

DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Response to Comments

Draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan for Northport Waterfront

Facility Site ID: 96239

Cleanup Site ID: 14874

Public comment period held:

March 13 – April 11, 2019

Summary of a public comment period and responses to comments

April 2019

Publication and Contact Information

This document is available on the Washington State Department of Ecology's website at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/CleanupSiteDocuments.aspx?csid=14874>.

Contacts

Toxics Cleanup Program, Eastern Region
4601 North Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99205

Huckleberry Palmer, Site Manager
509-329-3433, huckleberry.palmer@ecy.wa.gov

Erika Bronson, Public Involvement Coordinator
509-329-3546, erika.bronson@ecy.wa.gov

Washington State Department of Ecology - ecology.wa.gov

- Eastern Regional Office, Spokane 509-329-3400
- Headquarters, Lacey 360-407-6000
- Northwest Regional Office, Bellevue 425-649-7000
- Southwest Regional Office, Lacey 360-407-6300
- Central Regional Office, Yakima 509-575-2490

Special accommodations

To request materials in a format for the visually impaired, visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>, call Ecology at 509-329-3546, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.

Toxics Cleanup in Washington State

Accidental spills of dangerous materials and past business practices have contaminated land and water throughout the state. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Toxics Cleanup Program works to remedy these situations, which range from cleaning up contamination from leaking underground storage tanks, to large, complex projects requiring engineered solutions.

Contaminated sites in Washington State are cleaned up under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code¹](#)), a citizen-mandated law passed in 1989. This law sets standards to ensure toxics cleanup protects human health and the environment and includes opportunities for public input.

Public Comment Period Summary

Ecology held a comment period from March 13 through April 11, 2019, for the draft [Remedial Investigation Work Plan²](#) for the Northport Waterfront cleanup site. Draft State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) documents completed to determine whether the investigative activities would adversely affect people or the environment were available for public comment from March 13 through March 26, 2019.

Ecology appreciates the comments we received from two people, which we address in the Response to Comments section that begins on page 2. After considering the comments, Ecology has made the draft work plan final without further changes.

Northport Waterfront Background

Ecology is directing and funding an investigation and evaluation of cleanup options of smelter-related metals contamination on Northport's City Park and boat launch waterfront area. The site includes all permanently and seasonally exposed areas of the Columbia River bank and shore directly next to the Northport City Park and boat launch.

The Le Roi Smelter, which treated copper ores between 1901 and 1911, and lead ores between 1916 and 1921, was located just south of the Northport waterfront. Le Roi Smelter operations deposited clinker and granular slag wastes on the waterfront. The area remains polluted by smelter wastes that were dumped and dispersed along the shore. Our goal is to assess options for protecting people and restoring the environment next to the City Park.

The investigation included collecting soil samples from 25 locations along the shore and hillside leading up to the City Park and digging 16 test pits four feet deep by four feet

¹ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

² <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/DocViewer.ashx?did=81002>

wide and long. Direct readings of metals concentrations were also taken from approximately 300 locations using a hand-held device. Using the SEPA checklist, we determined the investigation would not have adverse impacts.

Response to Comments

Robert Jackman, April 8 letter, received April 10

4-8-19 (1)

To-Huckleberry Palmer
From Robert Jackman
Subject-Comments & Questions Re-The Northport
Waterfront Investigation.

RECEIVED
APR 10 2019
Department of Ecology
Eastern Washington Office

Comments & Requests:

1. I Request a Public hearing for this Study so that the Public be fully informed of the States actions & what their fellow citizens views are. Rather than our opinions being submitted individually & never being shared openly with the Public. Rather than being buried in some voluminous Govt. Report. In addition I Request that the Pakootas/Wa. State vs. Teck case be included in this hearing as it has material relevance to Columbia River Valley environmental problems caused by the Teck Smelter which includes in part the present Bed Sediment portion of this study.
Although we are aware of the 9th Circuits favorable ruling, we have also heard that the matter of Air Pollution has not been fully resolved. Since we have been subject to direct, not secondary transboundary Air Pollution from Teck's Smelter we have great concern. Therefore we Request a knowledgeable presentation, preferably from a representative from the KATY Governments office.
2. I Request Deep Core Sampling as part of the Northport Waterfront Bed Sediment Sampling or added to the investigation since the Drawdown window of opportunity will probably be closed. (Continued)

NORTHPORT WATERFRONT INVESTIGATION

4-8-19

(3)

(2. CONTINUED)

THE REASONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

a. Slag has been deposited in the present investigation site

b. Teck (then Cominco) has long maintained that its slag was inert as its toxins were sealed in a glassy silica coating.

c. U.S.G.S. conducted deep core sampling in Lake Roosevelt & found that Teck's slag was not inert, but that the toxins had been released.

