



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Public Participation Plan

Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant

**14549 River Bend Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273**

Facility Site ID: 79423677

Cleanup Site ID: 13264

April 2019

Publication and Contact Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant website at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=13264>

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Washington State Department of Ecology

Northwest Regional Office

Toxics Cleanup Program

Bellevue, Washington

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Introduction

The City of Anacortes (City) is addressing contamination at the Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant (Site) under a legal agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The structures at the Site were decommissioned in 2013 when the new water treatment plant became operational. During the decommissioning activities, contamination (polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs) was found in decommissioned building materials and in shallow soils immediately adjacent to the Site structures. The City conducted regular sampling of drinking water produced from the former plant and no samples of drinking water tested for PCBs ever contained detectable concentrations of PCBs. Investigations verified that there is no indication of PCBs in surface water or groundwater at the Site.

In order to protect human health and the environment, the contamination must be addressed in accordance with Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA).

Ecology developed this public participation plan (plan) as required under the MTCA to promote meaningful community involvement in the Site cleanup process. The plan first discusses the MTCA and the cleanup process, then provides information about the Site. Next it describes planned public involvement activities and then addresses plan updates and amendments.

Washington's Cleanup Law

Ecology derives its authority to require cleanup of contamination from the state Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA; [Chapter 70.105D Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\)](#)¹). The MTCA provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup in Washington State and sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects human health and the environment. Standards for sediment cleanup are established in the state Sediment Management Standards, [Chapter 173-204 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#)².

The MTCA began as a grassroots citizen's initiative in 1988, and started the process of systematically cleaning up contaminated sites in Washington. Under the MTCA, anyone with a current or past relationship with a contaminated site may be held responsible for cleaning it up to standards established to protect human health and the environment.

Ecology implements the MTCA and oversees cleanups in the state and issues regulations and guidance governing those cleanups. The regulations are found in [Chapter 173-340 WAC](#)³. Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and if it poses a significant threat to human health or the environment, the site is placed on the Confirmed and Suspected Contaminated Sites List

¹ <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/9406.pdf>

² <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-204>

³ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

Washington's Cleanup Law




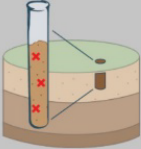






for further assessment. The cleanup process can begin at any time after a release of a hazardous substance to the environment has been discovered.

Public participation is an important part of cleanup under the MTCA. Participation needs are assessed at each cleanup site according to the level of public interest and the degree of risk posed by the contamination. Individuals who live near the site, community groups, businesses, government, other organizations, and interested parties have the opportunity to get involved by commenting during the cleanup process.

Under the MTCA, the cleanup process generally includes four steps (see page 3), with opportunities for the public to review and comment on cleanup documents. In addition, a partial cleanup (called an interim action) can occur at any time during the cleanup process. The public is provided an opportunity to review and comment on planned interim action work as well.

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA; Chapter 197-11 WAC). Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

Steps in Washington’s Cleanup Process

 <p>Interim Action</p>		<p>Cleanup action that partially addresses contamination at a site. Can occur anytime during the cleanup process. Typically performed to address contamination that poses an immediate threat to human health and the environment, or to take advantage of an opportunity to reduce overall cleanup costs.</p>
 <p>Remedial Investigation (RI)</p>		<p>Determines the nature, extent and magnitude of contamination at a site, and how people, plants and animals may be exposed to the contamination.</p>
 <p>Feasibility Study (FS)</p>		<p>Identifies various methods to eliminate exposure to the contamination found by the RI. Assembles methods into a range of cleanup alternatives. Evaluates alternatives through an environmental benefit versus cost analysis. This process identifies a preferred alternative.</p>
 <p>Cleanup Action Plan (CAP)</p>		<p>Describes Ecology’s selected cleanup action for the site. Developed based on information in the RI/FS. Includes cleanup standards, a schedule for design and construction work, and requirements for monitoring, operation and maintenance of the cleanup action.</p>
 <p>Cleanup, Monitoring, and Use Restrictions</p>		<p>Construction of the cleanup action described in the CAP. Post-construction monitoring, operation and maintenance activities. Restricting or prohibiting certain activities that could expose any remaining contamination or adversely impact the cleanup action, without prior Ecology approval.</p>

 Opportunities for public review and comment

Figure 1: Steps in Washington's Cleanup Process

Site Information

Background and location

The Site is located at 14489 River Bend Road in Mount Vernon and is adjacent to the Skagit River. The former plant was constructed on the property between 1969 and 1970 to treat water from the Skagit River prior to transfer to the City of Anacortes municipal water storage and distribution network. The Site structures were decommissioned in 2013 when the new water treatment plant (built on a different part of on the same property) became active.

