



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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Pacific Wood Treating  
111 West Division  
Ridgefield, Washington

Facility Site Number 1019  
Cleanup Site Number 3020

### **Prepared by**

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This public participation plan was originally created in November 2014. The document was updated in December 2024 to reflect Ecology's digital accessibility standards, provide current contact information, and correct website links. These minor updates did not change the document enough to warrant public comment.

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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 and gather input about the Pacific Wood Treating cleanup.

## LOCATION AND SITE BACKGROUND

The Pacific Wood treating site is located around 111 West Division in Ridgefield. The site includes about 41 acres of port property, sediments in parts of Carty Lake and Lake River adjacent to the site, and some land south and east of the port property (see map on page 3). The extent of contamination sets the site boundary.

### Site Background

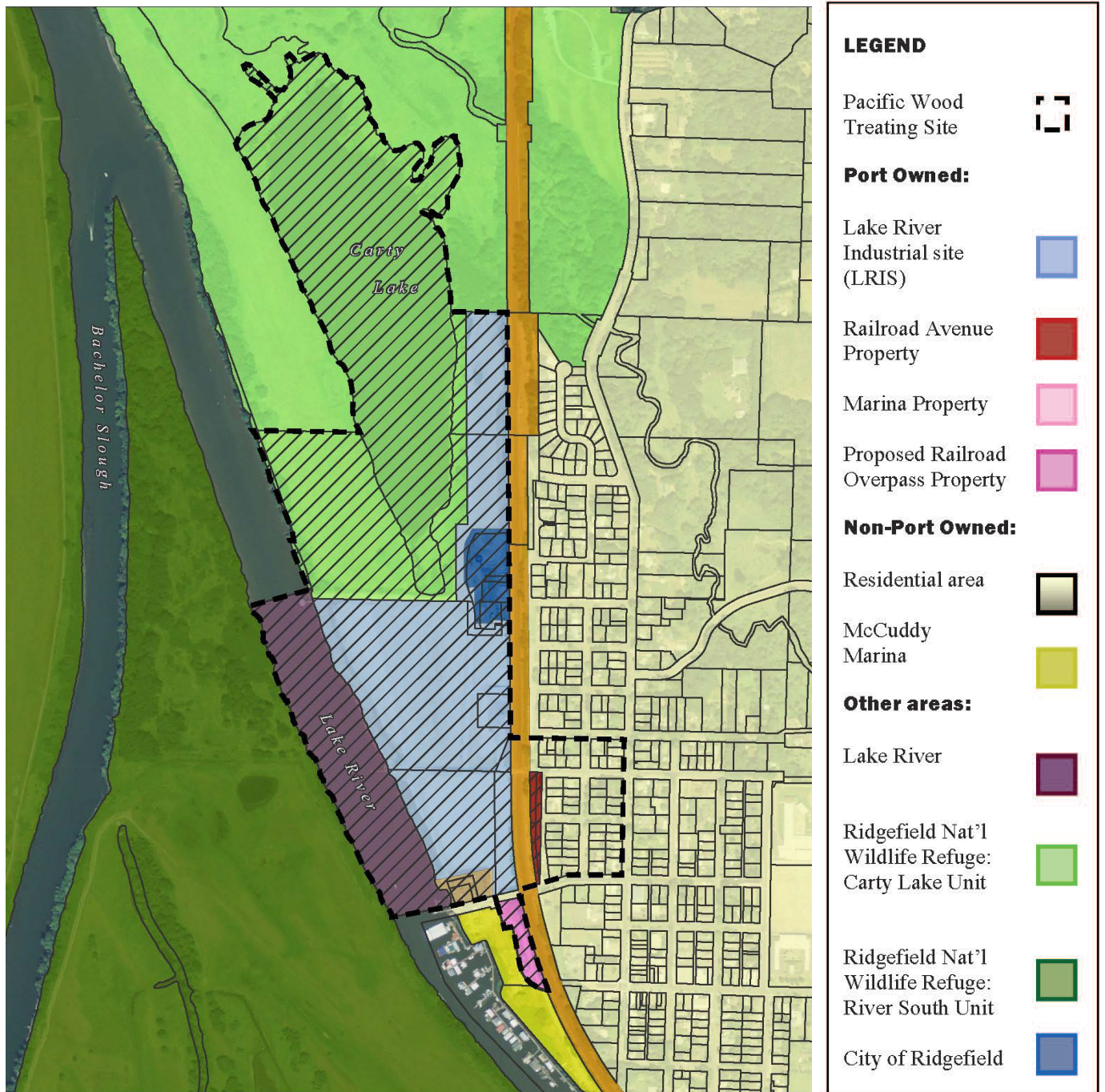
From 1964-1993, Pacific Wood Treating (PWT) operated on waterfront property it leased from the Port of Ridgefield (Port). PWT pressure treated wood products with a variety of toxic chemicals such as creosote, pentachlorophenol (PCP) and copper/chromium/arsenic (CCA) solutions. PWT released contaminants to the environment through spills, leaking wastewater storage tanks, stormwater runoff and leaks from the buried drain system.

