Site Cleanup:
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
Former Maintenance and Fueling Facility
Skykomish, Washington

Final
Public Participation Plan

August 1, 2001

Prepared by
Washington State Department of Ecology, with input from
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company, and
Skykomish Environmental Coalition

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BNSF SKYKOMISH SITE CLEANUP
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

The former railway maintenance and fueling facility in the east King County town of Skykomish is now owned and operated by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. Historical activities since the facility opened in the late 1890s included refueling and maintaining locomotives and operating an electrical substation for electric engines. These activities resulted in the release of contaminants to the surrounding environment. BNSF has accepted responsibility for cleaning up contaminants at the site.

A formal agreement and schedule for an interim action to cleanup that contamination has been developed. An interim action is any remedial action that partially addresses the cleanup of a site. In this case, the interim action will stop seeps to the Skykomish River.

This public participation plan describes a program for community involvement during the interim cleanup. It describes the ways community members can stay informed about site cleanup activities and participate in decision making. The public participation plan will be updated, or a new plan will be developed, for each phase of work. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has developed the plan, with input from BNSF and the Skykomish Environmental Coalition (SEC), in compliance with the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act, commonly known as MTCA. This plan replaces the public participation plan for the study phase of the cleanup that was finalized in August 1993, and reflects current conditions at the site and in the community.[1]

This plan identifies community concerns about the cleanup and defines the types of public participation activities that will take place during the cleanup process. It is based on Ecology's MTCA regulations (Chapter 173-340-WAC) and on a series of interviews and meetings with community and environmental group representatives during the winter of 2001. Ecology, BNSF and SEC are committed to an open dialogue with the community to ensure that interested parties can receive information and provide input to the decision-making process. This plan identifies ways in which that dialogue will take place.

The Model Toxics Control Act and Public Participation Commitment

MTCA began as a grass-roots citizens' initiative in 1988 and started the process of cleaning up contaminated sites in Washington State. Under MTCA, a current or past owner or operator may be held responsible for cleanup of contamination to standards that are safe for both human health and the environment. Ecology was charged with implementing MTCA and

[1] Washington State Department of Ecology, *Public Participation Plan, Burlington Northern Maintenance and Fueling Facility*, August 1993.

overseeing cleanups throughout the state and has issued regulations and guidance governing those cleanups. Ecology investigates any report of property contamination, and if it presents a significant threat to human health or the environment, the site is placed on the Hazardous Sites List. The cleanup process then begins.

MTCA places significant emphasis on public participation throughout the cleanup process. Neighboring residents, businesses, and other interested parties are given the opportunity to become involved in cleanups. The regulation requires early planning and development of a site-specific public participation plan. The plan is intended to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement tailored to the public's needs at a particular facility. According to MTCA, "the scope of the plan shall be commensurate with the nature of the proposed remedial actions, the level of public concern, and the risks posed by the facility."[2]

This public participation plan includes information about publishing public notices of available reports and studies on the site, conducting public comment periods, holding public meetings or hearings, and providing responses to all public comments. This response to comments is called a responsiveness summary. The responsiveness summary addresses all comments received during the public comment period and lets the public know how their comments were used or why they were not. These are the basic public participation requirements. Additional activities can be undertaken, such as interviews with community members, community group briefings, or workshops, particularly if public interest and concern are high.

Public participation grants are also available to groups living near contaminated sites. SEC has applied for and received such grants to conduct additional public involvement and receive technical assistance in understanding the complex issues of the cleanup.

Goals of the Public Participation Process

The primary goal of the public participation process is to allow the affected community to participate in the decision-making processes during the investigation and cleanup of the site in an informed and meaningful way. To accomplish this goal, Ecology will:

- **Provide information** – Provide people in the affected community with timely, understandable, useful, and accurate information, so they are prepared to give informed and meaningful input.

- **Be Responsive -** Respond to the needs and concerns of the affected community as they relate to the investigation and cleanup of this site in a timely manner.

[2] Washington State Department of Ecology, *Model Toxics Control Act Regulations, WAC 173-340-600, Public Notice and Participation,* February 2001.

- **Provide Meaningful Opportunities for Input -** Ensure that the community has an opportunity to comment on proposals at meaningful and key points in the cleanup process, and be sure public input is received before final decisions are made.

- **Facilitate Communication –** Facilitate and encourage open, two-way communication between the affected community, Ecology, other agencies and BNSF.

Roles and Responsibilities
Public participation activities for the cleanup process are coordinated among Ecology, BNSF, and SEC. Ecology maintains overall responsibility and approval authority for the activities outlined in this plan in accordance with MTCA requirements. Ecology, with the participation of BNSF and SEC, conducts public comment periods as required by MTCA, including soliciting, receiving and considering comments, making decisions, and preparing responsiveness summaries. BNSF finances and assists Ecology in conducting public participation activities. SEC received a public participation grant from Ecology to obtain technical assistance in understanding complex cleanup issues and conduct community outreach activities.

Organization of the Public Participation Plan
This plan provides an overview of the MTCA process, background of the site, and background of the community and its involvement with the site. Planned activities used to inform and seek input from the community are described in detail, along with a timeline. Other material needed to implement the public participation plan (e.g., locations of information centers and meetings, list of organizations contacted) is also included.

Ecology, BNSF and SEC urge the public to become involved in the cleanup process. Information will be provided regularly, and there will be many opportunities to review materials and provide comments. This plan is intended to be a flexible working document, with activities changing as community concerns emerge and more information becomes available during the cleanup process. If readers would like to arrange for a briefing with project staff, or have questions or comments on the plan or other aspects of the cleanup, please contact one of the persons listed below.