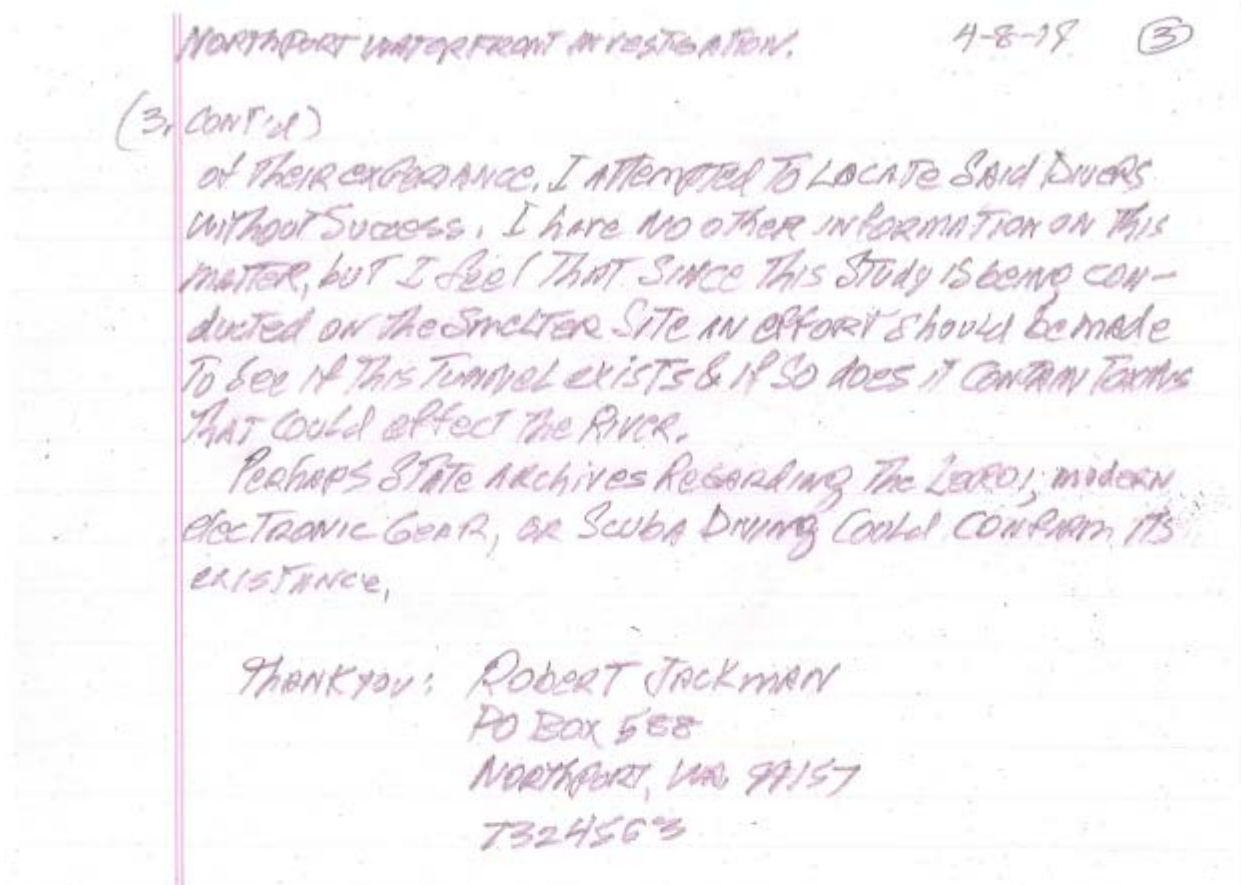
I conclude that the deeper the slag the older it is & the longer it has been subjected to physical agitation & possible abrasion, or possibly after a century of encapsulation its contents simply broke down the silica.

d. Thus its potential toxicity might be a problem for generations to come at levels near the surface. A potential 'toxic time bomb' for the future.

e. At the present we have a 'live' polluter, Teck. In generations to come Teck might not exist. Deep core sampling has not been done north of Lake Roosevelt & should be done.

3. The Possibility of Submerged Toxins in a Subterranean Tunnel Beneath the Former Leroy Smelter which has Access to the Columbia River.

Several years ago I was informed that a large tunnel lies under the Leroy Smelter site & it contained residue thought to be toxins from the smelter. This was reported found by Canadian scuba divers who accessed the tunnel from the river. One of the divers told my informant
(CONT'D)



Ecology's response

1. *Request for a public hearing:* We plan to hold a community meeting later this year, or early next, to present investigation results and begin discussing options for cleanup. A draft remedial investigation report will take several months to prepare and be publicly available later this year. We did not schedule a public meeting during this comment period because we didn't receive 10 requests and felt we would have more to share once we have preliminary results. Cleanup site managers are available to discuss the project by phone or in person at any time, and we encourage you to contact us with questions or input.