The Site consists of these decommissioned structures (see map on page 4):



Figure 2: Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant cleanup site location

- **Administration Building:** a two-story building that housed a control room, laboratory, and chemical additive mixing operations.
- **Filtration Basin:** a nearly 8,000 square foot concrete basin that used anthracite, sand, and gravel for water purification.
- **Clear well:** an approximately 12,000 square foot, multi-chambered, concrete storage space below ground and beneath the Administration Building, Filtration Basin, and Pump Room.
- **Waste well:** a concrete structure next to the Clear well where settled particulates were collected before pumping it to settling lagoons.
- **Sedimentation Basin:** an over 19,000 square foot concrete basin that featured gravity flow through the system into clean water overflow troughs for settled particulate collection.

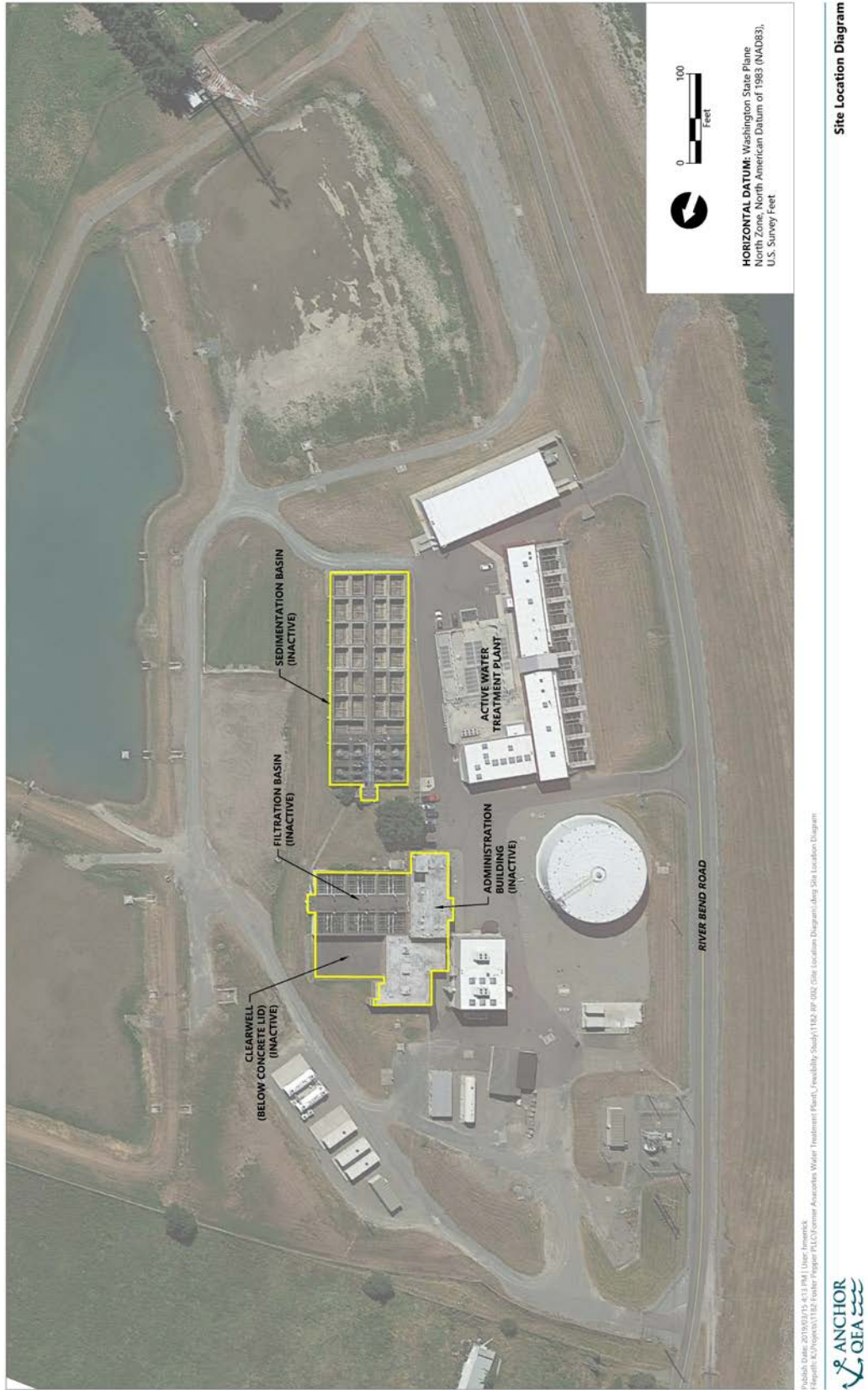


Figure 3: Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant site layout

Site Information



Figure 4: Decommissioned Pump Room below Administration Building, March 2018



Figure 5: Decommissioned Administration Building and Filtration Basin facing North, March 2018