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2.0 SITE BACKGROUND

Site Description and Location

The site is located in the Town of Skykomish in northeast King County in the State of Washington and includes BNSF property and surrounding properties impacted by activities performed at the former fueling and maintenance facility. The site location is shown in Figure 1-1. Railroad Avenue separates the railroad property from the main commercial district of the town Maloney Creek flows west to the South Fork of the Skykomish River. The site encompasses an area of about 40 acres. The approximate boundaries of the study area are as follows: the Skykomish River to the north, approximately the Old Cascade Highway to the south, Maloney Creek to the west, and Skykomish city limits to the east.

Site History

The former railroad maintenance and fueling facility in the town of Skykomish opened in the late 1890s and is now owned and operated by BNSF. Historical activities resulted in the release of contaminants to the surrounding environment. Responsibility for cleaning up contaminants at the site rests with BNSF.

The facility's primary functions over the more than 80 years that it was in full operation were to refuel and maintain locomotives, provide electricity for electric engines operating between Wenatchee and Skykomish, and 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 Skykomish, an electrical substation was constructed near the tunnel to provide power to locomotives traveling between Skykomish and Wenatchee. Diesel power was used for locomotives traveling west as early as the 1940s. By 1956, diesel completely replaced both bunker oil and electricity and remained the primary power source for trains operating out of Skykomish.

The fuel was stored in underground storage tanks at the site until 1974, when BNSF discontinued most fuel handling activities at its Skykomish facility. The BNSF facility is currently used as a base of operations for track maintenance and snow removal crews.

In early 1991, Ecology designated the former maintenance and fueling facility a high priority cleanup site. Later that year, BNSF indicated a desire to initiate a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in accordance with MTCA. At that time, formal negotiations for a legal agreement (called an Agreed Order) were initiated. Negotiations were completed in mid-1993. Following a public comment period, the Agreed Order, which includes detailed work plans for the RI/FS process and early interim cleanup work, was signed by Ecology and BNSF.

Contaminants of Concern

Investigations performed by BNSF in cooperation with Ecology since 1993 have revealed diesel and Bunker C fuel contamination in soils and groundwater at the site that exceeds state standards. The contamination has migrated beyond the railroad property and has been found underneath homes and businesses in Skykomish and in "seeps" on the banks of the Skykomish River. Based on available data, the site contamination consists of the following:

- **Soils —** Surface soils on the rail yard contain diesel and Bunker C fuel, lead, arsenic and PCBs above state cleanup standards. In some areas of the site, including areas off the rail yard, subsurface soils contain petroleum and its components (e.g., polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs) to an approximate 15-foot depth.

- **Groundwater —** Both floating and dissolved diesel and Bunker C products are present in groundwater beneath the site and at the Skykomish River at levels greater than allowed under state law.

- **Surface Water —** Diesel and Bunker C products from upland areas are seeping into the river after being transported underground by groundwater.

- **Sediments —** Petroleum and PAHs are present in sediments along the riverbank at seep locations.

BNSF and Ecology are working with the local community to ensure all exposure pathways are evaluated and the site is cleaned up. These contaminants are known to be toxic above

certain concentrations, and some components are known human carcinogens. The material seeping into the Skykomish River is one primary concern.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) evaluated the results of indoor air sampling from seven locations near the BNSF former fueling and maintenance facility in 1998-1999. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the potential health effects from contaminants detected in indoor air. The evaluation looked at five sampling events from March 1998 through February 1999. DOH concluded that based on current scientific and epidemiological information, exposure to the contaminants found over the five indoor air sampling events was not at levels expected to cause harmful health effects. [3]

In November 1996, due to concern over possible exposure to lead in surface soils, the Seattle-King County Health Department screened four children in Skykomish for blood lead levels. The children were from families believed to be at the highest potential risk for lead exposure due to their proximity to the lead contaminated soils. The children's blood did not contain elevated levels of lead, and the results of the tests were considered normal.[4]

To help prevent people from coming into contact with metals and contamination on its rail yard property, BNSF has posted no trespassing signs and applies a dust suppressant to the soil on an annual basis. Current activities also include belt skimmers installed in product recovery wells along West River Road. During periods of low river water, booms are placed on the river to recover surface oil seeps.

To reduce the potential for people coming into contact with contaminants in the groundwater and soil four or more feet below the ground surface, residents should contact BNSF's technical consultant, Halah Voges of ThermoRetec, at (206) 624-9349 if they plan to dig three feet or more below the surface. BNSF will ensure that any contaminated soils are properly tested and disposed of safely.

Although the contamination poses little immediate risk to human health, cleanup is necessary to minimize any long-term risk and improve the overall environmental health of the Town and the River. Cleanup actions will be conducted to prevent residents from contacting hazardous substances and to stop the flow of contaminants into the River.

The MTCA Cleanup Process

Figure 2-1 outlines the steps in the state's cleanup process and schedule for the cleanup of the BNSF former maintenance and fueling facility. Ecology and BNSF will solicit input from the public at key points during the investigation and cleanup process. Formal public

[3] Department of Health, *Environmental Health Update, Burlington Northern & Santa Fe, Skykomish, Health Consultation and Findings* (fact sheet), June 1999.

[4] Washington State Department of Ecology, *Burlington Northern Skykomish Project Update* (fact sheet), March 1997.

