DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Schwerin Concaves Site

Toxics Cleanup Program **October 2012**

Draft Cleanup Action Plan, SEPA Checklist and DNS Available for Comment

The Washington State Department of Ecology invites you to review and comment on documents that will guide cleanup at the Schwerin Concaves site. The site is located in a rural farming area east of the city of Walla Walla. Schwerin Concaves lies along the north bank of Dry Creek one and a quarter miles north of Highway 12 at 1106 Sapolil Road in Walla Walla County, Washington (Figure 1).

Contamination at the site is a result of chromium electroplating operations on the property. Hexavalent chromium is present in the soil and groundwater. There are also elevated levels of arsenic, cadmium, iron, lead, zinc, nitrate and sulfate in groundwater.

The Draft Cleanup Action Plan provides details about the selected cleanup action and how cleanup will be conducted. The State Environmental Policy Act Checklist (SEPA) considers potential environmental impacts prior to beginning the cleanup. The Determination of Non-Significance indicates the proposed actions will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment.

You are invited to:

- **Review** the Draft Cleanup Action Plan (DCAP), State Environmental Policy Act Checklist (SEPA), and Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) at the locations listed in the box on the right.
- **Send** your comments to the site manager William J. Fees at Ecology from **October 31 through November 30, 2012.** See the box at the right for his contact information.

Comments Accepted
October 31 through November 30, 2012

For **ADA** accommodations or documents in an alternate format call Carol Bergin 509/329-3546, 711 (relay service), or 877-833-6341 (TTY).

Para asistencia en Español
Richelle Perez 360/407-7528

Если вам нужна помощь на русском, звоните
Larissa Braaten 509/710-7552

Submit Comment and Questions
William J. Fees, P.E.
Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane WA 99205-1295
509/329-3589 or wfee461@ecy.wa.gov

Public Involvement
Carol Bergin
See Ecology Address Above
509/329-3546 or cabe461@ecy.wa.gov

Document Review Locations

WA Department of Ecology
Kari Johnson
Public Disclosure
See Ecology Address Above
Call for an appointment 509/329-3415

Walla Walla Public Library
238 East Alder Street
Walla Walla WA 99362

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Website
https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=3956

Facility Site ID No. 11293827
Cleanup Site ID No. 3956

Site Background

The Schwerin Concaves property was part of a wheat farming operation and then became a hard chromium electroplating business. Combine equipment, used in farming, contained parts called concaves. Concaves were used to separate the wheat from the chaff. These parts were brought to the electroplating facility and covered with chrome in a process called plating. The plating preserves the equipment from wear and tear.

The plating operation was located mainly in one large building known as the plating shop. Wastewater from the electroplating process was stored and treated in a tank just north of the plating shop (Figure 2).

Chromium was also documented in soil in the area previously used to store "self-propelled" equipment. Wastewater and wastewater treatment sludge containing chromium were placed in the self-propelled shed area and allowed to evaporate.

The plating and self-propelled areas were suspected as the source of groundwater contamination found in the monitoring wells on the site.

Releases from the wastewater tank resulted in high levels of hexavalent chromium in soil and shallow groundwater at certain locations at the site. Groundwater in the area that is used for irrigation, drinking water and recreation comes from deeper, non-contaminated wells. Hexavalent chromium is a toxic metal that can cause health problems and may contribute to certain types of cancer. The levels of chromium and lead in soil and groundwater do not meet state standards, therefore, Ecology began taking cleanup actions at the site.

Actions Taken

Ecology took actions to protect the public and removed nearly 3,000 tons of contaminated soil from the plating shop and self-propelled shed areas. Removal of the contaminated soil improved groundwater conditions.

Sampling of monitoring wells conducted within a one-mile radius of the site confirmed these wells meet state standards for drinking water. Dry Creek has not been impacted by work conducted at the site.

Some chromium and lead contamination remains in soil and groundwater. Ecology plans to move forward with additional cleanup to further protect people and the environment.

Cleanup Alternatives

Five cleanup alternatives were evaluated in a Focused Feasibility Study completed in 2008. Each of the five cleanup alternatives require placing restrictions called institutional controls on the property. These restrictions limit access to the property and how the land may be used. Restrictions are necessary because contaminated groundwater and in some cases, soil contamination will remain at the site under certain cleanup alternatives.

Each cleanup alternative also includes decontaminating and tearing down the former plating building. Details of the five alternatives may be reviewed in the Draft Cleanup Action Plan.

Draft Cleanup Action Plan

Ecology wrote the Draft Cleanup Action Plan (DCAP) based on information from the Focused Feasibility Study. Ecology selected the best cleanup alternatives from the FFS. Ecology may modify the DCAP based on public comment, if appropriate.

