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More sampling at G-P West cleanup site this week

BELLINGHAM – Crews will return to the Georgia-Pacific West cleanup site this week to get a more complete picture of the site's environmental conditions.

The first round of sampling was in September 2009.

"We looked at the data we had and agreed we needed more information," said Lucy McInerney, Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) site manager and project manager for the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot. "The additional samples will give us the clear understanding we need to develop and analyze cleanup options."

The G-P West site is one of 12 cleanup sites in the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot, a multi-agency collaborative effort to integrate cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and land use from a bay-wide perspective. The pilot program is a major step toward restoring Puget Sound, and it is a model for other large-scale cleanup initiatives.

The work this week is part of the environmental study required by a legal agreement between the Ecology and the Port of Bellingham.

Aspect Consulting is performing the work for the port. Ecology is overseeing cleanup activities at the site under the state cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.

Crews will collect and analyze samples to characterize soil and groundwater conditions, identifying the location and concentration of contaminants.

This work and previous studies will define the site conditions and boundaries. After the work is complete, Ecology and the port will evaluate cleanup options. In about a year, Ecology will invite the public to comment on the results of the study and evaluations.

The bulk of the cleanup site is made up of former Georgia-Pacific property, now owned by the port. The 64-acre property at 300 W. Laurel St. was used to manufacture paper and associated products from 1925 to 2007. The port acquired the former industrial site in January 2005.

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For more information, including a work plan addendum for the additional sampling:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/blhm_bay/sites/gpWest/gpWest_hp.htm