



BNSF Skykomish (Former Maintenance and Fueling Facility)

Available for Review and Comment: Draft Consent Decree, Draft Cleanup Action Plan, and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites you to comment on draft cleanup documents for the BNSF Skykomish Site.

This is an important time in the cleanup of the site. These documents contain the actions selected to clean up the entire site and to resolve the natural resource damages liability of BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) at the site.

Bunker C and diesel fuel oil underlie the town of Skykomish from 80 years of operations by BNSF's former Maintenance and Fueling Facility in Skykomish,

Washington. Some heavy metals, PCBs and dioxin are in the soil on BNSF's railyard and the former Maloney Creek channel.

Ecology seeks comments

Ecology would like your comments on the following documents:

- Draft Consent Decree,
- Draft Cleanup Action Plan
- Draft Public Participation Plan
- Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Ecology will accept comments from **June 12 through July 14**. The box to the right contains the information on where to review documents and submit written comments.

Public meetings and hearings will be held during the comment period to provide you an opportunity to talk with cleanup staff and neighbors regarding the proposed cleanup actions and to make oral comments. (See page 4 for details.)

June 2007

**Public Comment Period
June 12 – July 14**

Send comments to:

Louise Bardy, Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
425-649-7209
Email at lbar461@ecy.wa.gov

Review documents at:

Skykomish Library
100 5th Avenue, Skykomish
360-677-2660

WA Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
425-649-7190

(Please call for an appointment)

Ecology's Website
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/bnsf_sky/bnsf_sky.html

CDs of the documents are available on request by calling 425-649-4486.

Public Meetings/Hearings

- **June 13** – Public Meeting, Skykomish
- **June 27** – SEC Community Meeting, Skykomish
- **July 10** - Public Meeting/Hearing, Skykomish
- **July 12** - Public Meeting/Hearing, Bellevue
- **July 14** - Availability Meeting, Skykomish

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*If you need this publication in an alternate format, please call 425-649-4486.
Persons with hearing loss, call 711. Persons with a speech disability, call 877/833-6341.*

Site background

The Town of Skykomish, Washington, is located in the Cascade Mountains along State Highway 2, about 16 miles west of Stevens Pass. It became a center for railroad operations when train service to Seattle along the Great Northern Railway started in 1893. The town was incorporated in 1909. Mining, lumbering, milling, and railroad maintenance and fueling have been its economic mainstays. The rail line running through Skykomish was and still is one of the main rail transportation corridors across the country.

Railway maintenance and fueling facilities operated in Skykomish until 1974. Over the decades discharge to the environment of bunker C and diesel fuel from railyard operations occurred. The petroleum flowed downward to the water table, and then horizontally along the water table under the Town of Skykomish to the south fork of the Skykomish River. Seasonal fluctuation of the water table resulted in petroleum being smeared across the area of fluctuation. Sediments in the river were contaminated with petroleum. Free product occurs at the groundwater table, petroleum is absorbed into the soil, and groundwater contains dissolved petroleum constituents.

The railroad is currently owned by the BNSF Railway Company. BNSF and Ecology have been investigating the site since 1993. Remedial investigations, feasibility studies, and interim actions have been conducted. They provide sufficient data and information for Ecology to select a cleanup action.

Cleanup began with 2006 interim action

BNSF conducted an interim action in the summer of 2006 under Ecology oversight that began cleanup of the site. In the interim action, more than 70,000 cubic yards, over 104,000 tons, of contaminated soil and sediment were removed from the Skykomish River and adjacent uplands. More than 23,700 gallons of oil were removed from the site for recycling.

Five homes were relocated to perform the cleanup excavation, and returned to their original locations the end of 2006. Landscaping and restoration of infrastructure will continue through the spring of 2007.

The levee along the Skykomish River was replaced, and the shoreline was restored to provide habitat for fish. The top of the levee was replaced as a park according to the Town's vision. (*Vision for Skykomish, August 2005*)

Human health and environmental issues

Contamination at the site poses several potential threats to human health. Petroleum-contaminated soil poses a potential direct contact threat through ingestion of soil. Petroleum constituents in groundwater pose a human health threat due to the potential for ingesting groundwater as a drinking water supply. Contaminated groundwater also impacts the Skykomish River, which is used for recreation, and can be used for drinking water supply. Petroleum vapors pose a potential human health threat by inhalation.