Contamination related to PWT has been found in soil, sediment, and groundwater on and off the port property. Figure 1 shows the extent of the cleanup site and Figure 2 shows the different parts of the cleanup site and property ownership.

**Figure 1: Pacific Wood Treating cleanup site**



Figure 2: Pacific Wood Treating cleanup areas and property ownership



In 1985, as part of a focused nationwide effort to address impacts from wood treating facilities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigated the property. EPA found wood treating chemicals above state cleanup standards in soil and groundwater. Pacific Wood Treating entered into a legal agreement with the EPA through the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). This agreement required Pacific Wood Treating to determine the full extent of contamination and then clean it up. In 1993, PWT declared bankruptcy.

In 1996 and 2001, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the Port entered into agreed orders (legal agreements) to investigate contamination from the former wood treating plant and do interim actions (partial cleanups) on port property. From 1996 - 2013, the Port cleaned up contamination on their property. They removed:

- 24,800 gallons of liquid contamination.
- 1,545,000 pounds of contaminated sludge.
- Contamination from over 144 million gallons of groundwater.

The Port also capped the property using two or more feet of clean soil.

Investigations also found contamination outside port-owned property. In 2013, Ecology and the Port entered into a consent decree legal agreement for the port to clean up other areas with PWT contamination.

In summer 2014, the port began cleaning up off-property areas including the railroad overpass area and sediments in Carty Lake and Lake River. You can learn about those cleanup projects and progress on our website [go.ecology.wa.gov/3020](http://go.ecology.wa.gov/3020) or on our blog at <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog>.

Ecology and the Port are funding the cleanup. So far, Ecology has contributed over \$85 million for cleanup through grants and loans funded by the State and Local Toxics Control Accounts. With Ecology's continued financial support, the Port will be able to accelerate plans for redevelopment of this area.

## **2014 COMMENT PERIOD**

During investigations from 2010 – 2012, the Port found dioxins in soil above state cleanup levels on some public land in the neighborhood east of the port property (see Figure 3 on page 5). Most of the dioxins in off-property soil likely came from air-borne dust while Pacific Wood Treating was operating. Dust may have blown off the port property, been tracked onto roads from truck tires, and come off trucks hauling treated wood on Division St.

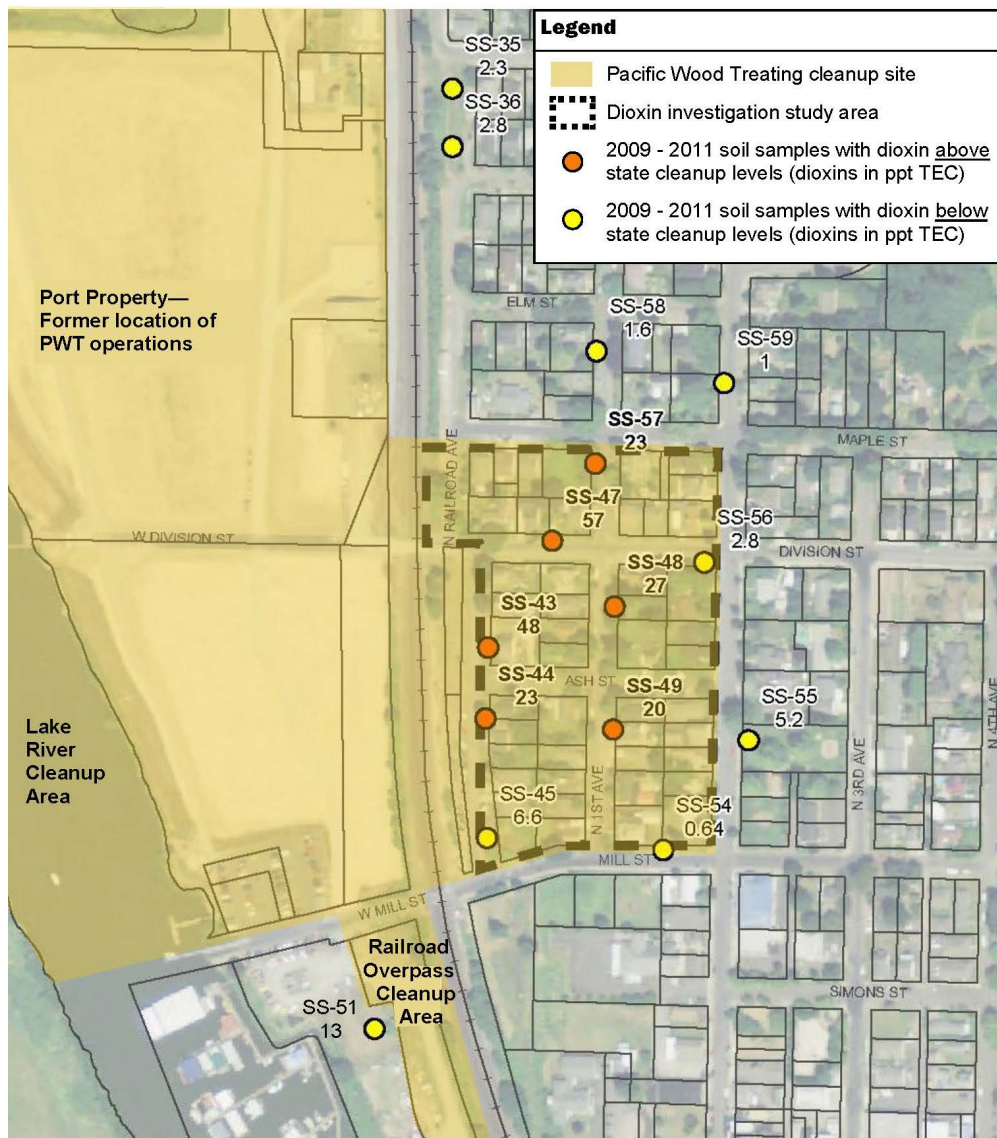
Ecology and the port are entering into an agreed order that requires the port to:

