



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**Cornwall Avenue Landfill Cleanup Site  
Bellingham, WA**

**Washington State Department of Ecology  
Northwest Regional Office  
Toxics Cleanup Program  
3190 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Bellevue, Washington 98008**

*October 2014*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has developed this public participation plan in accordance with the state's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), to promote meaningful community involvement during the cleanup of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill cleanup site (Site) located on Bellingham Bay in Bellingham, Washington. This plan describes public involvement activities Ecology will conduct during the cleanup, and identifies opportunities for the community to be involved in the cleanup process. It will be updated as needed throughout the cleanup process. Ecology is committed to an open dialogue with the community to ensure that interested parties can receive information as well as provide input during the decision-making process.

## **SITE BACKGROUND**

The Site is located at the south end of Cornwall Avenue (see figure). The Site extends into Bellingham Bay on the south and west, and is bounded by the R.G. Haley International Corporation, Inc. site on the north (a former wood treatment facility), and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks on the east. The Site is currently owned by the City of Bellingham and the state of Washington. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the state-owned portion of the land, which is leased to the city. The inner harbor line represents the boundary between city-owned land and state-owned land. There is currently no public access to the Site.

Most of the Site was originally tide flats and sub-tidal areas of Bellingham Bay. From 1888 to 1946, the Site was used for sawmill operations, including log storage and wood waste disposal. From 1946 to 1965, the Port of Bellingham (port) held the lease on the state-owned land, subleasing the property to the City of Bellingham (city) from 1953 to 1962. The city used the Site for municipal waste disposal. In 1962, the city entered into a lease with another port tenant (American Fabricators) who continued waste disposal operations at the Site until 1965.

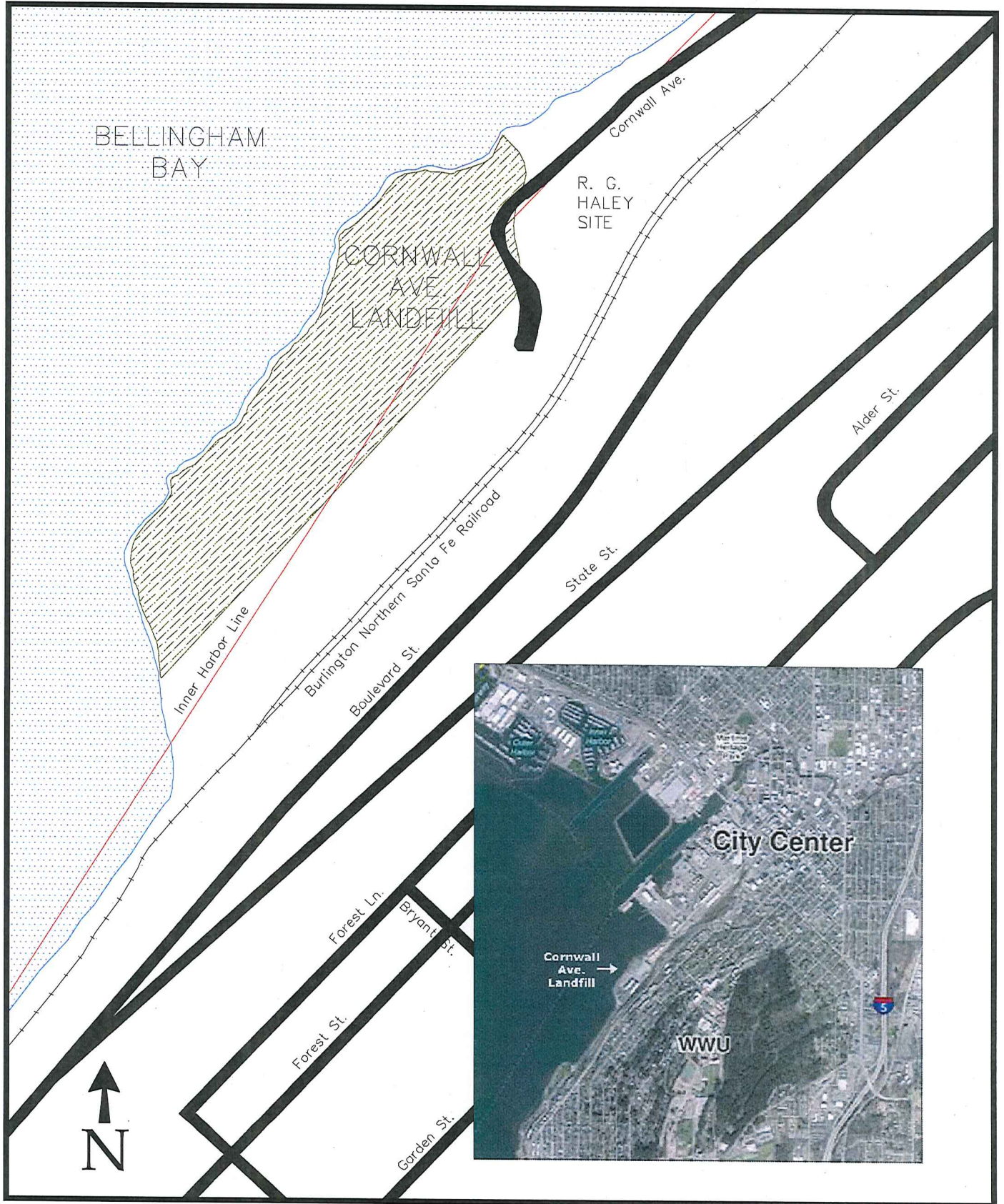
Landfill operations ended at the Site in 1965, and a soil layer was placed on top of the municipal waste. Rock boulders and broken concrete were later placed on the shoreline to prevent erosion. Despite this informal slope protection, significant shoreline erosion has occurred resulting in the exposure of landfill materials. The beach area is now largely composed of exposed and reworked landfill material, and the toe of the municipal waste fill slope extends out into Bellingham Bay some distance beyond the shoreline.

