



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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**WA DNR Webster Nursery  
Tumwater, Washington**

DRAFT

**Prepared by**

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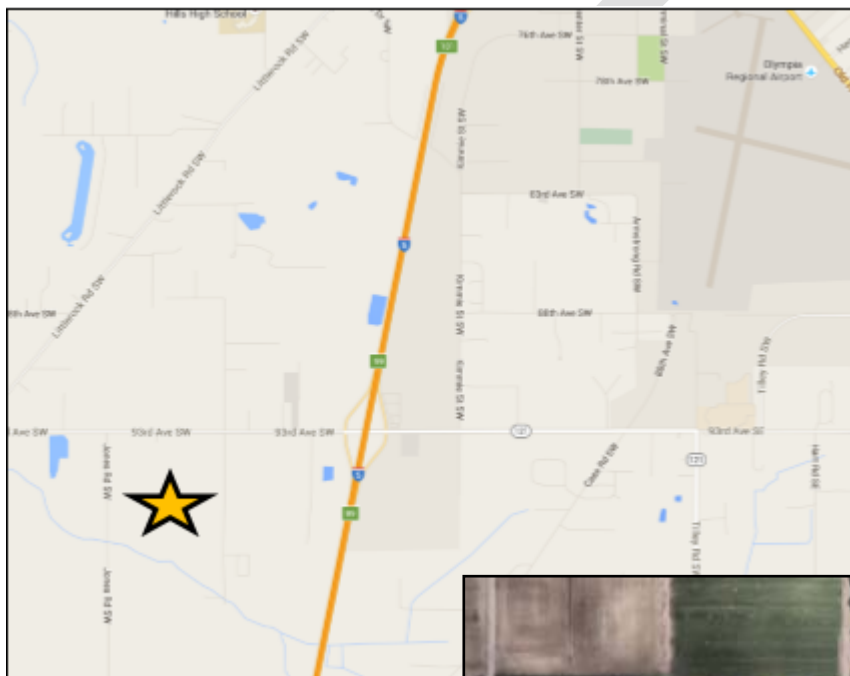
## INTRODUCTION

Public participation plans promote meaningful involvement during cleanups. This plan describes the tools the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) will use to inform the public about and gather input on the WA DNR Webster Nursery cleanup.

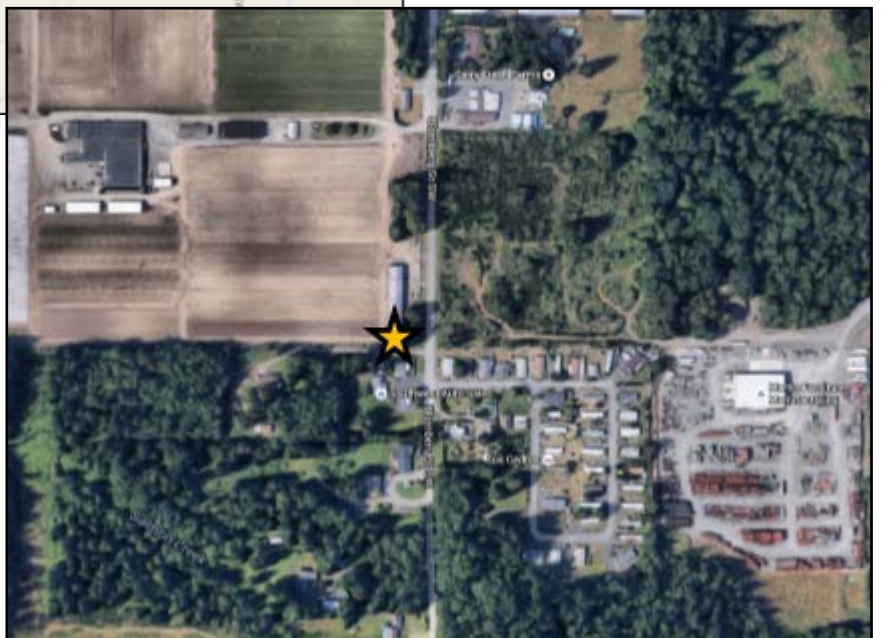
## SITE LOCATION

The WA DNR Webster Nursery cleanup site is located at 9805 Blomberg Street Southwest in Tumwater, Washington.

