaries will be defined during the investigation.

**Figure 1. Western Port Angeles Harbor Site Location**



## SITE BACKGROUND

Port Angeles Harbor has a long history as an important cultural area for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and later, as a busy industrial and shipping hub. Past sampling showed that the harbor is now contaminated with many toxic substances. Accumulation of wood debris also appears to be affecting the habitat of animals on the harbor floor.

### Site Investigation

In 2008, Ecology launched an investigation of Port Angeles Harbor through the Puget Sound Initiative. The harbor sediments investigation found many types of pollutants in Port Angeles Harbor that may pose a threat to human health and the environment, including fisheries and shellfish beds, and the people that depend on them.

The highest contamination is in the **western harbor** and near the former Rayonier pulp mill, in the **eastern part of the harbor**. Contaminants include:

- Dioxins and furans.
- Poly-chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
- Semi-volatile organics such as phenols and phthalates.
- Ammonia and sulfides from decomposing wood debris.
- The toxic metals arsenic, mercury, cadmium, and zinc.

For more information about the sediment investigation findings, you can visit Ecology's website at [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites\\_brochure/portAngelesHarborSed/paSed\\_hp.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites_brochure/portAngelesHarborSed/paSed_hp.htm).

More information about these pollutants and their health effects is available at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov> and <http://www.epa.gov>.

The harbor sediments investigation showed a separate, distinct area of contamination in the western part of Port Angeles Harbor. Ecology is investigating this as a new cleanup site – the **Western Port Angeles Harbor** site.

#### **Potentially Liable Persons (PLPs)**

Ecology named six responsible parties for this area: Georgia-Pacific LLC, Nippon Paper Industries USA Co. Ltd., Merrill & Ring, the Port of Port Angeles, the City of Port Angeles, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

#### **CURRENT ACTIVITY**

Ecology has worked with five of the Western Harbor PLPs (all except DNR) to develop an agreed order (legal agreement) to:

- Investigate the extent of contamination (remedial investigation) and
- Evaluate cleanup options (feasibility study).

Ecology is now holding a public comment period on the proposed **agreed order**, including a work plan for the **remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS)**. The RI/FS report will describe the nature and extent of contamination, and evaluate cleanup options.

After the comment period, Ecology will:

- Review and consider all comments we received during the comment period.
- Respond to comments in a responsiveness summary. We will send this document to those who commented and post it online.
- Finalize the agreed order, or make changes if needed based on public comment.

After the comment period, the PLPs will:

- Make changes to the RI/FS work plan if needed based on public comment.

- Submit a sampling and analysis plan for the investigation. Ecology will review this document and approve it or request changes. The PLPs plan to do sampling in summer 2013, after Ecology has approved the sampling and analysis plan.
- Develop the RI/FS report and submit it to Ecology.

When it is ready, Ecology will hold a public comment period on the draft RI/FS report. Ecology and the PLPs will also enter into a separate legal agreement for cleanup.

## **SITE CLEANUP PROCESS**

Cleanup activities at the Western Port Angeles Harbor site fall under Washington's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and accompanying regulations (Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 70.105D and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-340). MTCA has procedures for cleaning up contaminated sites to standards that are safe for both human health and the environment.

Toxic sites are cleaned up in stages, described below. Each stage has a related report or plan that the public is welcome to review and comment on.

### **Remedial Investigation & Feasibility Study (RI/FS)**

The RI looks at the extent and type of pollution on the site. It also looks at possible human health and environmental impacts. The FS identifies and evaluates different cleanup options.

### **Interim Actions**

Ecology may allow Interim Actions to partly clean up a site before the final cleanup plan is complete.

### **Cleanup Action Plan (CAP)**

The CAP describes the cleanup methods and how they will meet Ecology's cleanup standards.

### **Cleanup**

Cleanup removes contaminants from the site, contains them on the site, or treats them to make them less toxic. Based on the information in the RI/FS, Ecology selects a cleanup action and develops a new legal agreement for cleanup. CAPs require a public comment period.

### **Delisting**

Ecology keeps track of toxic cleanup sites on the Hazardous Sites List. Once cleanup is complete, the public will have a chance to comment before Ecology takes a site off the list.

You can find more information about toxic cleanups on Ecology's website:

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/cu\\_support/cu\\_process\\_steps\\_defns.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/cu_support/cu_process_steps_defns.htm).

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to promote public understanding and participation in the cleanup. This section of the plan describes how Ecology will share information and receive public comments on cleanup activities. Ecology will use the following public involvement activities during the Western Harbor site cleanup:

### **Formal Public Comment Periods**

Comment periods are the primary method Ecology uses to get feedback from the public on proposed cleanup decisions. Comment periods usually last 30 days. WAC 173-340-600 requires them at key points during the investigation and cleanup process, before final decisions are made. During a comment period, the public can comment in writing. Ecology can only take verbal comments during a public hearing.