Contamination

In 2015 while conducting a demolition assessment (Hazardous Materials Assessment) of the decommissioned Site, samples of building materials and soil were found to contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Initial conclusions of the 2015 Hazardous Materials Assessment and the related site investigation include:



Figure 6: Decommissioned Sedimentation Basin, March 2018

- **Building Materials:** PCBs were found in the coating material of the Sedimentation Basin and some of the building materials of the Administration Building.
- **Soil:** PCBs were only found in shallow soils between 0 to 12 inches below ground surface on a limited portion of the Site immediately next to Site structures. PCBs were detected in Site soils at concentrations that exceed the unrestricted land use cleanup levels under MTCA. These soils are the focus of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study in development.
- **Groundwater and surface water:** The field sampling confirmed that there was no indication of PCBs released to surface water or groundwater.

Safe and Clean Water

The City conducted regular sampling of drinking water produced from the former plant beginning in 1976 and continuing throughout operation. No samples of drinking water tested for PCBs ever contained detectable concentrations of PCBs.

In 2017, the City conducted an Evaluation of Potential Human Health Risks associated with contamination at the Site and determined that no adverse health effects are likely to have occurred to customers, workers, or water plant visitors as a result of PCBs at the former plant.

For more information, to sign-up for updates, and to view the Human Health Assessment go to:

www.safeandcleanwater.com

For Questions, Contact the City of Anacortes:

- info@safeandcleanwater.com
- 360-299-1950

Status of cleanup

To ensure a high level of accountability and transparency in the selection of a cleanup process, the City approached Ecology to conduct the work under the formal MTCA cleanup process.

In 2019 the City and Ecology will continue the cleanup process by welcoming public comments on an agreed order (legal agreement) and this public participation plan.

The legal agreement between Ecology and the City will require the City to investigate and describe contamination (Remedial Investigation), analyze cleanup options (Feasibility Study) and create a Draft Cleanup Action Plan. A future legal agreement will require the City to design and carry out the work described in the plan. These documents and reports will be made available for review and public comment.

Area land use

The Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant cleanup site is located in rural Skagit County next to the Skagit River, west of the city of Mount Vernon. The Site is included in the Agricultural-Natural Resource Lands (Ag-NRL) zoning district.

Community Demographics

The geographical location of the cleanup site is in Mount Vernon but the consumers of the treated water are the residents and businesses of Anacortes and surrounding communities. Both communities are located in Skagit County but demographics differ in each community.

- **Mount Vernon:** According to the [Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#),⁴ the rural residents located in Mount Vernon surrounding the cleanup site have no additional outreach accommodation needs or environmental justice screening characteristics above normal Washington State levels. The highest category was "Population With Less Than High School Education." The United [States Census Bureau's American Fact Finder](#)⁵ census tract data reports a total Spanish population speaking English less than "very well" as 5.9% which meets translation requirements for outreach materials.

⁴ <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/index.html?wherestr=47.505875%2C+-122.290814>

⁵ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>

- **Anacortes:** The residents of Anacortes live in a more urban community with the [Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#) ⁶ reporting a significant “population over 64 years of age.” The [United States Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder](#) ⁷ census tract data reports no significant language populations speaking English less than “very well.”

Ecology will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our public involvement efforts and provide information in other languages as appropriate following federal guidance.⁸ The non-English language most widely spoken in the Site area is Spanish. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Spanish. We strive to involve the whole community in our public participation efforts and welcome your input on additional measures we can take to reach the nearby community.

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Samish Indian Nation are federally recognized tribes in this area. Ecology will reach out to these tribes throughout the cleanup process.

Public Involvement Activities

This section describes how Ecology will share information with the community and how you can share information with us. In addition, this section provides information about state grants that are available to help the community understand and participate in the cleanup process.

