

Investigating contamination on the Northport waterfront



Comments accepted:

SEPA: March 13 – 26, 2019

RI Work Plan: March 13 –
April 11, 2019

Submit comments to:

Huckleberry Palmer
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205
Phone: 509-329-3433
Email: hpal461@ecy.wa.gov

Document review locations:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=14874>

Northport City Hall
315 Summit Ave.
Northport, WA 99157
Phone: 509-732-4450
Hours: Monday – Wednesday, 2nd
& last Thursday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Washington Dept. of Ecology
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205
Phone: 509-329-3415
Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. –
5 p.m. (by appointment)

Facility Site ID: 96239
Site Cleanup ID: 14874

The Washington State Department of 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. You are invited to comment on the draft Remedial Investigation (RI) Work Plan and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). We have reviewed the work plan activities using the SEPA checklist, and have determined they won't adversely affect people or the environment, which resulted in the DNS.

The project area includes all permanently and seasonally exposed areas of the Columbia River bank and shore directly next to the Northport City Park and boat launch (Figure 1). From the river, this area is between Smelter Rock downstream to the Northport Highway 25 Bridge, and is associated with the historic Le Roi Smelter that was located at and around the City Park. 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. Possible cleanup options could include removing or capping the smelter-related wastes in this area, which contain several metals, including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, and zinc. Metal levels known to be present do not pose an immediate, acute human health risk. However, long-term exposure may increase the risk of certain health problems. The information gathered during the investigation will help Ecology understand where contamination exists and develop options for cleaning it up.

We look forward to working with local government, businesses, and residents during the investigation and cleanup process to understand your concerns and the community's vision for the waterfront. Please contact us at any time, regardless of whether a comment period is open, with your comments and questions. Our goal is for this to be a transparent, interactive process that improves community and aquatic health, as well as enjoyment of the public space.

When will the investigation begin?

Parts of the shoreline are only fully exposed for very limited times during the year, and we are planning all work to occur only on exposed shore and riverbed. The best window of opportunity typically is during parts of March and April and depends on flows and dam operations. We are planning to conduct initial field activities late winter or spring 2019.

What will happen during the investigation?

An environmental contractor will (see Figure 1):

- Collect soil samples for laboratory analyses from at least 25 locations along the shore and the wooded, waterfront hillside that leads up to the City Park.
- Dig 16 test pits approximately four feet deep by four feet wide and long with a mini-excavator to take surface and subsurface soil samples and direct readings, which will help us understand what is below the surface and the extent of metals contamination. Pits will be refilled the day they are dug.
- Gather direct readings of metals concentrations in approximately 300 locations using a hand-held, field-measuring device.
- Collect geotechnical and other land measurements to support evaluation of cleanup options.

The information collected will allow us to understand the nature of the contamination and map out where smelter metals have accumulated, so we can focus cleanup efforts in these areas. We expect the work to last about a week or two, river conditions permitting.

Public access and boat launch will remain open

If you visit the City Park and waterfront during the investigation, you will be able to access park facilities, the boat launch, and portions of the beach. You may encounter people collecting samples and some heavy equipment. Our goal is to have as little impact as possible. For safety, some parts of the waterfront may be inaccessible when the crews are working.

