

**Toxics Cleanup Program****July 2014****Environmental documents ready for review**

The Port of Bellingham (port), with Ecology oversight, has studied cleanup options for the pulp and tissue mill area of the Georgia Pacific West cleanup site on Bellingham's waterfront. This work is available for review in a report known as a feasibility study. Based on that report, Ecology has developed a cleanup action plan for the pulp and tissue mill area of the site. The proposed plan is part of a legal agreement (called a consent decree) between Ecology and the port. The plan calls for soil removal, soil capping, groundwater monitoring, and property use restrictions.

**Public review and comment**

Ecology is seeking comments on these documents, along with a draft public participation plan and a Determination of Non-Significance under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Comments will be accepted from July 14 to August 27, 2014

**Site history**

The approximately 74-acre Georgia Pacific West cleanup site is located at 300 West Laurel Street, on the south side of Whatcom Waterway, in Bellingham. A pulp and tissue mill operated at the site from 1926 through 2007. The Port of Bellingham acquired property within the site from Georgia Pacific Corporation in January 2005, and plans to use the property for commercial, retail, and residential purposes.

In 2011 and 2013, interim cleanup actions were conducted at the site to remove contaminated soils and building materials. Environmental investigation of the site showed contamination in two separate and distinct areas. As a result the port and Ecology agreed to divide the site into two separate cleanup remedial action units, or areas, to expedite cleanup and support redevelopment. The two areas are known as the pulp and tissue mill area and the chlor-alkali area. These areas are shown on page 3.

**Public  
Comment Period  
Comments accepted:****July 14 – August 27, 2014****Submit comments/questions to:****Brian Sato, Site Manager**

WA Department of Ecology

3190 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE

Bellevue, WA

Phone: 425-649-7265

Email: Brian.Sato @ecy.wa.gov

**Documents available at:****Bellingham - Ecology office**1440 10<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 102

Bellingham, WA

By appointment. Call Linsay Albin:

360-715-5200

**Bellingham Public Library**

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**Bellevue – Ecology office**3190 160<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE

Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

By appointment. Call Sally Perkins:

425-649-7190

**Ecology's GP West website**[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites)Search Site Name: Georgia Pacific  
West

Or use your smartphone and this  
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connected quickly!



## Pulp & Tissue Mill Area

The former mill manufactured pulp for on-site production of tissue and toweling products, and for sale as market pulp. Other operations included an alcohol plant, lignin plant, acid plant, and steam plant with fuel oil storage. As a result the 31-acre area contains metals, low pH, petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, and dioxins/furans at levels that exceed state cleanup standards

## Chlor-alkali Area

The former chlor-alkali plant operated from 1965-1999. It used mercury to produce chlorine and sodium hydroxide for use at the pulp & tissue mill. Petroleum was also stored there. As a result this 43-acre area contains mercury, high pH, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and petroleum hydrocarbons that exceed state cleanup standards.

The feasibility study and cleanup action plan currently out for public review address the pulp and tissue mill area. A second feasibility study and cleanup plan will be developed for the chlor-alkali area in the future.

## Interim cleanup work

In 2011, the port removed about 4,333 tons of soil with high levels of petroleum from the pulp and tissue mill area of the site. The soil was treated and disposed at a permitted landfill. In 2013, the port initiated the removal of soil with high levels of mercury from the chlor-alkali area of the site, and the removal of mercury-contaminated building materials. 2013 work is currently wrapping up.

All interim cleanup work was performed to prevent the contamination of groundwater and air (from soil vapors), and was done with Ecology oversight.

## Cleanup options

To prevent people, plants and animals from being exposed to harmful levels of contamination within the pulp and tissue mill area of the site, 4 cleanup alternatives were evaluated in a feasibility study.

### Alternative 1:

- **Soil Removal:** Remove 2,000 cubic yards of petroleum contaminated soils not addressed by the interim cleanup action, to prevent contamination of groundwater and air (from soil vapor); dispose of the soils at a permitted landfill.

