

517.4

Burlington Northern Skykomish



Agreement Reached for BNRR Environmental Study -- Public Invited to Comment

Comment Period: August 16 - September 15, 1993
Public Meeting: August 25, 1993 (see page 2 for details)

This fact sheet has been prepared by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to inform you of a legal agreement between Ecology and Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR) for an environmental investigation in Skykomish, Washington.

Agreement for Investigation Reached

The Department of Ecology and Burlington Northern Railroad have finalized a legal agreement which includes the details of an environmental study which will take place at and around BNRR's maintenance and fueling facility in the town of Skykomish.

The purpose of the study, known as a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, will be to determine the full extent and type of contamination at the site and to determine the best method or methods for cleaning it up. Contamination, primarily petroleum-related products, was confirmed at the site during preliminary studies conducted by BNRR, but in order to fully characterize the contamination, an additional study is required.

The Remedial Investigation is being conducted under the Model Toxics Control

Act -- Washington's hazardous waste cleanup law.

The Study Area

The study area will cover a 40-acre area including areas surrounding Burlington Northern's property. The boundaries of the study area are as follows: the Skykomish River to the north, Northeast Old Cascade Highway to the south, Maloney Creek to the west and Skykomish city limits to the east (see map on page 3). In past studies, petroleum and other contaminants have been found in the soil and groundwater within this 40-acre area.

This 40-acre area has been defined for the purposes of the Remedial Investigation only, the actual boundaries of the area of contamination will be determined after the study is complete.

Give Us Your Input

You are encouraged to give the Department of Ecology your input on the legal agreement (Agreed Order) which includes the plan for the investigation (workplan). You have 30 days, from August 16 - September 15 to review these documents and submit written comments (see the box on the right for where to send comments). Ecology will also hold a public meeting in Skykomish at which you can receive more information and comment orally.

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August 1993

Send Written Comments to:

Barbara Trejo
Department of Ecology
3190 160th Avenue S.E.
Bellevue, WA 98008
(206) 649-7206

Review Documents at:

Skykomish Branch of the King County Library
119 4th Avenue North
Skykomish, WA 98288

Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue S.E.
Bellevue, WA 98008
Attn: Judy Fisher
(206) 649-7239

More Information?

Call Marianne Deppman
Ecology's Public Involvement Specialist at:
(206) 649-7254 or leave a message at: 1-800-458-0929

If you have special accommodation needs call Marianne Deppman at the number above or (206) 649-4259 (TDD)

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Public Meeting:

August 25, 1993
7 - 9:30 pm
Skykomish School
208 Railroad Avenue West
Skykomish, WA 98288

The documents are available for you to review at the Skykomish Library and at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office in Bellevue (see box on page one for addresses).

In order to take advantage of favorable weather conditions, field work for the investigation may begin before the end of the 30-day comment period. This will not affect your ability to submit comments. Ecology will consider all comments received and may modify the workplan, if necessary.

Maintenance and Fueling Facility History

The Burlington Northern Railroad Maintenance and Fueling Facility in Skykomish was originally owned and operated by the Great Northern Railroad (GNR). GNR owned the property from the late 1890s until 1970 when GNR merged with four other railroads and became Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR).

Over the more than 80 years the facility was in full operation, it's primary function was to refuel and maintain locomotives, provide electricity for electric engines operating between Wenatchee and Skykomish and to store snow removal equipment.

As technology advanced and changed over the years so did operations at the maintenance and fueling facility. Steam produced by coal heat originally powered locomotives operating from this facility. In later years, bunker oil replaced coal as the heat source. In 1929, when an 8-mile-long tunnel was built east of the BNRR facility, an electric substation was constructed to provide power to locomotives travelling between Skykomish and Wenatchee. Diesel power came next and was used for locomotives travelling

west as early as the 1940s. By 1956, diesel replaced both bunker oil and electricity and remained the primary power source for the trains operating out of the Skykomish facility.

The fuel was stored in underground storage tanks at the site until 1974 when BNRR discontinued most fuel handling activities at its Skykomish facility.

Currently the BNRR facility is used as a base of operations for track maintenance and snow removal crews.

What We Know About the Contamination at the Site

In past studies of the BNRR facility and surrounding area, petroleum was observed seeping into the Skykomish River and was found floating on the groundwater beneath the facility. Burlington Northern conducted studies at the site in 1991 and 1992 which further revealed the presence of petroleum. Metals (including lead) and low levels of PCBs and other organic compounds associated with petroleum were also identified at the Maintenance and Fueling Facility during these earlier studies.

What Will Happen During the Study?

During the investigation Burlington Northern's consultant RETEC will be taking samples of the soil, groundwater, surface water and sediments on and around the Burlington Northern Maintenance and Fueling Facility. The sampling will involve drilling holes and installing monitoring wells.

In order to fully characterize the location of the contaminants, some samples will be taken at private properties near the BNRR facility. Property owners will be notified by Burlington Northern in advance of the sampling and access agreements will be requested.

Timeline

The Remedial Investigation and evaluation of cleanup alternatives (feasibility study) will take

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at least 1 1/2 years to complete. When these steps have been completed, a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study report will be issued. At that time you will again be notified and will be invited to comment. After your comments are received, a plan outlining the final cleanup work needed at the site will be written. You will also be asked to comment on this plan before it is finalized.

Human Health and Environmental Concerns

Based on current knowledge of this site, the contamination is not considered an immediate

threat to either human health or the environment. Ecology is concerned with the potential long term threat.

More Information

If you need more information about the investigation and cleanup at the BNRR Skykomish site, please call Ecology's Public Involvement Specialist, Marianne Deppman at (206) 649-7254, or you can leave a message for her on Ecology's toll free line, 1-800-458-0920.

Map of Area
(see page one for study area boundaries)