Sources of contamination

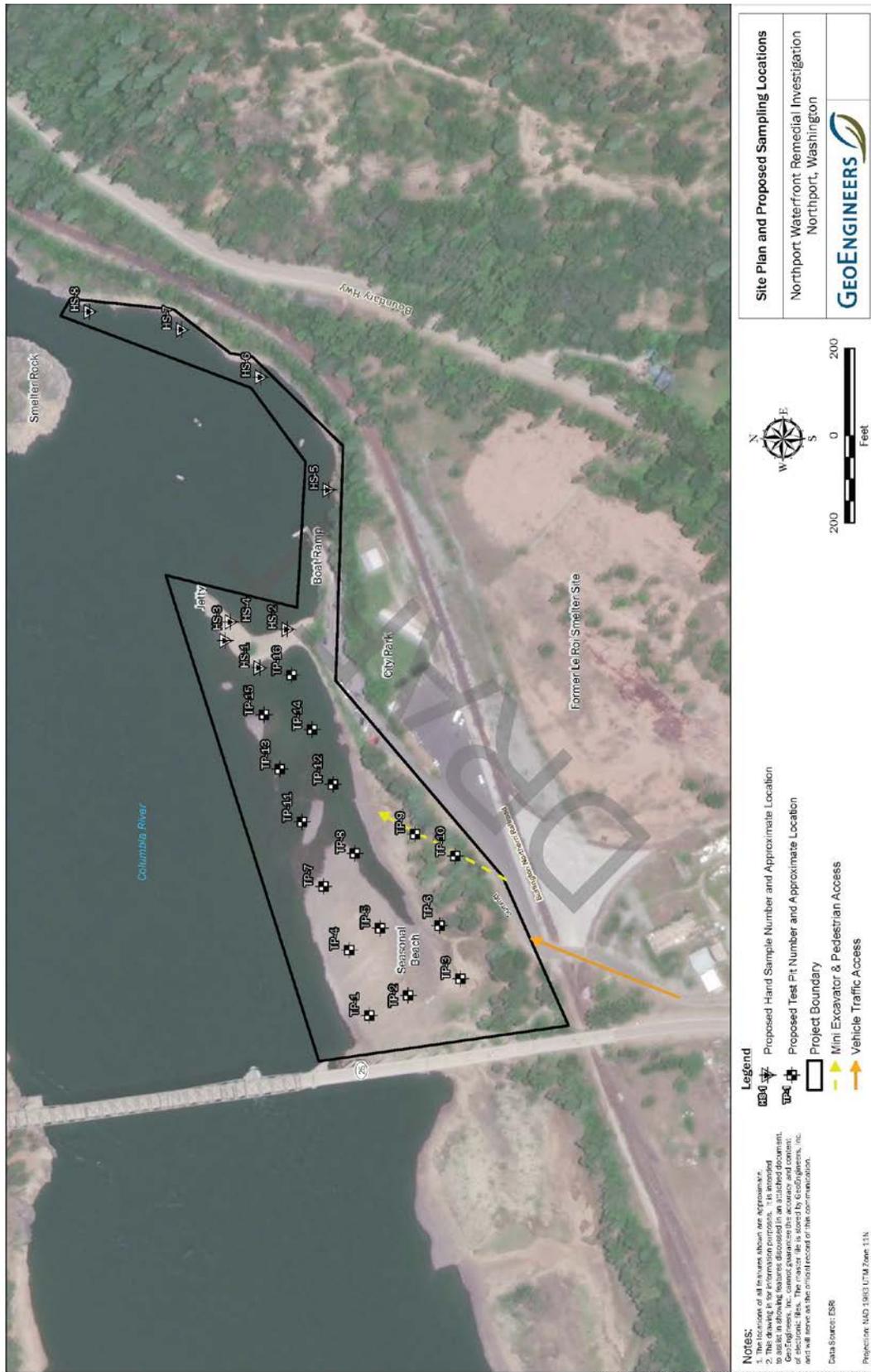
The Le Roi Smelter, which treated copper ores between 1901 and 1911, and lead ores between 1916 and 1921, was located just south of the Northport waterfront. Le Roi Smelter operations deposited clinker and granular slag wastes on the waterfront. Wastes, including slag, discharged into the Columbia River until 1995 from the still-operating metal smelter in Trail, British Columbia, Canada, are part of a broader series of investigations directed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Northport waterfront project is separate from the EPA-led efforts.

Next steps

Ecology will hold a public hearing on this proposal if 10 people request one. We will consider and respond to comments we receive on the draft RI Work Plan. This project will involve several steps and opportunities for community involvement. Because of the limited time window to access the study area due to water level conditions, comments on the current plan will be considered in later planning and field efforts.

The draft RI Report will take several months to prepare following the initial field work and be publicly available later this year. We will hold a comment period for it when the draft Feasibility Study Report that lays out cleanup options is also ready. Prior to that, we are planning to hold a public meeting to share the investigation results and start discussing options for cleanup. The purpose of having a public meeting prior to public comment on the reports is we'd like to incorporate the community's City Park shore improvement and development ideas into the cleanup options.

Figure 1. Northport waterfront investigation area and proposed sampling locations



Toxics Cleanup Program
4601 North Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99205

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Public comment period

March 13 – April 11, 2019

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We are investigating smelter-related metals contamination on Northport's City Park and boat launch waterfront area. Learn more inside. For information about how to protect yourself and your family from arsenic and lead in dirt, please visit our Dirt Alert website: Ecology.wa.gov/HealthyActions

This project is funded by the Eastern Washington Clean Sites Initiative. The money comes from a voter-approved tax on hazardous substances. Funds are used to clean up properties where the responsible party (land user, facility operator, or property owner) couldn't be found or can't pay cleanup costs.

Accommodation Requests: To request Americans with Disabilities Act accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 509-329-3546 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.