- **Soil Capping:** Contain contaminated soils by capping the 31 acre area with a combination of existing building floors, pavement, and new buildings, pavement, or soil. This will eliminate contact with contaminated soil and prevent rainwater from carrying contaminants to the bay.
- **Groundwater Monitoring:** Monitor and evaluate metals-contaminated groundwater. Contaminated groundwater does not reach Bellingham Bay and levels are decreasing due to natural processes. Monitoring will confirm the decreasing trend. If levels do not continue to decline as expected, additional actions may be taken.
- **Long-term Controls:** Place deed restrictions on the 31 acres to ensure the long-term integrity of the cleanup action and prohibit actions such as extraction of groundwater for drinking water.

### Alternative 2:

Includes all components of Alternative 1 and adds:

- Treatment of metals-contaminated groundwater to accelerate the natural processes that are currently reducing the levels of contamination.
- Capping to prevent rainwater from flowing through metals-contaminated soils that are the source of groundwater contamination.

### Alternative 3:

Includes all components of Alternative 1, and adds:

- Treatment of metals-contaminated groundwater to accelerate the natural processes that are currently reducing the levels of contamination.
- Removal of metals-contaminated soils that are the source of groundwater contamination.

### Alternative 4:

- Remove contaminated soils to a depth of 15 feet across the 31 acres and replace with clean soils.

