



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

1250 W Alder St • Union Gap, WA 98903-0009 • (509) 575-2490

October 31, 2019

Robert Brunoe, Manager Natural Resources and THPO  
Warm Springs Geo Visions  
Cultural Resources Department  
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
PO Box 460  
Warm Springs, OR 97761

**Re: BNSF Track Switching Facility Site aka Wishram Railyard Site**  
*Continuing Consultation for Environmental Investigation Fieldwork*

- **Site Name:** BNSF Track Switching Facility aka Wishram Railyard
- **Site Address:** 500 Main St., Wishram, Klickitat County
- **FSID No.:** 1625461
- **CSID No.:** 230

Dear Robert Brunoe:

This letter is to provide you with an update on the environmental investigation at Wishram, Washington, that may be of interest to you. The site is a railyard facility that has been in use for over 100 years. Initially, the operations at the facility included locomotive fueling and light maintenance on the railcars. Fueling activities took place for approximately 60 years until the late 1970s. Many of the other rail activities ceased in the period from 1956 to the late 1970s. Releases of petroleum hydrocarbons from the various railyard processes exist in the soil and in the groundwater.

Site investigations began in 2002 and the current owner/operator of the site, BNSF Railway Company (BNSF), entered into an Agreed Order (No. DE 12897) with the Department of Ecology (Ecology) in 2015. We are near completion for the upland portion of the investigation but work remains in the former shoreline area, now underwater, that was exposed before its inundation in 1957 following completion of the Dalles Dam.

Investigation for the Agreed Order began under a Cultural Resource Management Plan and an Inadvertent Discovery Plan. BNSF contracted with AECOM Technical Services (AECOM) to provide archaeological monitoring of soil core samples collected during the Agreed Order fieldwork. After the discovery of pre-contact archaeological materials, onsite investigation proceeded under Amended Emergency Archaeological Excavation Permit No. 2016-60 and then under Archaeological Excavation Permit No. 2018-38.

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Ecology requires more investigation in the inundated portion of the site due to the discovery of heavy oil contamination in the sediments.

Ecology also expects that BNSF will investigate all of the outfall areas that drains the uplands area and that currently discharges to or formerly discharged into the Columbia River. We are coordinating with the Yakama Nation Department of Fisheries since the shorelines of the Columbia River at Wishram are within a treaty usual and accustomed fishing area of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

You will find more information about the environmental contamination at the site on the Ecology website: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=230>. I am available to discuss the site status or to respond to any questions or comments you may have as this work goes forward. Please share this message with anyone in your agency who may have an interest.

Sincerely,



John Mefford  
Cleanup Project Manager  
Toxics Cleanup Program  
Central Regional Office

Enclosure: Site diagrams

cc: Alex Atkins, Archaeologist, CTWS  
Allyson Bazan, Assistant Attorney General  
Valerie Bound, Section Manager, Toxics Cleanup Program, Central Regional Office  
Roberta Kirk, Assistant THPO, CTWS  
Sage Park, Regional Director, Central Regional Office  
Rob Whitlam, State Archaeologist, DAHP