How we share information with the community

During specific steps of the cleanup process, Ecology will mail notices about upcoming public comment periods to residences and businesses near the Site. The mailing list area may vary depending on the type of contamination and where it is located, but at a minimum it will include addresses within a quarter-mile radius of the Site, and may include other interested organizations and individuals. The notices will provide general information about the Site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if one is not yet scheduled.

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the Site’s status. We will make these informational documents available online and, if warranted, by US mail.

⁶ <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/index.html?wherestr=47.505875%2C+-122.290814>

⁷ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=>

⁸ Guidance to Environmental Protection Agency Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 69 Fed. Reg. § 35602 (June 15, 2004).

Comment period notices and other Site announcements may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, libraries).

Notification lists

Ecology maintains an email list and a mailing list that includes: postal addresses within a quarter-mile radius of the Site; relevant local, state, federal, and tribal government contacts; and, other interested parties.

We will use these lists to send notices when cleanup documents are available for public review and comment or for other Site communications.

If you would like to be added to the email or mailing lists for this Site, please contact Ian Fawley at 360-255-4382 or ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov.

Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Site Register](#).⁹ To receive the Site Register by email, please contact Sarah Kellington at 360-407-7466 or sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov, or [subscribe online](#).¹⁰

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We will announce public comment periods and events in ads or notices published in the Anacortes American, Skagit Valley Herald, and Whidbey News-Times. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).¹¹

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a [website for the Anacortes Former Water Treatment Plant](#) site.¹² The website provides Site information, including current status, public comment period information and documents, and other Site documents.

The City also maintains a website with additional information about the Site, available here: www.safeandcleanwater.com

We may also share information about cleanup sites through [news releases, our ECOconnect blog, and social media](#).¹³

⁹ ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data

¹⁰ <http://listserv.ecology.wa.gov/scripts/wa-ECOLOGY.exe?SUBED1=SITEREGISTER&A=1>

¹¹ ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing

¹² <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=13264>

¹³ ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News

Document repositories

During public comment periods, you can find print documents at the following locations:

City of Anacortes City Hall

904 6th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
Phone: 360-293-1900

Washington Department of Ecology

Bellingham Field Office
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101
Bellingham, WA 98225

To schedule an appointment, please contact the Bellingham Field Office Administration Staff at 360-255-4400 or ECYDLBFOADMINSUPPORT@ecy.wa.gov.

Washington Department of Ecology

Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

To schedule an appointment, please contact the Northwest Region Office Central Records staff at 425-649-7190 or sally.perkins@ecy.wa.gov.

Signs at the Site

We may also install signs displaying information about cleanup status, traffic impacts, and health risks at the Site.

How to share information with us

Interested persons may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share Site information with Ecology at any time. However, to be included in the formal Site record, comments must be submitted in writing during designated comment periods. These written comments can be submitted via:

- Ecology's online comment form
- Email or mail to the Ecology Site Manager

We may also meet with interested community members and organizations to gather information and identify public concerns. To collaborate with us about this Site, please contact Ian Fawley at 360-255-4382 or ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov.

Public comment periods

At minimum, the MTCA requires 30-day public comment periods for cleanup documents. Ecology may hold longer public comment periods based upon the complexity of the documents, level of public interest, or other compelling factors.

For related SEPA documents, these are typically issued for public review with the cleanup documents and follow their public comment period.

After a public comment period ends, we respond in writing to all comments received in a Response to Comments document. This document is provided to each commenter, and placed on the Site webpage. If the comments received result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then we will revise and re-issue the documents for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, then the documents are considered final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and public hearings based on community interest. If we have not scheduled a meeting, we will hold one if we receive 10 or more written requests.

Events are held at locations close to the Site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

Public participation grants

Qualified individuals and not-for-profit public interest organizations are eligible to apply for a Public Participation Grant (PPG) from Ecology. For contaminated sites, these funds may be used to:

- Contract with an expert to help interpret technical jargon and information.
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the site cleanup process.

For more information about PPGs, please contact Lynn Gooding at 360-407-6062 or lynn.gooding@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit Ecology's [Public Participation Grant website](#).¹⁴

¹⁴ ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Public-participation-grants

Plan Amendments/Updates

Ecology will review this plan as the cleanup progresses and amend/update it as necessary.

The public involvement activities presented herein describe Ecology's current plans for keeping the public informed and for receiving information and comments from the public.

If you feel the public involvement activities described in this plan are insufficient, or need modification, please contact Ian Fawley at 360-255-4382 or ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov.