

Public Participation Plan

Western Port Angeles Harbor Port Angeles, Clallam County

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington State Department of Ecology

Southwest Region Office

Olympia, Washington



Document Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's Western Port Angeles Harbor [cleanup site page](#).¹

Cover photo credit

- Ecology, November 2024.

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 11907
- Facility site ID: 18898

Contact Information

[Toxics Cleanup Program](#)²

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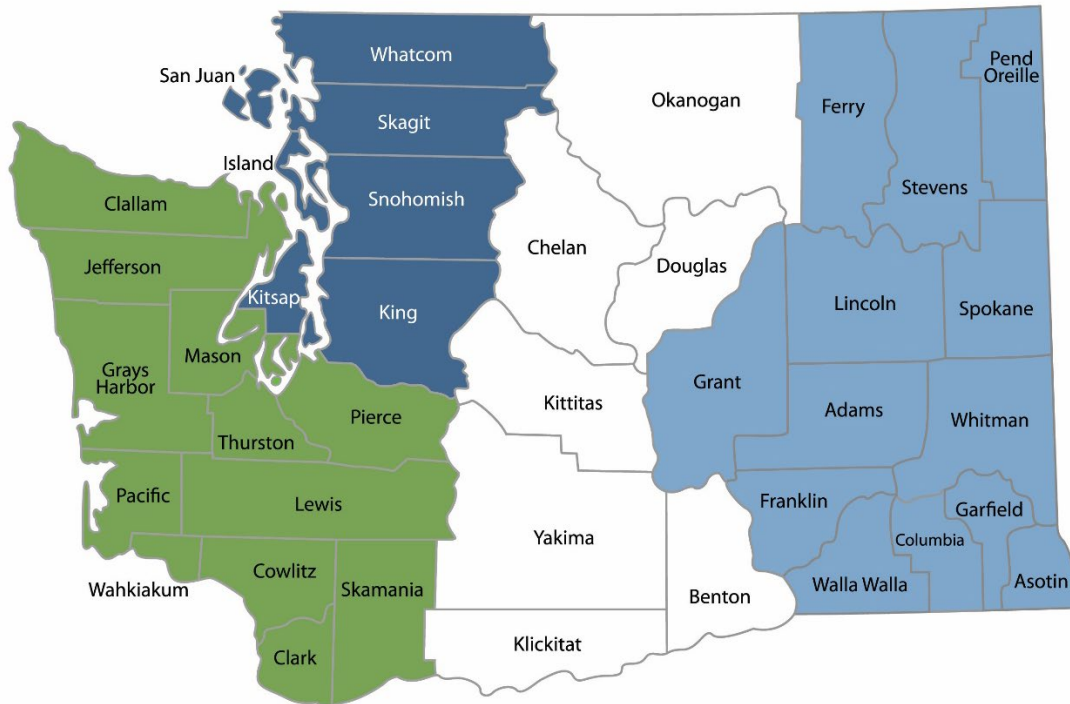
¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/11907>

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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Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed a public participation plan (plan) for the site in cooperation with the parties responsible for the cleanup, defined as the Potentially Liable Persons (PLPs). The PLPs for the Western Port Angeles Harbor cleanup include: Georgia-Pacific LLC, Nippon Paper Industries USA Co. Ltd., Merrill & Ring, the Port of Port Angeles, the City of Port Angeles, and Owens Corning. The purpose of the plan is to promote meaningful community involvement during cleanup of Western Port Angeles Harbor (site). The Western Port Angeles Harbor site public participation plan was originally created in 2013 and was updated in November of 2024. The document was updated to reflect Ecology's updated accessibility standards and to correct outdated contact information. The update was not different enough from the previous version to warrant putting the public participation plan out for public comment again.

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.

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

Southwest Region Office
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Connie Groven, site manager
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360-584-7037

Abby Zabrodsky, public involvement coordinator
Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov
564-250-0561

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](#).⁴

Washington’s Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) 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 human health and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this plan.

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 \(WAC\)](#).⁵ Ecology investigates reports of property contamination, and if the contamination is seen as a significant threat to human health or the environment, the contaminated property is placed on the [Contaminated Sites List](#),⁶ 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](#)⁷ includes multiple steps (Appendix A), 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 invited to review and comment on planned interim action work as well.

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG>

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/publications/9406.pdf>

⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process>

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA; [Chapter 197-11 WAC](#)⁸). 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 at the same time as comment periods held for cleanup documents.

Site Information

Habor and shoreline use

Port Angeles Harbor is a natural deep-water harbor on the northern coast of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. It is located along the southern shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in Port Angeles. City, Tribal, and commercial properties surround the harbor on the west and south sides, while Ediz Hook runs along the north. Ediz Hook is a long, sandy area that extends about 3 miles east from the harbor. It helps protect the harbor from large ocean waves coming from the strait.