The Cornwall Avenue Landfill site is one of several cleanup sites identified in the Bellingham Bay Comprehensive Strategy, a bay-wide guidance document issued in 2000. The Comprehensive Strategy integrates sediment cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and aquatic/shoreline land use on a bay-wide scale.

### **Known Environmental Conditions and Cleanup Plans**

Previous environmental investigations of the Site indicate the presence of hazardous substances in groundwater, soil and/or sediment above state cleanup standards, including arsenic, copper, lead, mercury, silver, zinc, cyanide, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) compounds and fecal coliform. As a result, the Site is subject to the investigation and cleanup requirements of MTCA and the Sediment Management Standards, administered by Ecology.

# Location map of Cornwall Avenue Landfill site



### **Interim Cleanup Action**

In 2011 and 2012, an interim cleanup action was conducted at the Site while investigations for an overall cleanup plan were ongoing. The interim cleanup included the placement of about 47,500 cubic yards (yd<sup>3</sup>) of stabilized sediment from a nearby port dredging project on the landfill surface. The sediment was placed into two piles and covered with a scrim-reinforced liner to prevent stormwater infiltration. Stormwater runoff from the piles was directed to a series of new drainage ditches connected to an existing stormwater detention basin which discharges to the bay. The effect of this action was to significantly reduce the amount of rainwater infiltrating into the solid waste, and thus reduce the flow of contaminated groundwater into Bellingham Bay. . It was also envisioned that this material could potentially be used as part of a low-permeability cap constructed as part of a final cleanup. A work plan for the interim action was issued on August 18, 2011, following public review and comment.

### **Investigations and Cleanup Action Plan**

In December 2013, the port and city completed the investigation of the site, and evaluated several cleanup alternatives, in a report call an Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Report (RI/FS). The RI/FS identified a preferred cleanup action, and from that a Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) was developed.

Ecology, the Port of Bellingham, the City of Bellingham, and the Department of Natural Resources have agreed to the CAP, and are entering into a legal agreement to implement it, called a Consent Decree (CD). Final agreement and implementation of the CD and CAP are subject to public comment.

### **Public Comment Period**

Ecology is conducting a public comment period, from June 2 – July 2, 2014, to solicit comments on the Draft Consent Decree, Draft Cleanup Action Plan, a Determination of Non-Significance under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and this Draft Public Participation Plan.

Ecology will also be hosting a public information meeting on June 5, 2014 from 6-8pm, at the Bellingham Public Library, to present these documents and the cleanup action plan for the Cornwall Site.

Once the comment period has ended, Ecology will review and respond to all commented received. Based on those comments, Ecology may modify the documents, and if there are significant changes, issue the documents again for public review. If there are no significant changes, the documents will be finalized.