After comment periods, Ecology reviews all comments and may respond in a document called a responsiveness summary. Ecology considers whether a document or decision needs to be changed or revised based on public input. If there are major changes, Ecology may hold a second comment period. If there are no major changes, Ecology finalizes the draft document(s).

### **Public Meetings and Hearings**

Ecology may hold public meetings at key points during the investigation and cleanup. Ecology also may offer public meetings for actions expected to be of particular interest to the community. Ecology will also hold a public meeting if ten or more people request one. These meetings will be at places and times convenient to the public.

### **Information Repositories**

These are places where the public can read and review site information, including public comment period documents. Ecology has two repositories for this site:

- Port Angeles Library, 2210 South Peabody St, Port Angeles, WA 98362. (360) 417-8500
- Washington State Department of Ecology, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey 98516. Please call (360) 407-6045 for an appointment.

See also Ecology's website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=11907>

### **Site Register**

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program uses its bimonthly Site Register to announce public meetings and comment periods, and many other activities. To receive the Site Register by e-mail, contact Seth Preston at (360) 407-6848 or [Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov). You can also read it on Ecology's website at [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/pub\\_inv/pub\\_inv2.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/pub_inv/pub_inv2.html).

### **Mailing List**

Ecology's mailing list for this site includes neighboring landowners and businesses, public agencies, and other known interested parties. Ecology's Southwest Regional Office maintains the list and will update it as needed. Please contact Diana Smith at (360) 407-6255 or [Diana.Smith@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Diana.Smith@ecy.wa.gov) if you would like to have your address added to or deleted from this mailing list.

**Fact Sheets**

Ecology will mail fact sheets to people and groups interested in this cleanup. Fact sheets will announce comment periods and public meetings. Ecology also may mail fact sheets with updates on cleanup progress.

**Newspaper Display Ads**

Ecology will place ads in *The Peninsula Daily News* to announce public comment periods and public meetings for the site.

**Plan Update**

Ecology may update this Public Participation Plan as the project moves forward. The public will have a chance to comment on any major changes to the plan.

**Contacts**

If you have questions or need more information about this plan or the Western Harbor cleanup site, please contact:

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## **GLOSSARY**

**Agreed Order:** A legal agreement between Ecology and a Potentially Liable Person (see below) to conduct work toward a cleanup.

**Cleanup:** Actions that deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health or the environment. Ecology often uses the term "cleanup" broadly to describe response actions or phases of cleanup, such as the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.

**Cleanup Action Plan (CAP):** A plan that explains which cleanup option(s) will be used at a site. The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study provide the data and analysis to write a CAP. It also takes into account public comments and public concerns.

**Comment Period:** A time period during which the public can review and comment on various documents and proposed actions. For example, a comment period may be provided to allow community members to review and comment on proposed cleanup action alternatives and proposed plans.

**Contaminant:** Any hazardous substance that does not occur naturally or occurs at greater than natural background levels

**Feasibility Study:** This study develops and evaluates cleanup options for a given site.

**Groundwater:** Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills spaces between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In some aquifers, ground water occurs in large enough amounts to be used for drinking water, irrigation and other purposes.

**Information Repository:** A file containing site information and reports for public review. It is usually located in a public building convenient for local residents, such as a public school, city hall, or library.

**Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA):** A law passed by Washington voter initiative in 1988. Its purpose is to find, investigate, and clean up places where hazardous substances have been released. It defines Ecology's role and encourages public involvement in cleanup decisions.

**Potentially Liable Person:** Any individual(s) or company(s) potentially responsible for, or contributing to, the contamination problems at a site. Whenever possible, Ecology requires PLPs to clean up sites.

**Public Notice:** At a minimum, adequate notice mailed to all persons who have made a timely request of Ecology and to persons residing in the potentially affected vicinity of the proposed action; mailed to appropriate news media; published in the local (city and county) newspaper of largest circulation; and the opportunity for the interested persons to comment.

**Public Participation Plan:** A plan prepared to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement designed to the public's needs at a particular site.



**Remedial Investigation:** This study characterizes the site and defines the extent of contamination.

**Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study:** Two distinct but related studies. They are usually performed at the same time, and together referred to as the "RI/FS." They are intended to:

- Gather the data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination;
- Establish criteria for cleaning up the site;
- Identify and screen cleanup alternatives for remedial action; and
- Analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

**Responsiveness Summary:** A summary of oral and/or written public comments received by Ecology during a comment period on key documents, and Ecology's responses to those comments. The responsiveness summary is especially valuable during the Cleanup Action Plan phase at a site when it highlights community concerns.

**Risk:** The probability that a hazardous substance, when released into the environment, will cause an adverse effect in the exposed humans or living organisms.

**Sediments:** Settled particles located at the bottom of a body of water or wetland. Sediment(s) also includes settled particulate matter exposed by human activity (e.g., dredging) to the biologically active aquatic zone or to the water column.

**Site:** Any area where a hazardous substance, other than a consumer product in consumer use, has come to be located.

**Toxicity:** How much harm a substance causes to living organisms, including people, plants and animals, at a certain concentration.