Figure 1: Site Location



Close up of location



## **SITE BACKGROUND**

The site is an operating nursery run by Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR). It is the only state-owned forest nursery in Washington and it is funded by seedling sales. The 300 acre nursery produces 10 – 15 million seedlings per year. Pesticides are applied to soils and plants, in early spring, summer and early fall to control weeds and protect new seedlings from disease.

A pesticide storage and mixing warehouse was built in 1978, with a system of floor drains plumbed directly to a 750-gallon capacity pre-cast concrete Underground Storage Tank (UST). The facility was used properly with pesticide being rinsed and washed into the tank during normal operation.

In 1982 the concrete UST was replaced with a Steel UST. WA DNR first found soil and groundwater contamination in 1996 when removing the full Steel UST. The contamination is from organochlorine pesticides specifically, the insecticide Heptachlor Epoxide (HE). Soil around drains and pipes were tested and found to be clean. WA DNR stopped using HE at the nursery in the early 1990's.

70 cubic yards (about 7 dump trucks full) of contaminated soil was removed and disposed of at a landfill facility in Arlington, OR. The liquid from UST was disposed of at a wastewater treatment and recycling facility. At the time, they were not able to remove all contaminated soil because groundwater was seeping in and filling the hole. Also, it was thought that digging deeper might affect the stability of the warehouse. WA DNR continued to monitor the groundwater. Ten years after the initial cleanup of the site, Heptachlor Epoxide (HE) remains above the state cleanup level in the groundwater.

### **Public drinking water testing**

In response to public concerns, Thurston County Department of Health and WA Department of Health tested residential wells in 1997. No pesticides were found in any of the wells sampled. The soil and groundwater testing since then has shown that the contamination remains only within 20 feet of the former tank area on site. The groundwater monitoring shows the level of HE at the wells at the edge of the nursery property are well below the safe drinking water standard. Well water tested at the nearby Los Cedros community in 2007 showed if HE is present at all, it is well below the safe drinking water standard.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITY**

The site will be cleaned up under the state's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). MTCA defines the [process and steps](#) of cleaning up a contaminated site (see Cleanup Process figure).

A public comment period will be held on the following documents:

- **Feasibility Study** – report identifying and evaluating the different cleanup options.
- **Draft Cleanup Action Plan**—Describes the proposed cleanup method
- **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination**—Describes the potential

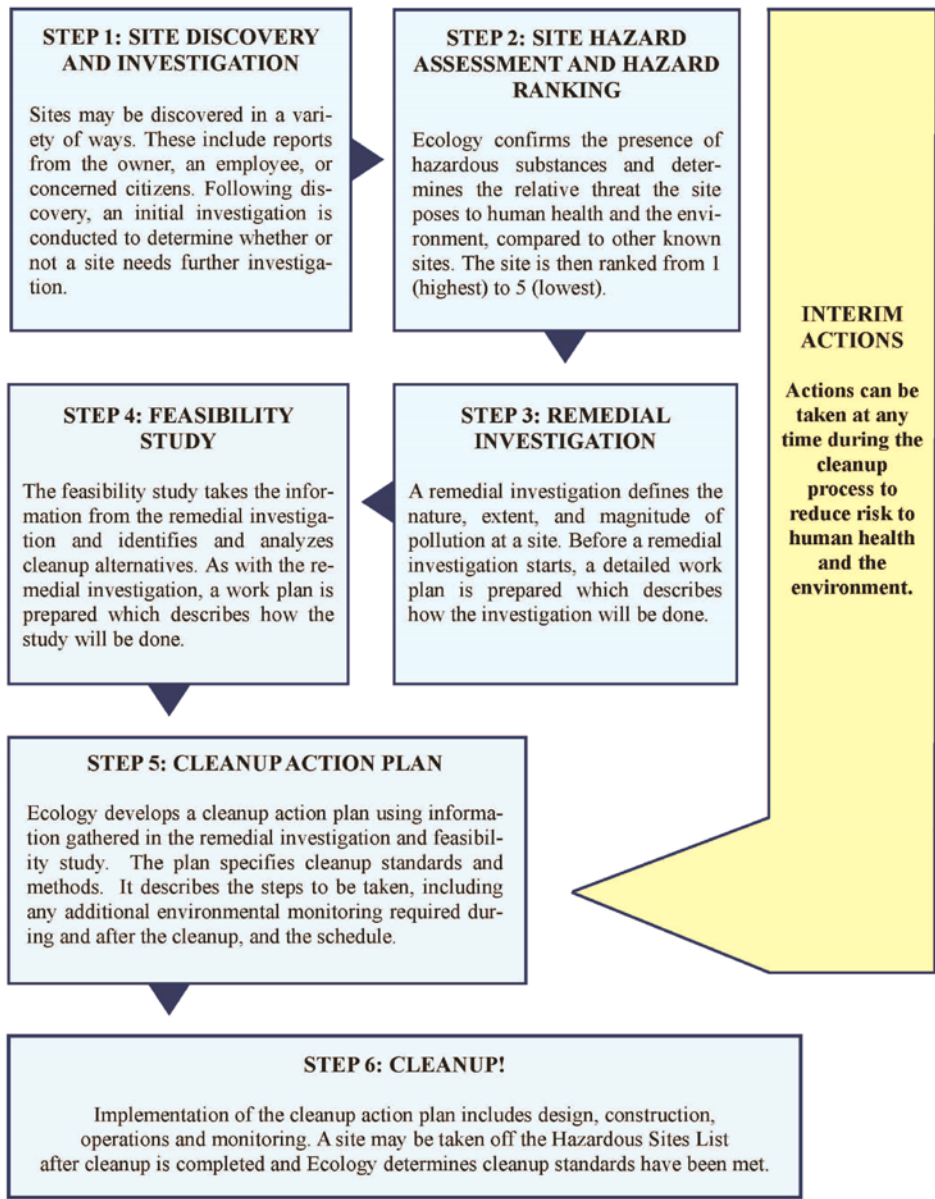
environmental impacts of the cleanup work.