Ecology's Proposed Cleanup Actions

Ecology selected a combination of the cleanup alternatives found in the Focused Feasibility Study.

The plating shop will be decontaminated, torn down and materials disposed of in an appropriate facility. A pilot study was conducted at the site to convert hexavalent chromium to a less harmful form of chromium. Ecology will use this system to treat contaminated soil and groundwater.

Some contaminated soil and groundwater will remain in certain locations at the site. Restrictions will be placed on the property to

prohibit or limit how groundwater and land may be used. Groundwater monitoring will be conducted until it meets state standards.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

The State Environmental Policy Act, known as SEPA, requires government agencies to consider potential environmental impacts of a project before beginning the cleanup. A Determination of Non-Significance indicates the proposed actions will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment.

- After review of the environmental checklist and other site-specific information, Ecology determined the actions to address contaminants in soil and groundwater will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment.
- The cleanup action will benefit the environment by reducing contaminants in groundwater and soil along with reducing possible exposure pathways for humans and wildlife.
- Therefore, Ecology has issued a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) for the cleanup action.

What Happens Next?

Ecology will respond to comments **submitted by November 30, 2012**. A Responsiveness Summary will be sent to all commenters and placed in the document review locations listed in the box on page 1. Ecology will make modifications to the DCAP based on public comment, if appropriate. If no changes are made, the DCAP will become final, and the cleanup will move forward.