The harbor has around 26 miles of marine shoreline. It reaches depths of up to 170 feet near Ediz Hook. At the far western end of the site, a channel connects the harbor to a lagoon about 25 acres in size.

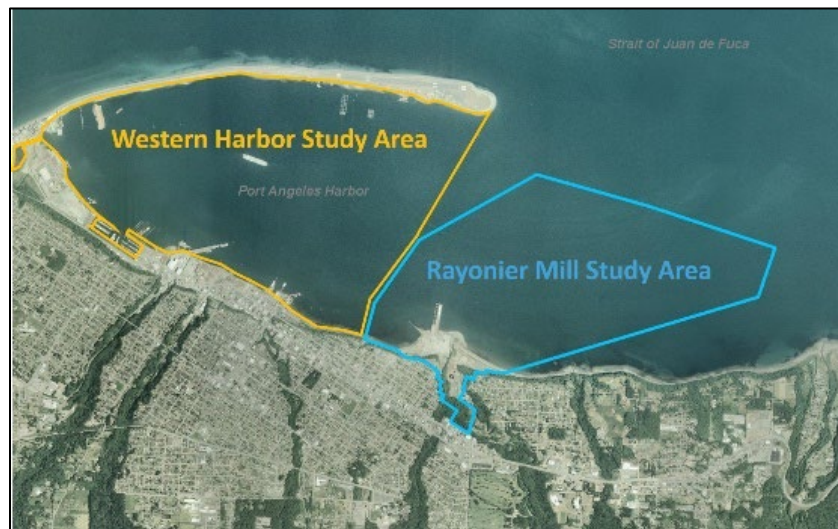


Figure 1: An aerial view of Port Angeles showing the Western Port Angeles Harbor and Rayonier Mill study areas.

⁸ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

Port Angeles Harbor is located within the traditional territory of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (LEKT). For over 2,000 years, Klallam people lived in several villages across the northern Olympic Peninsula and south Vancouver Island. Two major Klallam villages, l'e'nis and Tse-whit-zen, were located in the harbor area. The lagoon at the base of Ediz Hook provided a rich salt marsh habitat, making it an ideal place for the Tse-whit-zen village and for tribal fishing houses that continued to occupy the area into the early 20th century.

In 1937, the Lower Elwha Indians were moved from the harbor to land at the mouth of the Elwha River, which was set aside by the U.S. government for the Tribe under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This land became the Lower Elwha Indian Reservation in 1968. Since then, the LEKT has remained active in the harbor, using its treaty rights to harvest aquatic resources, restore shorelines and aquatic habitats, and protect cultural sites, including the remains of their ancestors at Tse-whit-zen. Given the history of the area and the many artifacts found there, it's likely that more Native American archaeological material could be discovered within the harbor.

The industrial history of the harbor began with the development of sawmills and fish-packing operations in the late 1800s. Over the past 130 years, Port Angeles became known for many businesses and industrial activities. Wood processing facilities, such as sawmills, plywood manufacturing, pulp and paper production, grew on and around the harbor. Other industries include commercial fishing and fish packing, bulk fuel facilities, boat building and refurbishing, marinas, and marine shipping and transport. Port Angeles is currently the largest urban center on the northern Olympic Peninsula.

The harbor is home to many different types of marine life. Examples of marine life include a healthy benthic community, macroalgae, seagrass. Also found in the harbor are over 60 species of fish, shellfish, birds, and marine mammals. Ecology has marked this area as a top priority for cleanup and restoration.

How the site became contaminated

In the past, some industries generated liquid waste and released it directly into the harbor and lagoon. Industrial facilities and the City of Port Angeles also discharged contaminated stormwater into the harbor. Several pulp and lumber mills burned salt-laden wood debris as a fuel source. Burning this debris formed hazardous substances, like dioxins, that rose up through smokestacks and settled onto marine sediments in the harbor.

Sediment contamination

Harbor sediment investigations identified the main contaminants found at the site. We have also identified the areas where the concentration of contaminants is high enough to require cleanup under MTCA. Contaminates requiring cleanup at the site include:

- Dioxins/furans
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)

- Carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs)
- Mercury

Cleanup plans

In 2008, Ecology launched an initial investigation of the site as part of the Puget Sound Initiative. We identified contamination that could pose a threat to human and environmental health. This discovery kicked off the formal cleanup process for the site.