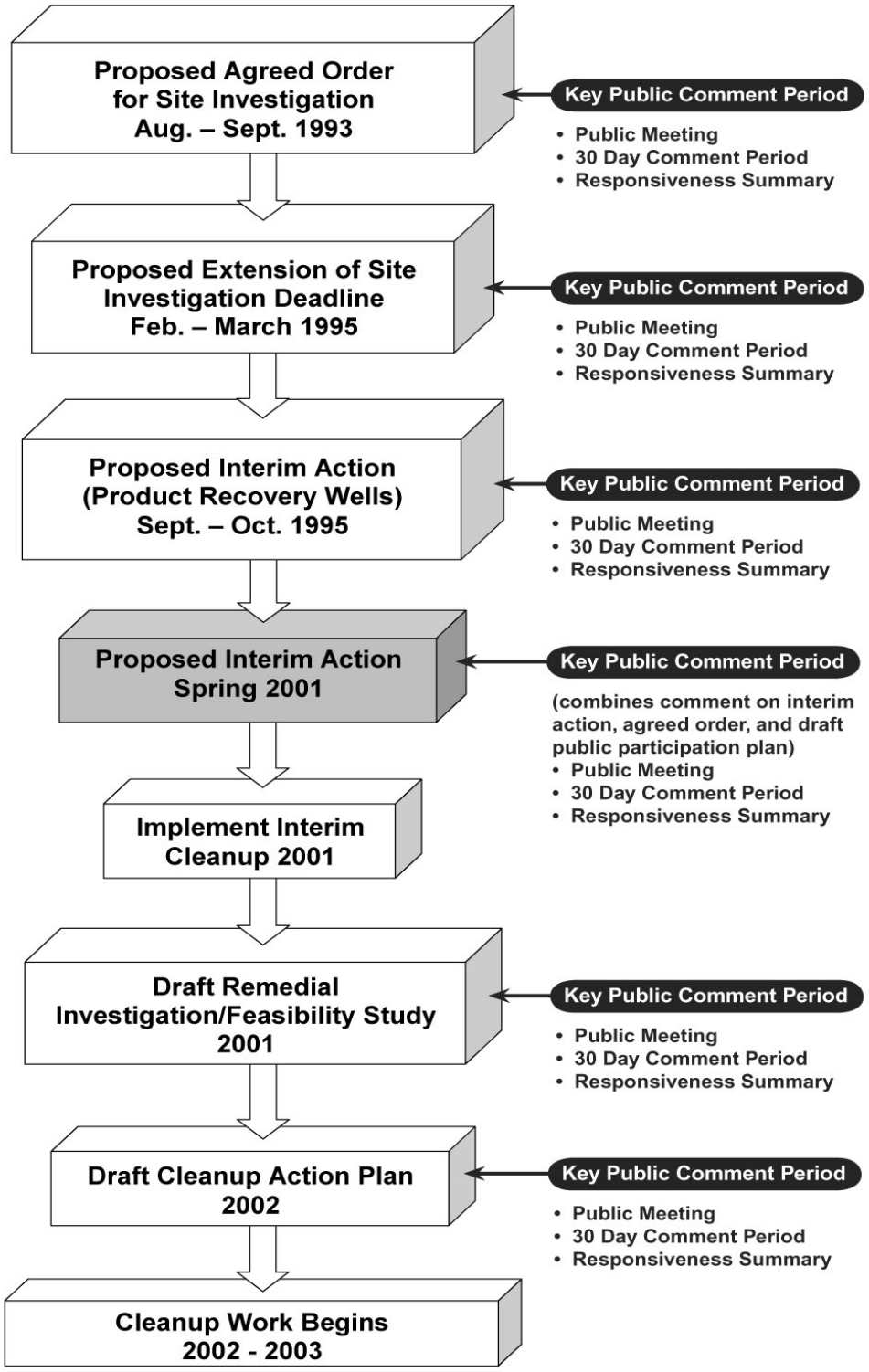
notice and public comment periods are held at certain points in the MTCA process, as shown in Figure 2-1.

When public notice is required, the law states that at a minimum, the "potentially affected vicinity" must be notified by mail, and an advertisement must be placed in the newspaper with the largest circulation in the community. Additionally, during any public comment period, if ten or more people request one, Ecology will hold a public meeting about the proposal up for public review. The law also allows Ecology to go beyond the minimum public involvement requirements if public interest and concern are high. As indicated in Section 4.0 of this plan, the public involvement activities for the Skykomish site will exceed minimum requirements.

Additional Interim Action to Address Seeps to the River in 2001

Ecology has asked BNSF to enhance its product recovery system and stop contaminants that are seeping into the Skykomish River through an Interim Action during 2001. An Interim Action is any action that partially addresses the cleanup of a site. Ecology will hold

Figure 2-1
BNSF Former Maintenance and Fueling Facility Cleanup Process and Public Participation Activities



a 30-day combined public comment period on the new Agreed Order (legal agreement), the draft design basis document for the Interim Action, and the draft public participation plan.

The Interim Action would involve construction of an underground barrier wall west from the bridge along West River Road to stop seeps from reaching the River. Monitoring wells would be installed behind (upgradient of) the wall and at the ends of the wall to determine where contaminants accumulate. Temporary recovery operations will be conducted from these wells. During the second phase, the monitoring wells that contain the most petroleum products would be converted into product recovery wells such as the recovery wells that currently skim petroleum from groundwater.

Draft Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Report

BNSF submitted the first draft of the Remedial Investigation report to Ecology in 1996.[5] This study provides baseline data about soil, groundwater, surface water, air and river sediments throughout the site that will be used to develop cleanup options that are physically, economically, socially and scientifically feasible. Since early 2000, Ecology and BNSF have been working toward completing a document called the Feasibility Study. This document includes a summary of investigation results as well as an evaluation of cleanup alternatives for the site.

