



Focus on **Montesano soil & groundwater investigation**

from Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program

REPORT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Background

This Focus Sheet shares results from the first phase of the downtown Montesano soil and groundwater investigation. If you want general information about the investigation, please read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet. The FAQ is available at locations listed on page 4.

You may also contact the following Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) staff with questions or requests.

Marv Coleman, Site Manager
Phone 360-407-6259
E-mail Mcol461@ecy.wa.gov

Cedar Bouta, Public Involvement Coordinator
Phone 360-407-6245
E-mail Cebo461@ecy.wa.gov

First phase of investigation is complete

The first (interim) phase of sampling soil and groundwater in downtown Montesano is complete. GeoEngineers, the consultant who did the sampling under contract with Ecology, has written a report that contains results and maps. You may view the report at locations listed on page 4 of this Focus Sheet.

The first phase of the investigation included:

- ✓ A review of historic and current land use for potential sources of contamination;
- ✓ A review of reports and state records related to properties with known contamination;
- ✓ Identification of groundwater flow direction and depth;
- ✓ Sampling of existing monitoring wells at sites with known contamination, and testing of groundwater twice a year;
- ✓ Boring of 32 holes into downtown soil, and testing 57 soil samples and 37 groundwater samples; and
- ✓ Interviews with landowners and community members.

Ecology's site manager, Marv Coleman, is contacting owners of contaminated properties identified in the first phase. Conversations are underway to determine the next steps in controlling or cleaning up the contamination.

Early results

The first phase of this investigation has:

1. Confirmed that a) petroleum products are in the soil and groundwater of specific areas in downtown Montesano, and b) there is not a widespread plume of contamination throughout downtown. Groundwater and soil samples had petroleum products. The amount of petroleum products poses a potential health hazard for humans and the environment and needs additional investigation.

A certified laboratory tested the samples for petroleum ingredients. The laboratory tested for and found gasoline-range hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and xylene. The amount found varies for each ingredient, and varies depending on where the sample was taken.

2. Identified three areas with contamination far greater than state law allows. We have started working with property owners in these areas to learn more about this contamination and to begin cleaning up these areas.
3. Identified four previous gas station locations with low levels of contamination. We also are working with these property owners to learn more about the contamination and these properties' histories.
4. Focused future investigation work. Now that we know more about the contamination's location, we can better focus sampling of indoor air and utility systems.

Key areas of contamination

The three main areas of contamination in downtown are at Whitney's/Sterling Savings Bank, Brumfield-Twidwell and Tony's Short Stop, including parts of neighboring properties. There is no immediate human health threat from the contamination. Citizens should not be concerned about visiting these businesses or areas.

The contamination may be moving through or along current and/or abandoned utility corridors in these areas. Additional work will more precisely identify the contamination's location.

Under state law (Model Toxics Control Act, Chapter 173-340 WAC), current property owners are responsible for clean up of contamination associated with their property. Past property owners and operators, when they can be identified, also are responsible for cleaning up contamination they caused and sharing in the costs.

The contamination associated with Whitney's/Sterling Savings Bank and Tony's Short Stop is likely from both historic and recent activities. Brumfield-Twidwell's contamination is apparently from historic sources only.

At this time, Ecology is negotiating formal agreements (Agreed Orders) with the current property owners to start cleanup. Ecology will attempt to identify past property owners or operators and require them to participate in the cleanup.

The parties responsible for clean up will need to take the following steps:

- Complete agreements (Agreed Orders) with Ecology for cleaning up the contamination.
- Complete a remedial investigation and feasibility study that identifies clean up options.
- Develop a cleanup plan for each area and any contamination that has migrated from these areas.
- Carry out the plan.
- While the rest of the plan is being carried out, clean up contamination at locations where the problem is well defined and the solution is obvious.
- Use sampling and other methods to measure the degree of success.

During each step of the cleanup, citizens will have an opportunity to review and comment on documents and decisions.

The time it takes to clean up a site varies, and each area will have its own schedule. The amount and type of contamination, resources of the property owners and operators, and other factors will define how long cleanup will take.

Secondary areas of contamination

The investigation also identified four areas with minor contamination. These areas once had gas stations and have or had buried fuel tanks. Soil and/or groundwater contamination in these areas is likely leftover from when these sites were gas stations. The level of contamination is just above levels allowed by state law.

Next steps

The second phase of sampling will begin soon. This phase will include:

- ✓ Additional soil and groundwater sampling to better identify where contamination is located. This will include drilling a few new monitoring wells to help further define location and travel patterns of groundwater contamination.
- ✓ Use of ground penetrating radar to confirm the location of underground fuel tanks.

- ✓ Sampling storm and sewer utility systems where they pass through contaminated groundwater and empty into the Chehalis River and nearby wetlands.
- ✓ Sampling air inside buildings that are located on top of severely contaminated groundwater, and where groundwater depth, soils and building structure indicate gasoline and other vapors may exist.
- ✓ Working with current and past property owners, and past operators, to begin site-specific investigation and contamination cleanup.

Locations where you may view the sampling report

Citizens are encouraged to review the technical report.

Copies of the report are available at:

- W.H. Abel Memorial Library, 125 Main Street South, Montesano, 360-249-4211
- Montesano City Hall, 112 North Main, Montesano, 360-249-3939
- Washington Dept. of Ecology, Southwest Regional Office Toxics Cleanup Program, 300 Desmond Dr., Lacey, 360-407-6365
- Ecology's website:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/montesano/montesano_hp.htm

If you have questions about the report, please contact:

Marv Coleman, Site Manager
Washington Department of Ecology
SWRO Toxics Cleanup Program
Phone 360-407-6259
E-mail Mcol461@ecy.wa.gov

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