- **Agreed Order** – legal agreement with WA DNR to perform the cleanup

Ecology determined the cleanup actions would not have significant negative environmental impacts (a Determination of Non-Significance).

The public will be able to review and comment on the major steps during the cleanup process.

### SITE CLEANUP PROCESS



Cleanup activities at the WA DNR Webster Nursery site fall under Washington’s Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and accompanying regulations (Revised Code of Washington (RCW))

70.105D and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-340). MTCA has procedures for cleaning up contaminated sites to standards that are safe for both human health and the environment.

Toxic sites are cleaned up in stages, described below. Each stage has a related report or plan that the public is welcome to review and comment on.

### **Remedial Investigation & Feasibility Study (RI/FS)**

The RI looks at the extent and type of pollution on the site. It also looks at possible human health and environmental impacts. The FS identifies and evaluates different cleanup options.

### **Interim Actions**

Ecology may allow Interim Actions to partly clean up a site before the final cleanup plan is complete.

### **Cleanup Action Plan (CAP)**

The CAP describes the cleanup methods and how they will meet Ecology's cleanup standards.

### **Cleanup**

Cleanup removes contaminants from the site, contains them on the site, or treats them to make them less toxic. Based on the information in the RI/FS, Ecology selects a cleanup action and develops a new legal agreement for cleanup. CAPs require a public comment period.

### **Delisting**

Ecology keeps track of toxic cleanup sites on the Hazardous Sites List. Once cleanup is complete, the public will have a chance to comment before Ecology takes a site off the list.

You can find more information about toxic cleanups on Ecology's website:

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/cu\\_support/cu\\_process\\_steps\\_defns.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/cu_support/cu_process_steps_defns.htm).

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to promote public understanding and participation in the cleanup. This section of the plan describes how Ecology will share information and receive public comments on cleanup activities. Ecology will use the following public involvement activities during the WA DNR Webster Nursery site cleanup:

### **Formal Public Comment Periods**

Comment periods are the primary method Ecology uses to get feedback from the public on proposed cleanup decisions. Comment periods usually last 30 days. WAC 173-340-600 requires them at key points during the investigation and cleanup process, before final decisions are made. During a comment period, the public can comment in writing.

After comment periods, Ecology reviews all comments and may respond in a document called a responsiveness summary. Ecology considers whether a document or decision needs to be changed or revised based on public input. If there are major changes, Ecology may hold a second comment period. If there are no major changes, Ecology finalizes the draft document(s).

### **Public Meetings and Hearings**

Ecology may hold public meetings at key points during the investigation and cleanup. Ecology also may offer public meetings for actions expected to be of particular interest to the community. Ecology will also hold a public meeting if ten or more people request one. These meetings will be at places and times convenient to the public.

