



Focus

Proposed Agreement & Plans for Marine Investigation and Interim Cleanup Actions Available for Public Review & Comment

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has prepared this focus sheet pursuant to the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) Chapter 70.105D. Its intent is to provide information about a proposed investigation of the marine environment and proposed interim actions at the Rayonier Port Angeles Mill Site, located at 700 North Ennis Street, Port Angeles, Clallam County.

The Department welcomes and encourages comment on the Agreed Order and Workplans that would require Rayonier Inc., the potentially liable person for the site, to conduct these actions. The comment period runs through April 5, 2002.

Definitions

A "Potentially Liable Person" is any person whom Ecology finds, based on credible evidence, to be liable for cleanup at a site.

An "Agreed Order" is a legal document issued by Ecology, to which the Potentially Liable Person receiving the order agrees to comply. It may be used to require or approve a Remedial Investigation, a cleanup, or other actions.

A "Remedial Investigation" is a study to collect, develop, and evaluate sufficient information regarding site to support the development of cleanup alternatives.

An "Interim Action" is an action that partially addresses cleanup of a site.

Site Background

The site is located along the waterfront at the east end of Port Angeles Harbor, lying below the coastal bluffs on a combination of native soils, beach deposits, and imported fill. Ennis Creek flows from the Olympic Mountains through the site and empties into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The delta of Ennis Creek and the adjacent shoreline is a cultural site of great importance to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Historically, this was the location of Y'innis, a fortified settlement which for many generations was one of the principal centers of Klallam culture.

The site was occupied in 1887 by the Puget Sound Cooperative Colony, which built and operated a sawmill there until 1893. The U.S. Government built a new sawmill on the site in 1917 to supply materials for the manufacture of aircraft. Rainier Pulp and Paper Company purchased the site in the 1920s and began operating the facility as a pulp mill in 1930. In 1937, the company incorporated under the name Rayonier.

The pulp mill used an acid sulfite process to produce dissolving-grade cellulose pulps for a specialty-chemical market. Over the operational life of the mill, liquid and semi-solid wastes were discharged to Port Angeles Harbor and to the Strait of Juan de Fuca through a series of outfall pipes. Fly ash and flue gases were emitted from boilers which burned combinations of fuel oil and wood waste to produce steam used in the pulping process. The amounts, composition, and discharge locations of these wastes varied as pollution control requirements became more stringent over time. However, in addition to releases allowed under the mill's environmental permits, there were episodic spills to the ground and exceedences of permit limits for both water and air. The mill ceased operations in February 1997 and most of the structures on the site have been demolished. In 1997, in response to a petition from a coalition of concerned citizens' groups, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated an investigation

to determine if the site should be proposed for listing on the National Priorities List, a federal list of contaminated sites in the U.S. In February 2000, through an agreement between EPA, Ecology, and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, EPA deferred the cleanup of the site to Washington State Ecology and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe are working cooperatively to provide oversight of the cleanup, which is being conducted by Rayonier under the authority of Washington's Model Toxics Control Act. Ecology, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and Rayonier have developed the workplans after consultation with several federal, state, and local agencies which have regulatory interests at the site. Those agencies have been provided with the opportunity to perform a preliminary review of the workplans. Comments received from these agencies will be addressed along with comments received during the public hearing process.

Remedial Investigation

The objectives of the remedial investigation are to determine the nature and extent of contamination in the marine sediments and to evaluate current and future risks to the environment and to human health in areas believed to be affected by the site. The evaluation of human health risks focuses on consumption of fish and shellfish. The primary areas of interest include the Strait of Juan de Fuca around the deep-water outfall and the nearshore waters adjacent to the dock and the former log pond.

Interim Actions

Three interim cleanup actions are being proposed, to address upland areas of soil contamination. One is at the former finishing room along the west bank of Ennis Creek. The others address soils adjacent to the former fuel oil tank near the western end of the site, and at the location of a machine shop in the former maintenance building in the west-central part of the site. The cleanups proposed for these sites consist of excavating the contaminated soils and disposing of them at a landfill facility approved for the types of waste found at these locations.

What's Next?

Once the Agreed Order and its accompanying Management Plans have been approved by Ecology, field sampling of the marine environment and interim cleanup actions at the three locations on the upland portion of the site can begin. This work is planned to take place during the summer of 2002.

Public Comment Period

The Agreed Order and Management Plans are now available for your review. After reading the documents, if you have comments, please submit them in writing or by e-mail to William Harris, Site Manager, at the Ecology address listed in the box on the first page of this fact sheet. Comment are due by April 5, 2002 Ecology will review all comments received, and the documents will be revised as necessary. Ecology will provide a summary of the comments received and how they have been addressed in the final documents.

Comments should be sent to:

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Information Repositories:

North Olympic Library System
Reference Desk
2210 South Peabody Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 417-8500

Peninsula College Library
Reference Desk
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Ecology is an equal-opportunity agency. If you have special accommodation needs, contact Michelle Payne at (360) 407-6129 (Voice) or (360) 407-6006 (TDD).