



Frequently Asked Questions about Briggs Nursery: Investigation and Cleanup of Uplands of Areas 1 & 2

from Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program, Southst Regional Office

Q: What is the status of the Briggs Nursery investigation and cleanup?

A: The investigation is complete on all property west of Henderson Boulevard, except for the kettle bottoms. The investigation found areas of contamination that needed more characterization. The characterization identified dieldrin (a chlorinated pesticide) and polychlorinated bi-phenyls (PCBs) in surface soils within historic work areas. The contaminated soils are being excavated and removed from the Olympia site. The site will be tested to make sure all contaminated soils have been removed.

Q: What are PCBs and dieldrin?

A: PCBs and dieldrin are both non-polar organic molecules which bond well to other organics in the soil. In other words, they do not dissolve easily in water and generally move only with soil.

PCBs and dieldrin were both banned in the 1970s. Their presence at the Briggs Nursery site is likely from legal use prior to that time. PCB oil could be legally used as a pesticide carrier at concentrations no greater than 2 parts per million.

Q: Where did the contaminated soil go?

A: The PCB contaminated soil went to a transfer station in Bremerton, then to a lined landfill in Arlington, Oregon. Under a Grays Harbor County permit, the dieldrin contaminated soil went to a Briggs' owned field in Porter. The sandy soils from the Olympia site are being used to improve drainage of the clay soils at the Porter site.

At Porter, the dieldrin-contaminated soil will be tilled into clean soil to dilute the contamination concentration, and then pumpkins will be grown for a minimum of 3 years. The pumpkin plants will take up dieldrin from the soil and store it in the pumpkins. The pumpkins will then be taken to a municipal, lined landfill. This process of using plants to remove contamination is called phytoremediation. The phytoremediation will remove any significant amounts of dieldrin that are left in the soil at Porter, and result in soil that meets state residential standards.

Q: What is phytoremediation?

A: Phytoremediation is the use of trees, shrubs or other plants to remove contamination from soil or groundwater. Plants can remove contamination by taking it up through their roots and storing it, or releasing it into the air. Using plants to take up heavy metals, pesticides, PCBs and solvents has proven effective at other cleanup sites.

Q: Has the groundwater been tested?

A: Yes. Groundwater has been tested from six wells installed across the site. Groundwater has been tested for PCBs, pesticides and herbicides. Hazardous substances were not detected in groundwater under the site. Test results show that hazardous substances have traveled to a maximum depth of 24 inches below the ground surface.

Q: What will happen now that cleanup is complete on much of the property?

A: Once cleanup of the Area 1 and 2 uplands (west of Henderson Boulevard) is complete, the Department of Ecology will issue a letter to the City of Olympia stating which parts of the site have been cleaned up to residential standards. The City of Olympia is expected to issue a permit and allow construction to begin on the clean part of site.

Q: When will the rest of the property be cleaned up?

A: Risk assessment work in the kettle bottoms may continue through 2006. Briggs Nursery plans to move the rest of their operations off the eastern portion of the site in 2006. Investigation and cleanup (if necessary) of the eastern portion will continue at that time.

Q: What about Ward Lake?

A: The Remedial Investigation Scope of Work requires the owner, Briggs Nursery, to determine whether Ward Lake has been affected by their operations. This work will be conducted when Briggs removes their operations from Area 3 in 2006.

Q: When is the next opportunity for public comment?

A: The Remedial Investigation will continue on Area 3 after Briggs completes removal of their operations in 2006. You will have an opportunity to comment on any interim cleanup action that is required by Ecology. If no interim cleanup action is required, you will have the opportunity to comment at the conclusion of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study and Risk Assessment.

Q: Who can I contact for more information?

Please contact Lisa Pearson, Ecology's site manager, if you have questions about the Briggs Nursery site. She can be reached by phone at 360-407-6261 or by email at Lpea461@ecy.wa.gov.

The news media should contact Caitlin Cormier, Ecology's public information officer, at 360-407-6149 or e-mail her at Ccor461@ecy.wa.gov.

Ecology's website for this project contains additional information. The website address is: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/briggs/briggs_hp.htm

If you require this publication in an alternate format, please contact Cedar Bouta at 360-407-6245 or Cebo461@ecy.wa.gov. For TTY, please call 711 or 1-800-833-6388.