The primary environmental concern is petroleum migrating from the railyard both north to the Skykomish River and south to Former Maloney Creek and other areas.

Data collected during investigations estimate two million gallons of petroleum remain below the ground surface. The petroleum occurs as free product, nonaqueous phase liquid (NAPL) in soil pore space, sorbed to the soil, and dissolved in the groundwater.

Human health and environmental issues also include arsenic, lead, PCB, and dioxin/furan. Lead and arsenic above cleanup standards are present on the railyard in surface soils. Lead above cleanup standards is found in surface residential soils off the railyard.

PCB is found in soils on railyard property in several locations. The areas of PCB contamination also have lead, arsenic, and petroleum.

Dioxin/furan is found in surface sediments in a portion of Former Maloney Creek on and adjacent to the railyard and behind the Skykomish School Bus Barn and King County fire station.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

A discussion of the proposed cleanup action, its significant adverse impacts, and mitigation measures for the impacts has been prepared to supplement the 2003 Draft EIS. The supplement adds information and analysis to the 2003 Draft EIS. Technologies not discussed in the original EIS are discussed in the supplement.

Both the original 2003 Draft EIS and the 2007 Draft Supplemental EIS will be finalized as one document after this public comment period.

Cleanup areas

The site has been divided into cleanup areas based on the differing kinds of contamination, varied ownership and land uses. (See enclosed Figures from the Draft Cleanup Action Plan for the cleanup areas and the year each area will be cleaned up.)

- **Levee** – The South Fork Skykomish River provides aquatic habitat for endangered and other species, and recreational opportunities. The levee provides some flood protection. Both the levee and the river are affected by petroleum contamination that consists primarily of bunker C.
- **Northwest** – This area is used for residential and commercial purposes. It has multiple property owners and includes the school. It is affected by petroleum contamination that consists primarily of bunker C. Near surface lead and arsenic contamination is present in isolated areas.
- **Northeast** – This area is used for residential and commercial purposes. It has multiple property owners. It is affected primarily by diesel. The diesel is more soluble and more biodegradable than the bunker C in other areas. Lead contamination is present in isolated areas.
- **South** – This area is used for residential purposes and has multiple property owners. It is affected by petroleum contamination that consists primarily of bunker C.
- **Former Maloney Creek** – The former Maloney Creek channel and associated wetlands provide aquatic habitat for endangered and other species, storm water detention, and recreational opportunities.
- **Railyard** – Almost all of this area is being used as a rail transportation corridor today. It has been used for railroad maintenance and fueling activities. Bunker C and diesel fuel contamination occurred as a result these activities. PCBs come from transformers associated with an electrical substation formerly on the railyard. Arsenic and lead are a result of maintenance activities that used sandblast grit. The Railyard area is almost entirely owned by BNSF. Three other small areas are immediately adjacent to the BNSF property: two with arsenic and lead and one with petroleum.

What cleanup accomplishes

Different combinations of cleanup actions are proposed for each area. The actions taken in each area are interdependent with the others. Achieving cleanup in one area depends not only on the cleanup actions in that area, but on the actions to be taken in other areas as well.

