



## **RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY**

### **Pacific Wood Treating Site**

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*De Minimis Consent Decree*

*Union Pacific Railroad Company*

**Prepared by**  
**Washington State Department of Ecology**  
**Southwest Regional Office**  
**Toxics Cleanup Program**  
**Lacey, Washington**

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## Site information

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**Address:** 111 West Division Street, Ridgefield

**Cleanup Project Manager:** Rebecca Lawson

**Public Involvement Coordinator:** Sheila Coughlan

Union Pacific Railroad Company (Union Pacific) and the Department of Ecology (Ecology) entered into a De Minimis Consent Decree. This legal agreement requires Union Pacific to pay for a portion of the cleanup cost at the Pacific Wood Treating (PWT) site. Ecology held a public comment period from June 8 to July 7, 2020 and received 4 comments.

Public comments and Ecology's responses for the comment period are summarized below.

## Site background

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From 1964 to 1993, PWT pressure-treated lumber wood products and poles. The plant operated in the general area of 111 West Division Street in Ridgefield, Washington. During its operations, PWT owned over 11 acres of land and leased:

- about 2 acres from Union Pacific
- 24 acres from the Port of Ridgefield (port)
- 0.5 acres from the City of Ridgefield

Their operations and waste disposal methods released wood treating hazardous substances that contaminated soil, groundwater, stormwater, and sediments. PWT stopped wood treating operations in 1993 when the company declared bankruptcy.

After PWT's bankruptcy, the port bought the PWT property and the property owned by Union Pacific. Since 1996, with the oversight and funding from Ecology, the port has been cleaning up the site. While cleanup is mostly completed, there is still some ongoing work in the off-port property (OPP) residential area.

## Next steps

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The settlement money associated with the [De Minimis Consent Decree](#) will be used toward cleanup of off-port property residential areas where dioxin contamination has been found in soil above cleanup levels. Under an on-going Agreed Order with Ecology, the port will complete a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) and a cleanup action plan. These documents will be made available for public comment. Ecology will inform property owners of the cleanup schedule which will likely take place during the summer of 2022.

## Comment # 1: Denise Wilhelm

From: Denise Wilhelm, Department of Natural Resources  
Sent: 6/0/2020  
To: Ecology via email (the exact content of comment)

**From:** Wilhelm, Denise (DNR) <[Denise.Wilhelm@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Denise.Wilhelm@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 9:21 AM  
**To:** Coughlan, Sheila (ECY) <[SCOU461@ECY.WA.GOV](mailto:SCOU461@ECY.WA.GOV)>  
**Subject:** Ridgefield clean up - de Minimis decree

Good morning Sheila. For DNR interests, I'm specifically interested in the area marked within lake river. Can you provide more information specific to any work that will be completed within lake river itself and the estimated time line for any work if planned.

Thank you.

**Denise I. Wilhelm**  
Rivers District Land Manager  
Aquatics Division  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)  
Office: (360) 740-6824  
Cell: (360) 844-0033  
[denise.wilhelm@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:denise.wilhelm@dnr.wa.gov)  
[www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov)

## Ecology Response

Sediment sampling in Lake River started in 2015 as part of the 2013 Consent Decree No. 13-2-03830-1 between Ecology and the Port of Ridgefield. Sampling takes place on a 0, 2, 5, and 10 year cycle. The most recent sampling report is the Lake River Sediment Monitoring Report from 2017. For more information such as a sampling schedule and the estimated time line for future work, I recommend that you contact the Port of Ridgefield. Craig Rankine is Ecology's project manager for this cleanup work. He can be reached at (360) 216-9394 or at [Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov)

The current comment period is for a [De Minimis Consent Decree](#) between Ecology and Union Pacific Railroad Company for a cash settlement that will be used for the remaining cleanup. Comments about the De Minimis Consent Decree can be submitted online.