The draft Feasibility Study is currently being revised by BNSF to incorporate comments from Ecology and SEC and to address recent changes to the state MTCA regulations. The study is being updated because a number of data gaps were identified and must be addressed before final cleanup decisions can be made. Once completed, the draft Feasibility Study, along with the revised draft of the 1996 Remedial Investigation report, will be available for public review and comment.

Draft Cleanup Action Plan

After public input is received on the draft report, preferred cleanup alternatives for the final cleanup will be selected and a draft Cleanup Action Plan will be written. This plan will be a detailed outline of the work to be performed during the actual cleanup of the site. Since the plan outlines in detail the final cleanup of the site, this will be another key time for public input. When this draft plan is finalized, the public will again be asked to comment. Once comments are received and reviewed and any necessary changes are made, work on the final cleanup of the site can begin.

[5] Remediation Technologies, Inc., *Remedial Investigation for the Former Maintenance and Fueling Facility in Skykomish, Washington* (fact sheet). Prepared for Burlington Northern Railroad, January 1996.

3.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Community Overview

The Town of Skykomish is located adjacent to the Skykomish River along State Route 2 and, according to the 1990 U.S. Census, has 273 residents. The town was founded in the late 1800s, primarily to support locomotive fueling and maintenance activities, and was incorporated in 1909. Major employers in the area are the Skykomish School District and U.S.D.A. Forest Service. A significant number of residents live there part-time, spending time in the area on weekends to enjoy outdoor recreational activities. The town has a school for students from K-12, which serves residents of Skykomish and surrounding towns. The town also has a library, tavern, motel, post office, and a few small businesses.

Skykomish has several buildings listed on the federal register of historic buildings. The town has a strong historic link to the railroad, though it is now more closely aligned with outdoor resources and recreation. The town has an active historical society, which has produced brochures promoting the history of the town. Skykomish also has a historical design review board that reviews proposed building and land use changes to ensure that the historical character of the town is maintained. Drinking water is provided to all residents and businesses through a community water system, but the town does not have a community sewer system.

Skykomish Environmental Coalition

SEC was formed in 1996 and funded by Ecology through a MTCA public participation grant. A renewal of the grant in 2000 funds the group's efforts to broaden local public outreach activities relating to the cleanup. SEC members and two consultants work to bring an understanding of issues relating to the cleanup to community members.

Community Interviews, Meetings and Contacts

Representatives of various community and interest groups were interviewed to gather input for the development of this public participation plan. Paul Hezel and Jennifer Kauffman of EnviroIssues, a consultant to BNSF for public participation planning, conducted one- on-one community interviews in March and April 2001. Over 25 members of the community were interviewed for about an hour each to better understand current community concerns related to the cleanup and the proposed Interim Action, and to determine how to best involve community members in the process. An interview outline was used to guide the interview process. The interviews and group discussions were conducted informally with fairly open-ended questions and produced a great deal of useful information. The interview questions included the following topics:

- Introductions and a description of the site, its regulatory status, and the role of public participation in the MTCA cleanup process.

- Questions about the individual's and the community's relation to the site, awareness of the site status, and interests or concerns related to the site and its link with the larger community.

- Specific questions about ways to reach people in the community with information, the types and content of needed information, and ways to disseminate information (including need for special accommodations or printed material in another language).

- Specific questions about outreach formats, meeting locations, information centers, and other outreach options.

The input received during the interviews was used to guide the development of this plan.[6] Interviewees included members of the town council, members of the school board, the school superintendent, business people, and residents, including a number along West River Road who would be directly affected by construction activities of the proposed Interim Action. A summary of the interviews is included in Appendix A.

In addition, a series of meetings with SEC, the Town Council and the School Board have been held in recent months. These include:

- Ecology meeting with SEC, January 23, 2001
- Ecology, BNSF, EnviroIssues and ThermoRetec meeting with SEC and the Mayor, February 28, 2001
- Ecology, EnviroIssues and ThermoRetec meeting with the Town Council on March 12, 2001
- Ecology, EnviroIssues and ThermoRetec meeting with the School Board on March 28, 2001 and April 24, 2001

Ecology staff has also responded to questions and concerns received via telephone on an ongoing basis.

Key Community Concerns

Key community concerns raised during the interviews related to the environment, health, town economy, property values, and public participation. Each of these issues is summarized below.

- **Environment -** Many in the community feel that protection of the environment is important, and that the oil seeps to the river do need to be addressed. However, protection of public health was generally identified as a higher priority. Several people requested that maintenance of the booms in the river be improved and that cleaning of the riverbank be evaluated.

- **Public Health –** The people that were interviewed are fairly comfortable that the petroleum products pose no imminent health risks, based on several studies done by the Washington State Department of Health and Seattle/King County Health Department. However, there are concerns about unknown long-term health effects. Cancer was mentioned in several interviews as a nagging question. The results of the recent King County investigation indicated no increased incidence of cancer, and these results were acknowledged in some instances. Several individuals expressed concern about

potential exposure of children and tourists to PCBs and metals contamination when they enter or cross the rail yard. Several residents expressed that cleanup of that area is of primary concern. Three people asked whether it is safe to have a garden in the town.

- **Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment -** People have noted strong concerns about the proposed Interim Action possibly raising the groundwater table along West River Road. There is concern that the oil floating on the groundwater could be pushed to the surface, as well as concern about impacts of rising groundwater on septic drainfields for the school and residences in that area. The town's water supply wells are upgradient, and contamination of the supply is not a concern. Several people, however, expressed concern about contamination entering water lines located in the vicinity of the contaminant plume, should the lines become depressurized during maintenance or operational problems.