- **Levee** – *The levee area was cleaned up by excavation of petroleum-contaminated sediments and soil, and collection of free product during an interim action in 2006. The levee area cleanup was conducted according to the guidelines in this proposed draft cleanup action plan. It is considered the first area to be cleaned up at the site.*
- **Northwest** – Soil with free product and petroleum concentrations exceeding 3,400 mg/kg will be excavated. Lead and arsenic concentrations exceeding 250 and 20 mg/kg, respectively, will be excavated. Thermal treatment or similar aggressive treatment method will be used beneath the school.
- **Northeast** – Free product and soil with petroleum concentrations exceeding 30,000 mg/kg will be excavated. Air sparging will be done over 10 years to reduce soil petroleum concentrations to below 3,400 mg/kg, and groundwater concentrations to below 477 mg/kg.
- **South** – Soil with petroleum concentrations exceeding 3,400 mg/kg will be excavated.
- **Former Maloney Creek** – Sediment with petroleum concentrations exceeding 22 mg/kg will be excavated. This excavation will also remove dioxin/furan.
- **Railyard** – A minimum of at least 5,000 to 10,000 cubic yards of free product and soil with petroleum concentrations exceeding 30,000 mg/kg will be excavated over a period of 20 years. Shallow soil with lead, arsenic, PCB, dioxin/furan, and petroleum contamination will be excavated. A groundwater control and containment system at the railroad property will ensure that groundwater containing contamination above the cleanup and remediation levels does not flow off railroad property. Contaminated groundwater will be controlled on the railyard and will be treated before allowed to infiltrate the ground outside the railroad property. Monitoring will continue indefinitely.

What cleanup accomplishes cont.

The Skykomish school has a unique role in the community, and Ecology has assessed that moving the large, historic, masonry structure is unfeasible without probable damage. Therefore, the proposed cleanup plan calls for the development of an alternative cleanup action other than excavation of soil under the school. Treatment technologies will be researched and tested, and the school board will be consulted before a cleanup technology is chosen for the school.

The cleanup within the Town will take place from 2008 through 2011.

Natural resource damages settled

The release of bunker C and diesel fuel oil related by-products has resulted in natural resource injuries to the environment. To compensate for these injuries and to restore the environment, BNSF has agreed to pay \$5.5 million.

The money will be used to restore, enhance and protect the natural resources and compensate for lost recreational opportunities in and around the Town of Skykomish as well as the Skykomish and Snohomish River watershed.

- \$2.5 million for fish and aquatic habitat protection and restoration in the Skykomish and Snohomish watersheds
- \$1.5 million toward Skykomish's planned wastewater treatment project to protect ground and surface water quality
- \$1.5 million for terrestrial and waterfowl habitat projects and compensation for lost recreational opportunities.

Of the last \$1.5 million, a credit of \$350,000 is given to BNSF for levee improvements already completed, \$50,000 for in-kind services done in coordination with the Town, and \$50,000 is dedicated to address turbidity violations that occurred in the cleanup of the levee in 2006.

This settlement resolves BNSF's natural resource damages liability with the State for the site.

What happens next

Ecology will review the comments received on the draft documents and will modify the documents as appropriate. If significant changes are made to the documents, there will be an additional public comment period. If no significant changes are made, the documents are

considered final and the project will proceed as scheduled. The signed decree will be entered into the State of Washington King County Superior Court.

For information about other opportunities for public involvement such as meetings, hearings, open houses and workshops, please visit Ecology's Public Involvement Calendar at:

<http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/publiccalendar/calendar.asp>

While you are at the calendar page, you may click on the link *Frequently Asked Questions about Effective Public Commenting* and learn more about the public comment process.

Public meetings and hearings

There are a number of opportunities for you to discuss the proposed cleanup plans throughout the public comment period.

- Public Meeting to present the documents
Wednesday, June 13, 2007
6 – 8 pm
Community Center, 208 Railroad Avenue, Skykomish
- Community Meeting hosted by Skykomish Environmental Coalition (SEC)
Wednesday, June 27, 2007
6 - 8 pm
Community Center, 208 Railroad Avenue, Skykomish
- Public Meeting/Hearing to receive oral comments
Tuesday, July 10, 2007
6 – 8 pm
Community Center, 208 Railroad Avenue, Skykomish
- Public Meeting/Hearing to receive oral comments
Thursday, July 12, 2007
10 am – 12 pm
Ecology NW Regional Office, 3190 160th Avenue SE, Bellevue
- Availability Meeting to answer last minute questions and receive written comments
Saturday, July 14, 2007
10 am – 12 pm
Community Center, 208 Railroad Avenue, Skykomish
- Ecology's Information Office will be open Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the month of June during the public comment period at the Community Center, 208 Railroad Ave., Skykomish.