## Comment # 2: Dennis Wardlaw

From: Dennis Wardlaw, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
Sent: 6/24/20  
To: Ecology via email (the exact content of comment)

Hi Shelia,

Good morning. Attached please find our letter for the project referenced in the subject line. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,  
Dennis

## Ecology Response

The current comment period is for a [De Minimis Consent Decree](#) for a cash settlement. Although the settlement money will be used toward the remaining cleanup at the Pacific Wood Treating site, this legal agreement does not involve excavation or any type of site work. As part of the planning process for the actual cleanup work, Ecology will coordinate with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer and Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to address all archeological issues.

If you have any other comments about the De Minimis Consent Decree, you are welcome to submit them online until July 7.

## Comment # 3: Elizabeth Brush

From: Elizabeth Brush  
Sent: 7/4/20  
To: Ecology via SmartComments (the exact content of comment)

Mu Husband & I own the property at 321 N 3rd Ave where the dioxin level has been tested to be over the acceptable limits. I have operated my business--Myrtle's Tea House--at this property since 2011. I have been anxiously awaiting word that this property would be cleaned up and I am hoping this latest communication means that it will be!! I am looking to retire in the next few years and either sell or lease the property, but with the dioxin issue--know I can't get top dollar in selling & who would want to Lease? Wanted to have outdoor seating this summer on the patio & also the grass to increase outdoor seating, but can't do THAT with dioxin- ethically- unless I disclose this to patrons--not an option with covid-19 summer! Would LOVE to have cleaned up as soon as possible--I have felt stressed and powerless with owning this commercial property since finding out about the dioxin condition--so look forward to resolution--Thank you so much!! I have HOPE.....

## Ecology Response

The settlement money associated with the [De Minimis Consent Decree](#) will be used toward cleanup of Ridgefield properties where dioxin contamination has been found in the soil above cleanup levels. We know the cleanup will involve yard soil removal and replacement. At this time, we do not know the cleanup timeframe except that work will need to take place during the summer months. The good news in the cleanup process is that the extent of the dioxin contamination is defined and the Port of Ridgefield can move to complete a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) and a cleanup action plan. We will be informing property owners of the cleanup schedule when we have that information. There will also be a chance to comment on the RI/FS and the proposed cleanup action plan. For the most up to date information, please visit Ecology's [Pacific Wood Treating](#) webpage.

You can still use areas of the yard that have dioxins but we recommend that you reduce contact with the soil. The main source of exposure could occur by accidentally inhaling (breathing) in dust that carries dioxins or ingesting (eating) soil that contains dioxins. A grass cover is a very effective way to reduce contact with contaminants as long as you repair any bare patches of lawn by reseeding or covering them with mulch. Dioxins are only present in the top six inches of your property soil.

We appreciate your patience and know that it's a very difficult situation. While we know that contaminated soil is a concern for property owners please direct your questions or any potential buyers to our website for the most up to date cleanup information or have them contact Ecology's cleanup project manager Craig Rankine by phone at (360) 216-9394 or by e-mail at [Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov).

## Comment # 4: Johnny Walker

Phone call from: Johnny Walker

Received: 7/4/20

To: Sheila Coughlan's voicemail concerning cleanup

## Ecology Response

The Department of Ecology is in the process of receiving settlement funds that will go toward the cleanup of your property (yard replacement) as well as 12 other residential properties in your area. We expect the yard replacement process to begin in the summer of 2021 or 2022. When we are close to that time, we will schedule a home visit to talk to you about what to expect during cleanup and to develop a cleanup plan for your property. We will work with you to select a yard design that can include a combination of lawn, mulched beds, and regionally appropriate plants, or the same landscaping that was removed can be restored. No work will be conducted in your yard without your knowledge and consent.

In general, mature trees and large shrubs over 5 feet tall will be left in place during cleanup. The

cleanup crew will do their best to remove the contaminated soil around roots. Pavers, such as in the 25 X 25 area you mentioned can be set aside and then put back in place after the contaminated soil is removed.

We appreciate your patience and look forward to cleaning up your yard. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me or Craig Rankine, Cleanup Project Manager at [Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Craig.Rankine@ecy.wa.gov) or (360) 690-4795.