- **Economy -** Many people feel that activity during the cleanup could either help put Skykomish back on track for economic recovery, or finish the economic tumble from which it is trying to recover. Several individuals wondered how disruptive the cleanup would be to businesses and asked whether cleanup workers would wear "moon suits" and respirators, which could negatively impact businesses.

- **Property Values -** Property owners are concerned about impacts on property values, their ability to sell their properties, and who is responsible for long-term liability associated with the contamination. They are also concerned about restrictions on property use associated with the contamination, such as the inability to dig in certain areas and future institutional controls (e.g., deed restrictions).

Identified Community Organizations and Ways to Reach Citizens

People have expressed an interest in being continually updated about activities regarding the cleanup. The lack of visible action in the last few years was noted, and several people expressed frustration about the delay. The SEC receives copies of monthly progress reports and other documents about the project. Many of those interviewed who do not belong to SEC, however, indicated that they lack information about the current status of the investigation and what it means to them. They also expressed interest in having officials meet with them directly, rather than through mailings or letters.

A goal of this public participation plan is to identify communication channels and ways to solicit community involvement. There is no local paper and no door-to-door delivery of a major daily newspaper in the Town of Skykomish. Suggested ideas for distributing information and gathering input throughout the public involvement process include:

- Community Organizations - Interviewees stressed the importance of working through local community organizations by providing briefings (Town Council and School Board). Leadership volunteers in the community are already stretched thin and have limited ability to take on more responsibility, so working through existing groups, rather than establishing a separate advisory group for the cleanup, is recommended.

- Teachers, Parents and School Children - The Skykomish School District currently has about 72 students, from grades K-12, that are drawn from Skykomish, Index, Grotto, and Baring. Many of the school district's employees, students, and parents of students, do not reside in the Town of Skykomish. These people should also be included in the public outreach activities by placing information in teacher mailboxes and sending notices to the parents of school children. In addition, students at the school have prepared an award-winning video on the contamination in the town. Education and involvement of the students in the cleanup process is recommended.

- Community Bulletin Boards - Posting cleanup information on community bulletin boards was presented as another means for delivering information. Suggested locations included the Community Center, library, post office, and the board next to the Whistling Post Tavern.

- Internet Address – The town has had local Internet access for about a year. The library has several computers, but most people do not have home Internet access. Establishing a home page for the project and an e-mail network is not the best way to reach people at this time but should be re-evaluated in the future.

- Information Repository – The King County Library currently houses the information repository. However, the library has limited space for document storage or patrons to review lengthy documents. In addition, weekend hours are not available. The information in the repository in March 2001 was not complete or up-to-date. An updated collection and a repository with weekend access and workspace are needed to facilitate public review of complex documents.

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

In this section, public participation activities are described and linked with the technical activities and overall schedule for the cleanup.

Public Participation Strategy

Sending Information to the Community

Mailings will be the primary method of distributing information to the public. A mailing list has been compiled by Ecology that includes all residents and property owners in the Town of Skykomish, parents of school students, and other interested parties. This list will be updated regularly. Fact sheets and official notice of public comment periods and public meetings will be distributed to this mailing list. Ecology will be responsible for conducting the mailings.

Information will also be posted at the Skykomish Community Center bulletin board, library, post office and the bulletin board next to the Whistling Post Tavern. The same postings will also be made at bulletin boards in other communities, such as Baring.

Answering Public Questions/Explaining Information

During the investigation and cleanup process, questions will arise from members of the public. Project contacts are listed in Section 1.0. Interested parties are encouraged to contact these persons by phone or e-mail to obtain information about the site, the MTCA process,

and potential decisions. Personal communications will be the primary means of explaining information that is distributed through the mail.

Regular briefings (bimonthly) of the SEC, town council and/or the school board are recommended. In addition, public briefings on the status of the cleanup investigations, followed by an opportunity to ask questions about what is known and not known about individual properties, are planned.

Public Notice and Comment Period

As described in Section 2.0, Ecology will hold a 30-day public comment period during the proposed Interim Action process. Public notice will be distributed through mailing lists and postings as described previously. In addition, MTCA requires that official public notice be published in a newspaper of record for any formal public comment period and public meetings. The *Everett Daily Herald* newspaper is the paper of record in the area. A paid display ad in the paper is recommended.

During the public comment period, Ecology and BNSF will hold a public meeting. The preferred meeting format is a combination open house (with displays and an opportunity to talk with project technical and public involvement staff one-on-one), followed by a more structured presentation with an opportunity for the public to present verbal comments.

The public meeting will be held in the Skykomish Community Center. The open house will be held in an informal setting, with displays that summarize the information contained in the report, how the information was developed, and the MTCA process. Verbal comments will be recorded during the meeting.

Comment forms will be available to be filled out at the meeting or mailed in after the public has had a chance to study the report and provide comments on the issues raised. Ecology will consider the comments, make a final decision, and prepare a responsiveness summary that is a compilation of public comments and responses to them.

