



News Release

Washington Department of Ecology news

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Cleanup work starts at historical Bellingham landfill

BELLINGHAM – Crews will move equipment on site today to dig up the contents of a historical landfill in what is now Little Squalicum Park.

The cleanup work at the Eldridge Municipal Landfill site will involve removing garbage and contaminated soil – about 2,400 cubic yards covering 19,000 square feet within the park boundary adjacent to Bellingham Technical College. Work will continue into late September.

Glacier Environmental Services will do the work for the city. Ecology is overseeing cleanup activities at the site under state cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.

The project is considered an interim cleanup action because it will take place before the comprehensive environmental study and analysis of cleanup options (known as a remedial investigation and feasibility study) are finished.

The city of Bellingham proposed an interim action because it has funding available now to do the work. Ecology agreed because removal is the most aggressive cleanup option.

After the contaminated material is removed, the city will complete the environmental study, showing whether additional cleanup is needed to comply with state cleanup requirements. Ecology expects to release the study report for public review in 2012.

The interim cleanup action will cost an estimated \$656,000. Ecology will reimburse up to half the city's costs through the state's remedial action grant program, which helps pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The state Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a voter-approved tax on hazardous substances.

The Eldridge Municipal Landfill site is on property owned by Whatcom County, which the city manages as a park.

In the 1930s, the city used a portion of what is now the park as a landfill for burning and burying local municipal waste. It operated for only a few years.

The landfill was discovered and investigated as part of the 2006 Little Squalicum Park environmental study. The landfill site is separate from the Little Squalicum Park site. The U.S.

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Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing cleanup of the creek area of the park as part of the adjacent Oeser Superfund site.

The Eldridge Municipal Landfill is one of 12 cleanup sites in the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot, a multi-agency collaborative effort to combine cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and land use. The pilot program is a major step toward restoring Puget Sound, and it is a model for other large-scale cleanup initiatives.

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For more information: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=1897>, or navigate there by going to www.ecy.wa.gov, click on “Programs,” click on “Toxics Cleanup,” click on “Cleanup Site Information,” and search by site name for “Eldridge.”

Bellingham Bay cleanup:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites_brochure/blhm_bay/sites/bel_bay_sites.html, or navigate there by going to www.ecy.wa.gov, click on “Programs,” click on “Toxics Cleanup,” click on “Complex Cleanup Sites,” and “Bellingham Bay Sites.”

Ecology’s website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>

Ecology’s social media: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html>

Broadcast version

The Washington Department of Ecology will oversee interim cleanup work that starts this week at a historical landfill in what is now Little Squalicum Park.

The project will involve removing garbage and contaminated soil – about twenty-four hundred cubic yards covering nineteen thousand square feet within the park boundary.

Glacier Environmental Services will do the work for the city. Work is expected to wrap up in late September.

The interim action will cost an estimated six hundred fifty-six thousand dollars. Ecology will reimburse up to half the city’s costs through the state’s remedial action grant program, which helps pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The state Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a voter-approved tax on hazardous substances.

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