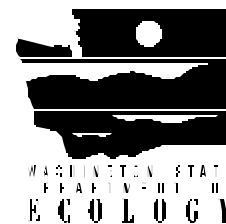


Tacoma Smelter Plume Child Use Area Studies King and Pierce Counties; VMI



Introduction

Arsenic and lead contamination in soil is known to exist over large parts of both King and Pierce Counties as a result of air emissions from the now-closed Asarco smelter in Ruston. The Departments of Ecology and Health, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department are concerned about the potential exposure of young children playing in the soil. Ecology and the county health departments are launching a child-use area study in each county. The first child-use area study will take place in King County. This fact sheet outlines our approach to the child-use area studies, and invites you to participate in our outreach program in King County.

Child Use Area Studies

The Child-use Area Study design is focused on gathering soil samples in areas where young children routinely play— schools, parks, camps, and childcare facilities— to evaluate the potential for exposure. While we would like to sample *all* areas where children are most likely to be exposed in the Tacoma Smelter Plume, we are unable to do so because of funding limitations. Current funding allows for about 70 child-use areas to be sampled in King County. We propose to prioritize the child-use areas. Our prioritization plan has these key elements at its core:

- **Worst First** - use information we have from previous studies to focus on those areas we believe most likely to have higher elevations of arsenic and lead. Areas closer to the smelter, in specific wind directions, and with minimal soil disturbance

will likely have the higher concentrations of arsenic and lead.

- **Greatest potential exposure** - focus on play areas where very young children (less than 6 years of age) play most frequently, such as schools and childcare facilities.

Ecology, with Public Health - Seattle & King County, the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, and technical consultation, designed a formula that incorporates the above elements. While the formula is mathematically helpful in prioritizing the child-use areas, we need to involve you in evaluating our results to ensure that they are fair and equitable.

Next Steps in Prioritizing Child-Use Areas for Sampling – Please Give Us Your Feedback

Staff at Public Health – Seattle & King County is gathering information about the child-use areas in your community. We need your feedback to make sure we have accurate information – including areas we may have missed. For example, we don't have accurate information on vacant lots – and we need your help in locating these potential child-use areas. We want your feedback on the elements we have considered. And, we would like to discuss with you what you believe are the top five priority child-use areas in your community.

Ecology will attend a meeting sponsored by the Vashon Maury Island Community Council, at Chautauqua Elementary School on November 18, 2002, to receive your input. Prior to the meeting, a Fact Sheet explaining the prioritization formula will be available on our website.

October 14, 2002

SEND WRITTEN COMMENTS TO:

Guy Barrett, Site Manager
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775
gbar461@ecy.wa.gov
(360)407-7115

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Documents can be reviewed at SW King County libraries:

Burien Library
14700 Sixth SW
Burien, WA 98166
(206) 243-3490

Des Moines Library
21620 11th Ave S.
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 824-6066

Federal Way Regional Library
34200 1st Way S.
Federal Way, WA 98003
(253)838-3668

Vashon Library
17210 Vashon Hwy SW
Vashon Island, WA 98070

Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Dr.
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

Ecology's web site:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/Tacoma_smelter/ts_hp.htm

For special accommodation needs or language translation assistance, call Molly Gibbs, Ecology's Public Involvement Specialist at (360) 407-6179 or (TDD) at 711 or 1-800-877-8973.

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If you have special accommodation needs, please call (360) 407-6300 or (TDD) at 711 or 1-800-877-8973.

The Fact Sheet and the draft prioritized results will be available for your review at the community meetings. We will describe how the schools, childcare facilities and parks were identified, and you will be asked if these selections include areas you think are most important to include in the study. A city street map will be available to assist with the identification of child use areas.

Following careful review of the information received at the meeting, Ecology will announce the selected child-use areas for this next King County study. We anticipate field work to begin in January, and finalization of the study, with a report, will be released Spring, 2003.

Contacts

Please contact one of us with your recommendations:

May Gerstle, Chair Heavy Metals Remediation Committee
Committee of Vashon Maury Island Community Council
206-463-0974 or
jamgerstle@aol.com

Molly Gibbs
Department of Ecology
Public Outreach Coordinator
360-407-6179 or
mgib461@ecy.wa.gov

Direct any questions you may have about the study to:
Marian Abbett, Coordinator
Department of Ecology
Tacoma Smelter Plume Project
360-407-6257 or
mabb461@ecy.wa.gov

For more information about this year's efforts on the Tacoma Smelter Plume Project see "Update 2002" at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/Tacoma_smelter/tshp.htm

Outreach Efforts

This year, we responded to hundreds of questions regarding the Tacoma Smelter Plume contamination, ranging from health effects to real estate concerns. Our outreach efforts include:

- * A website, with up-to-date information, press releases, and links to information on gardening, fertilizers, pesticides, treated wood and related topics.
- * Training sessions for local governments and schools
- * City Council updates, information nights (town meetings).
- * Recommendations from the TSP Advisory Group regarding real estate concerns, solutions and education for property owners.
- * Numerous services through King and Pierce County Public Health Departments.
- * A videotape titled Tacoma Smelter Plume: Lead, Arsenic and Lifestyle Choices, available in late November at local libraries, and city government offices.

Attend an evening meeting with opportunity to discuss child use area priorities. Staff will be available during the meeting to talk with you.

Nov. 18, 2002 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Get the Scoop on Our Dirt Symposium
Chautauqua Elementary School
9309 SW Cemetery Rd.
Vashon, WA 98070