Information Repositories

A set of project information will be kept at the Skykomish Branch of the King County Library System. Complete site files are kept at Ecology's regional office in Bellevue and available for public review by appointment. Since neither of these locations is open on weekends, a temporary repository for the documents will be available on request during the weekends from the SEC. During comment periods, all the documents that are available for review will be compiled and kept at the repository. Documents remain at the repositories for the entire duration of the investigation and cleanup. For the Burlington Northern Maintenance and Fueling Facility Site, the repositories will be:

King County Library Skykomish Branch 100 5th Avenue N. Skykomish, WA 98288	Washington State Department of Ecology 3190 160th Ave., S.E. Bellevue, WA 98008 Call for an appointment: Sally Perkins

(360) 677-2660 Hours: Monday and Friday, 2 – 6 PM, Tuesday and Thursday, 2 – 8 PM Closed Wednesday and weekends	(425) 649-7190 (425) 649-4450 FAX E-mail: perk461@ecy.wa.gov Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 - 4 PM
On weekends, call for an appointment: Skykomish Environmental Coalition Skykomish, WA Michael Moore Phone: (360) 677-2410 Lorna Goebel Phone: (360) 677-2812	

In addition, during the public comment period, an Ecology staff member could be made available to respond to questions on a Saturday from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Skykomish Community Center. Additional copies of the documents may also be made available for circulation through the SEC.

Site Register

One of Ecology's primary communication tools is the state-published Site Register. Public meetings and comment periodsmay be published in this bi-monthly report. If you would like to receive the Site Register, call 360-407-7200 or send e-mail to shan461@ecy.wa.gov. You may also sign up on-line through Ecology's website at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/pub_inv/pub_inv2.html.

School Outreach

Efforts will be made to involve and engage the students at the Skykomish School in understanding activities related to the cleanup. SEC will coordinate information sharing and activities with the students. BNSF and technical staff from BNSF's consultant will be available to work with students in workshops, etc. A study of benthic organisms in the river is one suggestion. A school bulletin board will be maintained with updated information about the project.

Project Design/Bidding and Interim Cleanup Implementation

After the public comment period and responsiveness summary have been completed and the final agreed order has been signed, implementation of the Interim Action will begin. BNSF will prepare a bid document that will include design and construction details, the construction schedule, and any associated community disruptions and how they will be addressed. A hotline may be established during periods of construction. Construction workers will be briefed so they will be prepared to answer questions during their workdays and to refer people to the proper contacts for additional information. Periodic community meetings and project updates are also planned.

Public Participation Timeline

Figure 3-1 outlines the public involvement activities that will take place during the cleanup process, and the associated timeline.

Figure 3-1
BNSF Skykomish Site
Public Participation Activities and Schedule

Schedule	Technical/Regulatory Activities	Public Outreach Activities
February - May 2001	Ecology and BNSF Negotiate Agreed Order, and Discuss Scope and Develop Basis of Design for Interim Action ♦ Stop product from entering river	♦ Fact sheet issued - Feb. 2001 ♦ Community interviews ♦ SEC meeting(s) – 1/23/01; 2-28-01; 4/11/01; 4/19/01; 4/26/01 ♦ Town Council Briefing- 3/12/01; 4/9/01 ♦ School Board Briefing – 3/27/01; 4/24/01
May – June 2001	Public Comment Period on Proposed Interim Action ♦ New Agreed Order ♦ Design Basis Report for Interim Action ♦ Public participation plan for Interim Action	♦ Public notice – 5/1/01 ♦ Bulletin board notices – 5/1/01 ♦ Site Register – 5/1/01 ♦ Fact sheet – 5/1/01 ♦ Public comment period – 30 days – 5/1/01 – 5/31/01 ♦ Public meeting – 5/10/01 ♦ Availability session – 5/19/01, 10 am – 1 pm (optional) ♦ Responsiveness summary – 6/15/01
June 2001	Prepare to Implement Interim Action ♦ Prepare bid documents ♦ Finalize construction details/schedule	♦ Community consultations (impact mitigation) ♦ Negotiate access ♦ Town Council briefing – 6/11/01 ♦ School Board briefing – 6/26/01 ♦ Fact sheet ♦ Establish construction complaint hotline ♦ Bulletin board notices
July – September 2001	Implement Interim Action ♦ Install underground barrier wall to stop seepage into river	♦ Community kickoff meeting ♦ Fact sheet ♦ Complaint hotline ♦ Signs ♦ Construction updates (flyers)

GLOSSARY

Agreed Order: A legal document, issued by Ecology, which formalizes an agreement between Ecology and the potentially liable persons for the actions needed at a site. An Agreed Order may be used for all remedial actions except for non-routine cleanup actions and interim actions that constitute a substantial majority of a cleanup action likely to be selected. Since an Agreed Order is not a settlement, it shall not provide for mixed funding, a covenant not to sue, or protection from claims for contribution. An agreed order means that the potentially liable person agrees to perform remedial actions at the site in accordance with the provisions of the agreed order, and that Ecology will not take additional enforcement action against the potentially liable person to require those remedial actions specified in the agreed order, so long as the potentially liable person complies with the provisions of the order. Agreed orders are subject to public comment. If an order substantially changes, an additional public comment period is provided.

Cleanup: The implementation of a cleanup action or interim action.

Cleanup Action: Any remedial action, except interim actions, taken at a site to eliminate, render less toxic, stabilize, contain, immobilize, isolate, treat, destroy, or remove a hazardous substance that complies with cleanup levels; utilizes permanent solutions to the maximum extent practicable; and includes adequate monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the cleanup action.

Cleanup Action Plan: A document that selects the cleanup action and specifies cleanup standards and other requirements for a particular site. The cleanup action plan, which follows the remedial investigation/feasibility study report, is subject to a public comment period. After completion of a comment period on the draft cleanup action plan, Ecology issues a final cleanup action plan.

Cleanup Level: The concentration of a hazardous substance in soil, water, air, or sediment that is determined to be protective of human health and the environment under specified exposure conditions.

Cleanup Process: The process for identifying, investigating, and cleaning up hazardous waste sites.