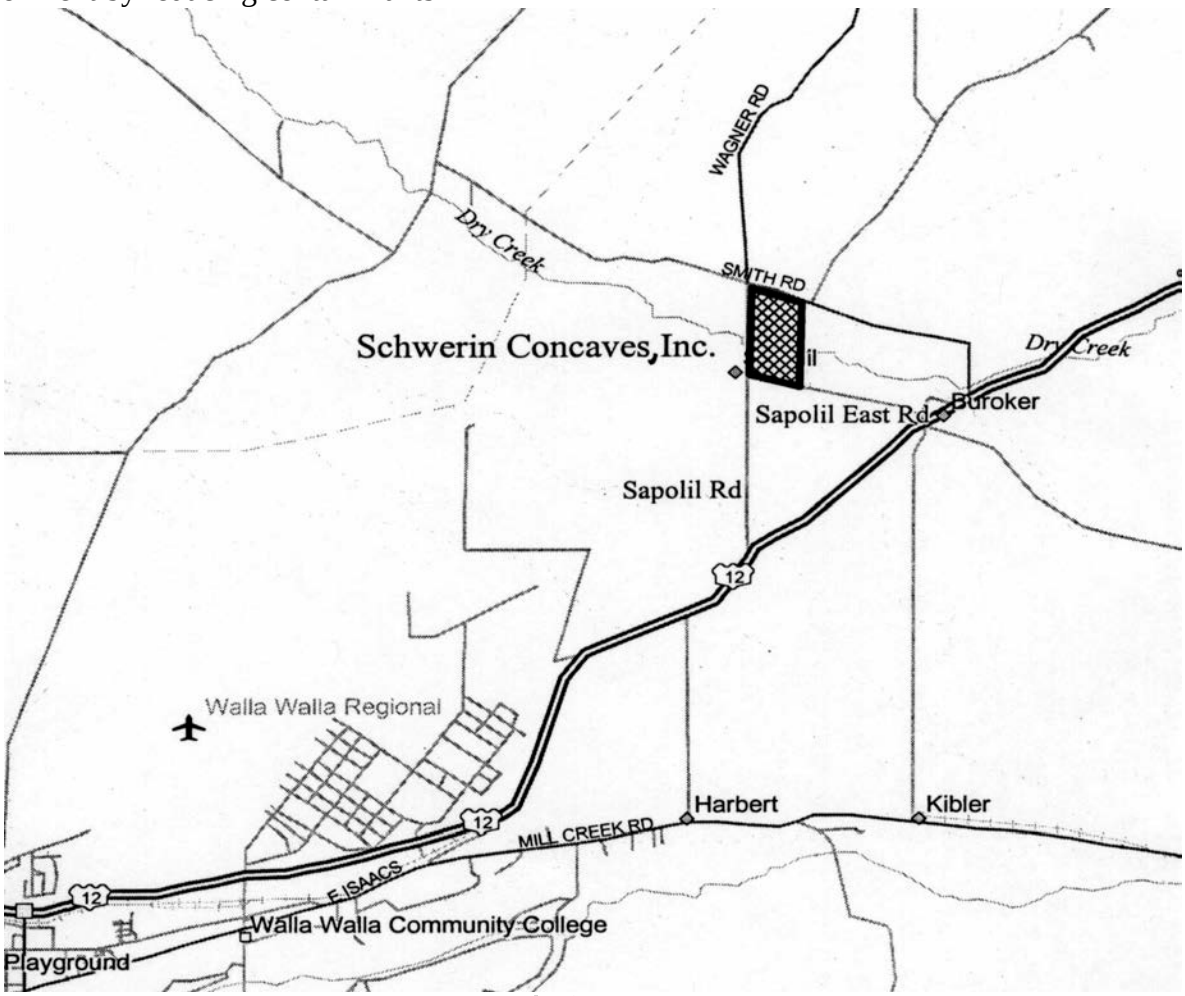

Figure 1 Site Location

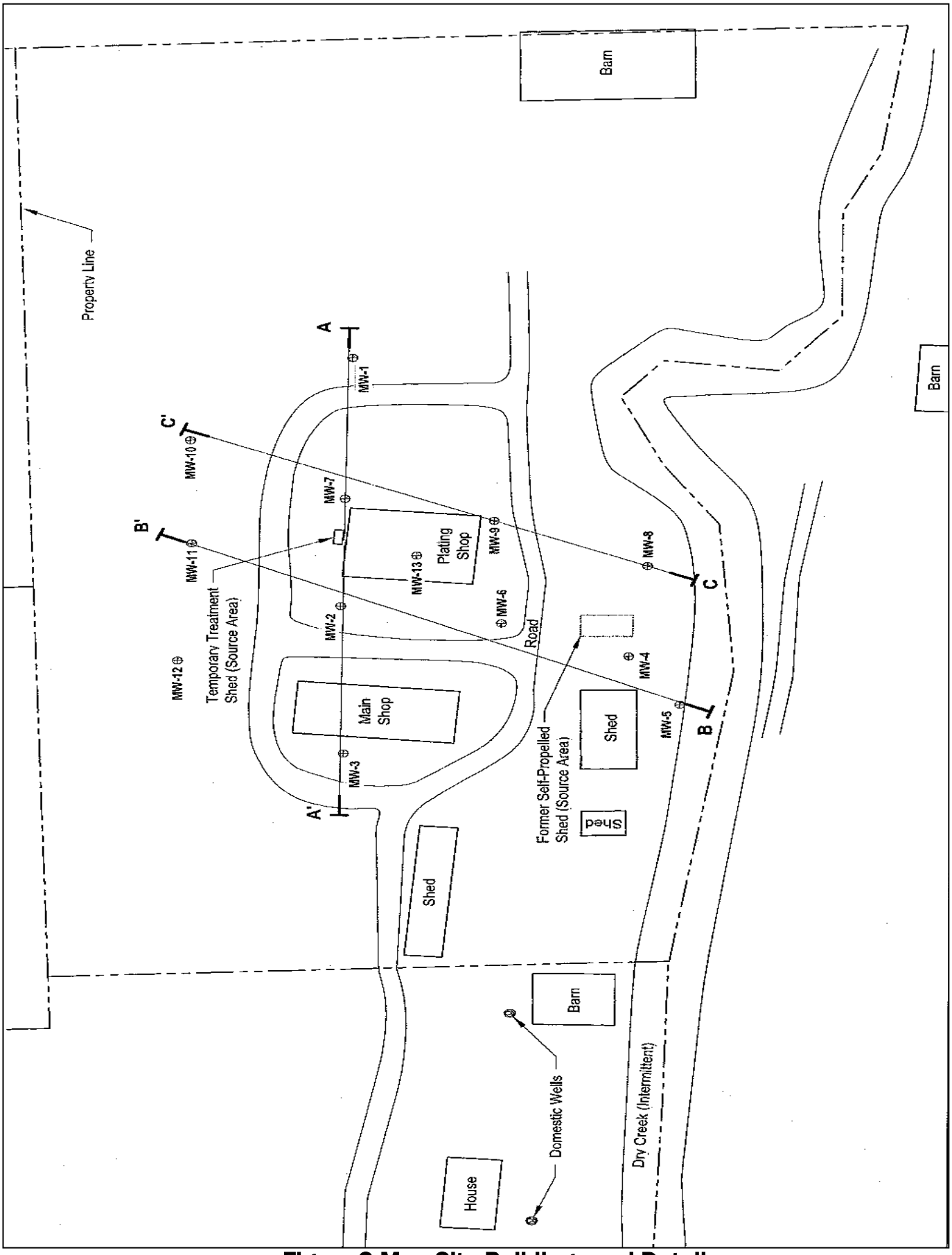

Figure 2 Map Site Buildings and Detail
Courtesy of Hart Crowser