In 2013, Ecology signed a legal agreement called an Agreed Order (AO) with the PLPs responsible for the site's cleanup. The AO required the PLPs to develop several documents. It required a Remedial Investigation (RI) to study the site. The RI helped us identify contaminants, measure their amounts, and pinpoint their locations. A Feasibility Study (FS) was also required to consider options for cleanup and their costs and benefits. An AO amendment required the PLPs to create the Draft Cleanup Action Plan.

In 2020, Ecology held a public comment period for and finalized the site's RI, FS, and an amendment to the AO. Ecology finalized these documents after considering public comments.

After development of the proposed cleanup action plan, Ecology will hold a comment period on the proposed plan and the legal agreement to implement the plan. After considering public comments, the cleanup plan will be finalized, and final design and cleanup construction will begin. We will continually monitor, maintain, and review the site once construction is completed.

Before we remove the site from the Contaminated Sites List, we will hold a public comment period.

Area community

The Western Port Angeles Harbor cleanup site is located within the waters of Port Angeles Harbor. The land immediately surrounding the cleanup site is zoned for commercial, heavy industrial, and central business district use. Residential neighborhoods and public spaces are located within a quarter mile of the site.

Some key features of the community include multiple schools, the Olympic Medical Center, and downtown. Downtown Port Angeles has many businesses, such as restaurants, shops, and hotels. Port Angeles hosts a variety of festivals and events throughout the year in its downtown and waterfront areas. Additionally, there is a U.S. Coast Guard Air Station on Ediz Hook.

Environmental and demographic information about the community near the site will be gathered from informational websites. We collect this information to learn more about the community. We hope gathering this information will improve our ability to effectively communicate with the community.

To collect this information, we will use the [Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map](#)⁹ and [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Environmental Justice Screen \(EJ Screen\)](#).¹⁰ We will also EJ Screen to evaluate language access needs. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach material in languages other than English.

Demographic and community environmental health information can change over time. We will review information about the community near the site before each new comment period. 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 site is located on the traditional areas of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (LEKT). This federally recognized Tribe has treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering rights in the harbor. The LEKT people have lived in the northern Olympic Peninsula, including the harbor, since time immemorial. Contamination may impact areas that the tribe use, or that possess cultural artifacts. If cultural resources are uncovered during cleanup, construction will stop immediately, and the immediate area will be preserved. The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the local Tribes will be notified immediately. Ecology will include the Tribe in any decision-making processes about the site. Ecology will also ensure that the Tribe has opportunities to get involved with 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.

The public is invited during comment periods to review site documents before they become final. To be included in the formal site record, comments must be submitted during formal comment periods. Making comments during comment periods is the most direct and influential way to learn 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 people living at 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 1/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals. These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting

⁹ <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>

¹⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings or how to request one if not scheduled.

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 on the site's webpage. We may mail print copies 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 ¼-mile radius of the site and relevant local, state, and federal government contacts. Those who are on our postal mailing list will receive notices with general information about the site, comment periods, and public meetings or hearings.

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 Abby Zabrodsky at 564-250-0561 or Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).¹¹ To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),¹² or contact Sarah Kellington at Sarah.Kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

When MTCA requires, we will announce public comment periods and events for this site in ads or notices published in *The Peninsula Daily News*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).¹³

Email lists

Ecology maintains an email list to update interested persons about this site. If you would like to be added to the email list for this site, please contact Abby Zabrodsky at 564-250-0561 or Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov.

Ecology will begin sending automatic electronic alerts to individuals who have signed up for them within the next year. These alerts will notify subscribers when new information is

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data>

¹² https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_118

¹³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

available on the site’s webpage. We will send details about the electronic alert system and how to sign up to those on our email list once the application is ready.

Ecology’s website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the [Western Port Angeles Harbor site](#).¹⁴ 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](#).¹⁵

Places to see print documents

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

Port Angeles Library
2210 South Peabody Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362
360-417-8500

Washington Department of Ecology
Southwest Region Office
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503

To view print documents at Ecology’s repository, you must schedule an appointment ahead of time. To schedule an appointment, please contact Susan Baxter at 360-407-6365 or PublicDisclosureSWRO@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. We may hold comment periods longer than 30 days.

We may also contact and meet with interested community members and groups to learn more about their concerns and cleanup goals for the community. To learn more about the site and share your concerns with us about this site, please contact Abby Zabrodsky at 564-250-0561 or Abby.Zabrodsky@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. We may may extend the SEPA comment

¹⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/11907>

¹⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News>

period 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, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, we will revise and re-issue the documents 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. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the requested meeting can occur during the comment period.

We will hold events at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. We will always announce public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings in advance using a variety of methods.

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 Abby Zabrodsky at 564-250-0561 or Abby.Zabrodsky@ecy.wa.gov.

This plan intends 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 need to be modified, 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.

Appendix A. Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law. See the attached, accessible PDF for details.

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.