Consent Decree: A legal document, approved and issued by a court, which formalizes an agreement reached between Ecology and potentially liable persons on the actions needed at a site. A consent decree is subject to public comment, and a public meeting is required. If a consent decree substantially changes, an additional comment period is provided. After

satisfying the public comment and meeting requirements, Ecology files the consent decree with the appropriate superior court or federal court having jurisdiction over the matter.

Containment: A container, vessel, barrier, or structure, whether natural or constructed, which confines a hazardous substance within a defined boundary and prevents or minimizes its release into the environment.

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

Dissolved-Phase Contaminants: Chemicals that are constituents of LNAPL and dissolve into groundwater over time (see also LNAPL).

Exposure Pathway: The path a hazardous substance takes or could take from a source to an exposed organism. An exposure pathway describes the mechanism by which an individual or population is exposed or has the potential to be exposed to hazardous substances at or originating from a site.

Feasibility Study (FS): Provides identification and analysis of site cleanup alternatives and is usually completed within a year. The entire Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study process takes about two years and is followed by the cleanup action plan. Remedial action evaluating sufficient site information to enable the selection of a cleanup action plan.

Free Product: A hazardous substance that is present as a nonaqueous phase liquid (that is, liquid not dissolved in water).

Groundwater: Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills pores between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In aquifers, groundwater occurs in sufficient quantities that it can be used for drinking water, irrigation, and other purposes.

Hazardous Site List: A list of ranked sites that require further remedial action. These sites are published in the Site Register.

Interim Action: Any remedial action that partially addresses the cleanup of a site. It is an action that is technically necessary to reduce a threat to human health or the environment by eliminating or substantially reducing one or more pathways for exposure to a hazardous substance at a facility; an action that corrects a problem that may become substantially worse or cost substantially more to address if the action is delayed; an action needed to provide for completion of a site hazard assessment, state remedial investigation/feasibility study, or design of a cleanup action.

Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid (LNAPL): Oily liquid that floats on groundwater and accumulates on top of water in wells or surface water is called mobile (free-phase) LNAPL. See also residual LNAPL.

Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA): Refers to RCW 70.105D. Voters approved it in November 1988. The implementing regulation is WAC 173-340 and was amended in 2001.

Monitoring Wells: Special wells drilled at specific locations on or off a hazardous waste site where groundwater can be sampled at selected depths and studied to determine the direction of groundwater flow and the types and amounts of contaminants present.

Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbon (PAH): A class of organic compounds, some of which are long lasting and carcinogenic. These compounds are formed from the combustion of organic material and are ubiquitous in the environment. PAHs are commonly formed by forest fires and by the combustion of fossil fuels.

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 or county) newspaper of largest circulation; and the opportunity for interested persons to comment.

Public Participation Plan: A plan prepared under the authority of WAC 173-340-600 to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement tailored to the public's needs at a particular site.

Recovery Wells: Special wells drilled at specific locations on or off a hazardous waste site where petroleum products can be recovered from the groundwater and recycled or disposed in accordance with state law and regulations.

Release: Any intentional or unintentional entry of any hazardous substance into the environment, including, but not limited to, the abandonment or disposal of containers of hazardous substances.

Remedial action: Any action to identify, eliminate, or minimize any threat posed by hazardous substances to human health or the environment, including any investigative and monitoring activities of any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance, and any health assessments or health effects studies conducted in order to determine the risk or potential risk to human health.

Remedial Investigation (RI): Any remedial action, which provides information on the extent and magnitude of contamination at a site. This usually takes 12 to 18 months and is followed by the feasibility study. The purpose of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is to collect and develop sufficient site information enabling the selection of a cleanup action.

Residual LNAPL: The oily residue that is caught up in the soil pores due to capillary pressure following the removal of mobile LNAPL (see LNAPL). Residual LNAPL can provide a continuous source of contamination to groundwater from soluble constituents.

Responsiveness Summary: A compilation of all questions and comments to a document open for public comment and their respective answers/replies by Ecology. The responsiveness summary is mailed, at a minimum, to those who provided comments, and its availability is published in the Site Register.

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

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

Seep: A point on the riverbank where the groundwater has carried the petroleum products, and those products are released into the river.

Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH): A scientific measure of the sum of all petroleum hydrocarbons in a sample (without distinguishing one hydrocarbon from another). The "petroleum hydrocarbons" include compounds of carbon and hydrogen that are derived from naturally occurring petroleum sources or from manufactured petroleum products (such as refined oil, coal, and asphalt).

Toxicity: The degree to which a substance at a particular concentration is capable of causing harm to living organisms, including people, plants and animals.

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APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Representatives of the following categories of people were interviewed:

- Mayor and Town Council
- Business owners
- Property owners
- Residents
- School Board and staff
- SEC members

ISSUES, CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS

Issues, concerns and suggestions have been summarized and are grouped into categories below.

Interim Action

- Coordinate and communicate about construction activities for interim action with school and other affected parties.
- Pre- and post-inspection and monitoring of houses for settling and damage because of barrier wall should be done.
- Health concerns (dust) during soil removal may require temporary closure of the library.
- Access to West River Road needs to be maintained for emergencies during interim action construction.
- An access road to West River Road via the City right-of-way may not be feasible due to presence of streambed and wetland.
- Barrier wall may cause problems with septic tanks and drainage for school and residents of West River Road. There is also concern that the water table will rise and push oil contamination to the surface.
- Hydraulic concerns with the barrier wall need to be addressed and explained.
- Construction mostly concerns and impacts people located on the plume.