- Develop a **sampling plan** for investigating dioxins in yards in the study area.

- Do a **remedial investigation (RI)**, which describes the type and extent of contamination.
- Do a **feasibility study (FS)**, which evaluates cleanup options.
- Develop an **RI/FS report**.
- Unless Ecology decides one is not needed, develop a **preliminary draft cleanup action plan** that proposes cleanup actions.

After the comment period, we will review and respond to your comments and questions. While the port can begin work under the agreed order during the comment period, we will consider your comments as the port moves forward with the investigation. This may include adjusting how the port does the investigation. The port will use the data from this investigation to evaluate if cleanup is needed, and what the cleanup plan should be for the study area.

**Figure 3: Pacific Wood Treating off-property dioxin investigation study area**



## SITE CLEANUP PROCESS

Washington's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) requires that cleanups meet standards that are safe for both human health and the environment. For more information on MTCA, please visit Ecology's website at <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Rules-directing-our-cleanup-work/Model-Toxics-Control-Act>.

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. The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study provide the data and analysis to write a CAP. The CAP also takes into account public comments and concerns.

**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 off-property dioxin investigation RI/FS, Ecology will select a cleanup action and amend the consent decree for the Port to conduct a cleanup. The CAP will require a public comment period.

**Delisting** - Ecology keeps track of toxic cleanup sites on the Contaminated 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: <https://ecology.wa.gov/spills-cleanup/contamination-cleanup/cleanup-process>.

## 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 Pacific Wood Treating 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 or hearing 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:

- Ridgefield Library, 210 N. Main Ave., Ridgefield 98642. (360) 887-8281.
- Washington State Department of Ecology, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey 98516. Please call (360) 407-6365 for an appointment.

See also Ecology's website: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/3020>

## **Site Register**

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program uses the Site Register to announce public meetings and comment periods, and many other activities. You can read and subscribe to the Site Register on Ecology's website at <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/guidance-technical-assistance/site-register-lists-and-data>.

For more information contact Sarah Kellington (360-280-3167, [Sarah.Kellington@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Sarah.Kellington@ecy.wa.gov)).

## **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 Carolyn Subramaniam at (564)-250-0563 or [Carolyn.Subramaniam@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Subramaniam@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 Columbian* 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 Industrial Petroleum 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.

**Consent Decree:** A legal agreement between Ecology and a Potentially Liable Person (see below) to conduct work toward a cleanup. It is approved and issued by a court.

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

**Dioxins:** A family of chemicals with similar chemical structures and effects on living things. They are unintentional byproducts of both human activities and natural processes. They do not break down easily in the environment, and as a result, are found everywhere.

**Feasibility Study:** This study identifies and evaluates different cleanup options.

**Groundwater:** Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills spaces between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In some areas, groundwater 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.

**Remedial Investigation:** Looks at the extent and type of pollution on the site. It also looks at possible human health and environmental impacts.

**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 lake, river or in wetlands.

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.

**Voluntary Cleanup Program:** An option for cleaning up hazardous waste sites. The program allows a party to clean up a site independently with technical assistance and written opinions from the Department of Ecology on the cleanup.