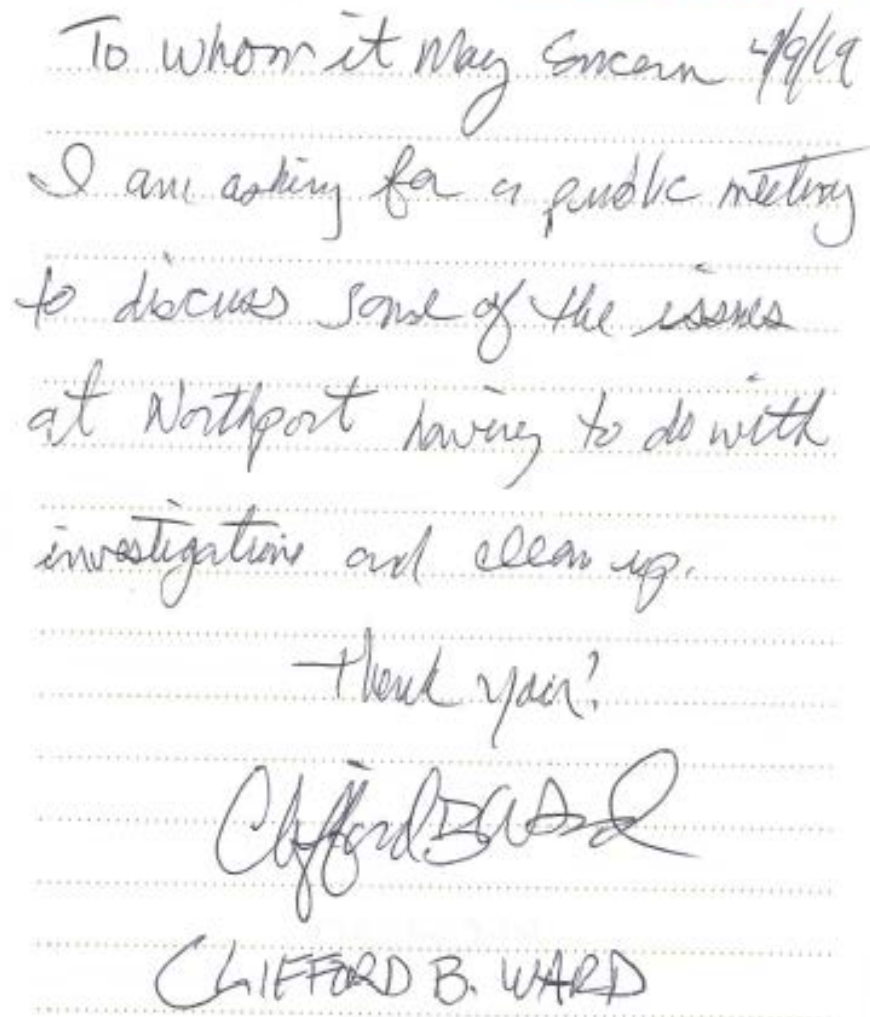
A section of our Upper Columbia River/Lake Roosevelt site web page is dedicated to the ongoing litigation between Washington and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation versus Teck. Please visit that site for information:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=12125#litigation>.

Ecology agrees, as we expressed in our 2017 report, that air conditions measured in the past combined with our predictions about current conditions do warrant a new monitoring program. We requested that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) include that in their ongoing, broader investigation, but they declined.

2. *Request for deep core sampling:* Approximately 25 pits extending to depths of 4 to 5 feet are part of the Northport Waterfront investigation. Based on sediment conditions within the waterfront, results from the test pit samples will allow us to assess contaminant conditions below the surface, which will factor into the resulting cleanup options. Ecology's investigation is separate from the broader EPA studies. The EPA continues to investigate Trail smelter slag and effluent wastes upstream and downstream of Northport. Bulk and dispersed Trail slag wastes in the upper Columbia River remain a public and environmental health concern. Ecology has emphasized and requested that EPA characterize slag deposits below the surface of the riverbed. We agree that slag-enriched sediments and deeper waste deposits are a toxicological concern deserving further investigation by EPA. Deep core sampling previously performed under the direction of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation showed that large deposits of slag have accumulated in the river upstream of Northport.
3. *Concern of a subterranean tunnel into the river from the historic Le Roi smelter operations:* Cleanup of the Le Roi smelter site is finished. Various historic conveyances transported wastes from the facility toward the river, including some underground. Ecology has not encountered nor are we aware of remnant tunnels or current conveyance seepage threats extending out into the river. Using available historic records and accounts, our investigation covers the shoreline area directly associated with historic riverfront discharges. We will investigate contamination in shoreline bank soils nearest to the historic discharge points.

Clifford Ward, April 9 letter, received April 10



To whom it may concern 4/9/19
I am asking for a public meeting
to discuss some of the issues
at Northport having to do with
investigation and clean up.
Thank you?
Clifford B. Ward
CLIFFORD B. WARD

Ecology's response

Request for a public hearing: We plan to hold a community meeting later this year, or early next, to present investigation results and begin discussing options for cleanup. A draft remedial investigation report will take several months to prepare and be publicly available later this year. We did not schedule a public meeting during this comment period because we didn't receive 10 requests and felt we would have more to share once we have preliminary results. Cleanup site managers are available to discuss the project by phone or in person at any time, and we encourage you to contact us with questions or input.