- A barrier wall may not be the best way to attack the problem. Instead, put recovery wells in places of greatest oil concentration and take steps for an aggressive cleanup action at the riverbank.
- School and residents need to have operational status of the septic system guaranteed. A contingency plan needs to be in place in case of failure to address removal, holding tanks for septic systems, and possible surface contamination behind the wall.
- School impacts of noise, open windows, student safety, and playground restrictions need to be addressed. A wing wall onto the playground may be unacceptable. The barrier wall should be completed before school starts, if possible.
- Actions on the rail yard would have fewer impacts on the school and can easily be done during the school year.
- Coordination should take place with residents and the library for actions on the rail yard. The library does not close; safety issues and dust issues are a primary concern.

Public Participation Comments and Concerns

- Introduce interim action in public meeting before or right at beginning of comment period, followed later in the comment period by a public comment meeting.
- Have reviews with townspeople in evenings, with an introduction of purpose and issues of discussion in a short concise letter 2-3 weeks in advance of each review.
- Direct, individual interaction with residents by members of the project team to discuss concerns, issues, and answer questions is appreciated.
- Availability sessions with project staff are a good idea.
- Sources of information include mailings, the SEC, word of mouth, and postings.
- Information should be posted at the post office, Community Center, school and bulletin board by Whistling Post. Notices should also be posted on West River Road. Information should be posted on bulletin boards in Baring.
- Mailings should continue.
- Community newspapers in Monroe, Baring, and Index, as well as the school newsletter, can publish information.
- People may be reluctant to speak at public meetings.
- Public meetings should be considered for Saturdays, to accommodate weekend residents and people returning from work.
- Food should be served to draw people to public meetings.
- Information and fact sheets need to be more easily digestible by the public.
- There is some apathy toward oil contamination. Part of it may stem from the fact that not all residents are directly affected by contamination on their property. Others feel

- that the town has lived with contamination for so long that nothing needs to be done. Most residents are interested in what happens to the town in the long term.
- Agencies need to make definitive statements about health effects and effects of contamination.
- Public meetings have not occurred recently because there has been no action on which to report.
- A core group of 10-12 people has shown interest in the contamination. That group is growing.

Environmental Concerns

- Oil seeps to the river are a concern. Petroleum contamination under the town is a concern. Both should be addressed. Rail yard surface soil contamination is a greater concern than the petroleum contamination (potential for direct exposure is greater).
- There is some question as to whether environmental concerns should be prioritized above the more immediate health concerns.
- Plume maps are not consistent, and data should be gathered to give an accurate sense of the extent of contamination.
- The environmental concerns of the contamination should have been addressed years ago. Seeps to the river should have been a priority years ago.
- Oil sheens appear in the town after heavy rains.
- Cleanup of the beach should be more aggressive.
- Petroleum contamination has become an accepted part of life in Skykomish.
- There may be some environmental effects that affect species listed under the Endangered Species Act, concern the Forest Service, etc.

Health Concerns

- Health concerns for rail yard contamination of PCBs and metals are greater than for petroleum contamination.
- Dust issues are a primary concern with the rail yard.
- Soil Sement (dust suppressant) in the rail yard does not seem to be completely effective at containing dust in the rail yard. Railroad maintenance and a train derailment have disturbed its integrity in the past.
- There is general acceptance of the health study results for cancer risk assessment, air quality, and lead testing.
- Questions about cancer linger, despite acceptance of a health department report that did not confirm a link between the two.
- Concern was expressed about unknown effects of long-term exposure.

- Water lines through contaminated soil might represent a potential exposure pathway.
- Potential health effects are less a concern for those not living on the plume.

Economic Concerns

- There is concern about the effect of the contamination on property values.
- Is BNSF responsible for loss in property values? There should be compensation for loss in property value due to contamination.
- What will be the effect of institutional controls?
- Cleanup activities could negatively impact business.
- Contamination and signs have had a negative effect on business.
- Construction will have impacts on tourist business during summer months.
- Perception of cleanup because of clothing/signs could chase business away.
- Economic prospects for the town are mostly tourist-related.
- Lack of sewer/drainage restrictions represents a major constraint to economic growth.

Overall Cleanup Opinions and Concerns

- What is the realistic range of options for long-term cleanup?
- Residents would like to limit impacts to houses and buildings. Residents are not interested in the condemnation of the town or a section of the town for complete removal of subsurface petroleum.
- Historic structures cannot be moved.
- The cleanup process is too slow.
- Aggressive cleanup at the beach is needed.
- There is skepticism that the cleanup will actually happen.
- A wastewater treatment system should be considered for oil-contaminated areas.

Suggestions Made by Interviewees

- Coordinate and communicate about construction activities for interim action with school and other affected parties.
- Focus on cleanup of rail yard before barrier wall.
- Fence off contaminated areas of rail yard if interim action is not completed in summer of 2001.
- Property owners should be notified in person of cleanup actions and intentions.

- Review 1990 flood records for evidence of oil contamination rising to surface.
- Ask for property owners' permission to sample on yards for plume characterization.
- Involve classes and students in the school with cleanup actions.
- Install better monitoring/maintenance controls and practices for wells and booms. Solicit local help with monitoring and possibly maintenance.
- Distribute fact sheets to school staff/brief school staff about construction project.
- Do pre-inspection and post-inspection and monitoring of houses for damage as a result of installation of the barrier wall.
- Railroad should install sewer system in town.
- Bore test wells in grid throughout town to determine locations of plume.
- Use case study of barrier wall project by Retec in Pasco.
- Include SEC consultants early in document review process to identify issues that need to be addressed beforehand.