### **Information Repositories**

These are places where the public can read and review site information, including public comment period documents. Ecology has three repositories for this site:

- Tumwater Timberland Library, 7023 New Market St., WA 98501 (360) 943-7790
- Washington State Department of Ecology, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey 98503. Please call (360) 407-6365 or email [PublicDisclosureSWRO@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:PublicDisclosureSWRO@ecy.wa.gov) for an appointment.

See also Ecology's website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=3380>.

### **Site Register**

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program uses its bimonthly Site Register to announce public meetings and comment periods, and many other activities. To receive the Site Register by email, contact Seth Preston at (360) 407-6848 or [Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Seth.Preston@ecy.wa.gov). You can also read it 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's mailing list for this site includes neighboring landowners and businesses, public agencies, and other known interested parties. Ecology's Southwest Regional Office maintains the list and will update it as needed. Please contact Stacy Galleher at (360) 407-6255 or [Stacy.Galleher@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Stacy.Galleher@ecy.wa.gov) if you would like to have your address added to or deleted from this mailing list.

### **Fact Sheets**

Ecology will mail fact sheets to people and groups interested in this cleanup. Fact sheets will announce comment periods and public meetings. Ecology also may mail fact sheets with updates on cleanup progress.

### **Newspaper Display Ads**

Ecology will place ads in *The Olympian* to announce public comment periods and public meetings for the site.

### **Plan Update**

Ecology may update this Public Participation Plan as the project moves forward. The public will have a chance to comment on any major changes to the plan.

**Contacts**

If you have questions or need more information about this plan or the WA DNR Webster Nursery cleanup site, please contact:

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## **GLOSSARY**

**Agreed Order:** A legal agreement between Ecology and a Potentially Liable Person (see below) to conduct work toward a cleanup.

**Cleanup:** Actions that deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health or the environment. Ecology often uses the term "cleanup" broadly to describe response actions or phases of cleanup, such as the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.

**Cleanup Action Plan (CAP):** A plan that explains which cleanup option(s) will be used at a site. The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study provide the data and analysis to write a CAP. It also takes into account public comments and public concerns.

**Comment Period:** A time period during which the public can review and comment on various documents and proposed actions. For example, a comment period may be provided to allow community members to review and comment on proposed cleanup action alternatives and proposed plans.

**Contaminant:** Any hazardous substance that does not occur naturally or occurs at greater than natural background levels

**Feasibility Study:** This study develops and evaluates cleanup options for a given site.

**Groundwater:** Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills spaces between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In some aquifers, ground water occurs in large enough amounts to be used for drinking water, irrigation and other purposes.

**Information Repository:** A file containing site information and reports for public review. It is usually located in a public building convenient for local residents, such as a public school, city hall, or library.

**Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA):** A law passed by Washington voter initiative in 1988. Its purpose is to find, investigate, and clean up places where hazardous substances have been released. It defines Ecology's role and encourages public involvement in cleanup decisions.

**Potentially Liable Person:** Any individual(s) or company(s) potentially responsible for, or contributing to, the contamination problems at a site. Whenever possible, Ecology requires PLPs to clean up sites.

**Public Notice:** At a minimum, adequate notice mailed to all persons who have made a timely request of Ecology and to persons residing in the potentially affected vicinity of the proposed action; mailed to appropriate news media; published in the local (city and county) newspaper of largest circulation; and the opportunity for the interested persons to comment.

**Public Participation Plan:** A plan prepared to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement designed to the public's needs at a particular site.

**Remedial Investigation:** This study characterizes the site and defines the extent of contamination.

**Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study:** Two distinct but related studies. They are usually performed at the same time, and together referred to as the "RI/FS." They are intended to:

- Gather the data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination;
- Establish criteria for cleaning up the site;
- Identify and screen cleanup alternatives for remedial action; and
- Analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

**Responsiveness Summary:** A summary of oral and/or written public comments received by Ecology during a comment period on key documents, and Ecology's responses to those comments. The responsiveness summary is especially valuable during the Cleanup Action Plan phase at a site when it highlights community concerns.

**Risk:** The probability that a hazardous substance, when released into the environment, will cause an adverse effect in the exposed humans or living organisms.

**Sediments:** Settled particles located at the bottom of a lake, river or in wetlands. Sediment(s) also includes settled particulate matter exposed by human activity (e.g., dredging) to the biologically active aquatic zone or to the water column.

**Site:** Any area where a hazardous substance, other than a consumer product in consumer use, has come to be located.

**Toxicity:** How much harm a substance causes to living organisms, including people, plants and animals, at a certain concentration.