After the CAP and CD are finalized, the port, city, DNR, and Ecology will begin work on engineering the cleanup action plan. They will produce and engineering design report, which will detail how the cleanup action plan will be implemented, and submit it for public review. Upon completion of public review, it will be finalized and the cleanup will proceed at the site.

### **Key Community Concerns**

Public concerns and interests expressed about the Site include the following:

- Protection of human health and the environment;
- Stewardship of state-owned aquatic lands;
- Avoidance of impacts to important fisheries resources and habitats;
- Coordination of cleanup actions with other Bellingham Bay site cleanups;
- Opportunities for public involvement;
- Compliance with regulatory requirements;
- Long-term vulnerability of the site to sea-level rise, the potential for stronger storm events, and seismic activity;
- Coordination of the cleanup action with habitat restoration.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Ecology will use a variety of methods to keep community residents and stakeholders informed and involved in the Westman Marine cleanup project. We will continue to try to find new ways to share project information and expand our audience. This plan will be edited and updated as appropriate. Public involvement activities include the following:

#### **Public Meetings and Hearings**

During the public comment period, a public meeting will be scheduled if 10 or more people request it. Otherwise, Ecology will hold public meetings as needed at key points in the cleanup process. These meetings will be held to describe work that is occurring and introduce key staff that will be working on cleanup. Meetings will be held at local locations to the community.

#### **Information Repositories**

Information repositories are places where the public may read and review site information. Ecology can also make copies of documents for a fee. For this site, the repositories are:

- Washington Department of Ecology, Northwest Regional Office, 3190 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Bellevue, WA 98008. Please call (425) 649-7190 for an appointment.
- Department of Ecology, Bellingham Field Office, 1440 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 102, Bellingham, WA 98225
- Bellingham Public Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98227
- Ecology's Cornwall Avenue Landfill Web Site:  
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=220>

#### **Site Register**

Ecology's Toxic Cleanup Program uses its bimonthly *Site Register* to announce all of its public meetings and comment periods, as well as many other activities. To receive the *Site Register* in electronic or hard copy format, contact Seth Preston at (360) 407-6848, or by email at [Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov). It is also available 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 has compiled a mailing list for the Site. The list includes individuals, groups, public agencies, elected officials, private businesses, and other interested parties. The list will be maintained at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office and will be updated as needed. Please contact Brad Petrovich at (425) 533-5537 or [Brad.Petrovich@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Brad.Petrovich@ecy.wa.gov) to have your address added to or deleted from this mailing list.

### **Fact Sheets**

Ecology will mail fact sheets to inform the community and other interested parties of public meetings and important site activities, including project milestones and status updates.

### **Community Group Meeting Presentations**

Ecology staff will present information about the Cornwall Avenue Landfill cleanup when requested by the Blaine neighborhood associations or other community groups. Residents can request a presentation by contacting Brad Petrovich at (425) 533-5537 or [Brad.Petrovich@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Brad.Petrovich@ecy.wa.gov).

### **Ecology Website**

Ecology will maintain a site webpage at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=220>. This page will be updated regularly and will hold information available for comments and other relevant documents and information.

### **Newspaper Display Ads**

Ecology may place ads in *The Bellingham Herald* to announce public meetings and other events related to the Westman Marine cleanup.

### **Plan Update**

This public participation plan may be updated as the project proceeds. If an update is necessary, and is a substantial change in the plan, it will be announced via site register and the website.

### **Public Participation Grants**

As part of the Model Toxics Control Act, Ecology developed a public participation grant program to promote public participation during cleanups. Public Participation Grants provide funding to community groups to help involve the public in the investigation and cleanup of contaminated properties. The grants also help develop and carry out programs that promote the state's solid or hazardous waste management priorities.

For cleanup sites, non-profit groups or groups of three or more unrelated individuals can apply for grants to fund outreach and education efforts for the community that is impacted by the cleanup. Past projects have helped people understand the cleanup and how to comment on cleanup proposals during public comment periods. Grant funds may be used to pay for technical experts who help people understand cleanup issues. They can also be used to hold meetings, workshops and other events that help to inform people. In addition, printing and distribution of reports, brochures and other materials may be covered. For more information about this grant program, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/grants/ppg.html>

#### **4. POINTS OF CONTACT**

**Public involvement:**

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**General project information or technical questions:**

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