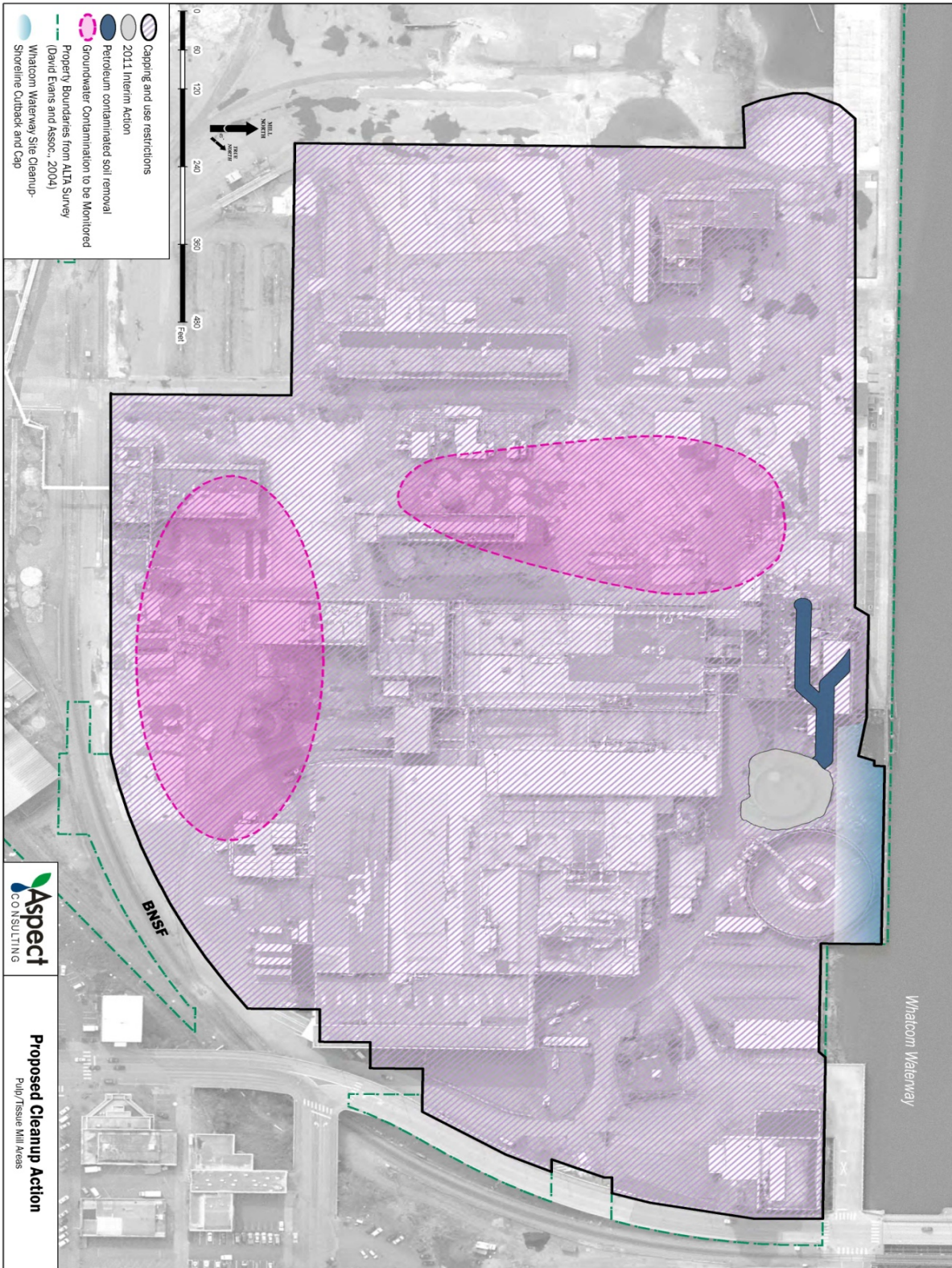
## Proposed cleanup action

Based on the feasibility study report, Ecology has selected Alternative 1 as the cleanup action for the pulp and tissue mill area of the site (see page 4). Key factors in selecting this alternative are that contaminated groundwater does not reach Bellingham Bay, and levels are decreasing due to natural processes. Also, Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would increase cleanup costs without providing a proportionate increase in environmental benefit.









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### State Environmental Policy Act

Under the State Environmental Policy (SEPA), environmental values must be considered by state and local agencies when making decisions. Therefore, Ecology has completed a SEPA checklist and determined that the cleanup of the pulp and tissue mill area is unlikely to have a significant adverse environmental impact. Ecology is asking for public comment on the checklist and determination.

### Costs and funding

The cleanup of the pulp and tissue mill area is expected to cost about \$5.7 million. Ecology will reimburse up to half the port's costs through the state's remedial action grant program, which helps to pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

### Project timeline

- July 14-August 27: public comment.
- Late 2015: public review of engineering design report
- Mid 2016: begin cleanup
- Early 2017: complete cleanup

### Related cleanup work

The cleanup of the adjacent Whatcom Waterway site includes cutting back and capping a portion of the shoreline within the pulp and tissue mill area. This work is expected in 2015.

#### Help with other formats?

To ask about obtaining this document in a version for the visually impaired, call Brad Petrovich at Ecology, 425-533-5537.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service.

Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

### Next steps

The public is invited to comment on all documents from July 14 – August 27, 2014. If ten or more persons request a public meeting about this cleanup, Ecology will provide notice and hold a meeting.

Ecology will review and consider all comments, and may modify the documents based on the comments. If there are significant changes, Ecology will issue them again for public comment. If there are no significant changes, the cleanup action plan will be implemented.

Chlor-Alkali area: A feasibility study report evaluating cleanup options for this area, and a consent decree/cleanup action plan amendment describing Ecology's selected cleanup action, are expected to be completed in 2015. Ecology will issue these documents for public review.

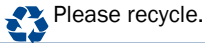
#### Información en español:

El Departamento de Ecología del Estado de Washington (Ecología) quiere recibir comentarios del público sobre los documentos asociados con la limpieza del sitio contaminado "Georgia Pacific West". Los documentos incluyen un estudio de factibilidad, un plan de acción de limpieza, un acuerdo legal (conocido como un decreto de consentimiento) entre Ecología y el Puerto de Bellingham, un plan de participación pública, y una Determinación de Insignificancia bajo la Ley Estatal de la Política Ambiental.

Ecología aceptará comentarios del público del 14 de julio hasta el 27 de agosto de 2014. Usted puede ver más información sobre esta limpieza en el siguiente sitio Web de Ecología: [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites) una vez allá, debe buscar para el nombre: Georgia Pacific West. Para obtener más información en español, favor de comunicarse con Gregorio Bohn al 509-454-4174 o [Gregory.Bohn@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Gregory.Bohn@ecy.wa.gov).



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Bellevue, WA 98008-5452



## Georgia Pacific West Cleanup Site Bellingham Waterfront

Cleanup options for the pulp and tissue mill area of the Georgia Pacific West site have been evaluated in a feasibility study report, and Ecology has prepared a cleanup action plan. The plan, part of a legal agreement between Ecology and the Port of Bellingham, calls for soil removal, soil capping, groundwater monitoring and property use restrictions.

Ecology is asking for comments on these documents as well as a public participation plan, and a Determination of Non-Significance under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Ecology will be accepting comments from July 14 – August 27, 2014. Please read more inside this document to learn details, and how you can provide your comments to Ecology.



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[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp)  
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