

Progress Elementary

Cleanup Proposed at Playground Summer 2007



Protective Cover Proposed for Lead and Arsenic at Playground

The Washington State Department of Ecology proposes to place a protective cap over soil contaminated with lead and arsenic at the Progress Elementary playground. The work is planned to begin in June 2007 and be completed before school starts in the fall. The school is located at 710 North Progress Road, Spokane Valley, WA (Figures 1 and 2).

Public Comments Invited

There are three documents related to this project that are available for review.

- The Interim Action Work Plan which provides background information about the project and the proposed cleanup actions.
- A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Checklist.
- A SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS).

The State Environmental Policy Act, known as SEPA, requires government agencies to consider potential environmental impacts of a project before beginning the cleanup. A Determination of Non-Significance indicates the proposed actions will not have a probable adverse impact on the environment.

- After review of an environmental checklist and other site-specific information, Ecology has determined the

cleanup of lead and arsenic in soil at Progress Elementary will not have a probable adverse impact on the environment.

- This action will benefit the environment by reducing the exposure to toxic chemicals from the site.
- Therefore, Ecology has issued a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS).

You may review the documents and submit your comments to Ecology May 9, 2007 through June 8, 2007. The box at the right shows the locations for reviewing documents and submitting comments.

Why Soil was Tested

The testing and proposed cleanup are part of Ecology's Area-Wide Soil Contamination Project. Ecology is sampling soil from former orchard lands throughout the state. The primary focus is on areas where there is high use by children such as schools and daycare centers. Soil testing is necessary because pesticides containing a mixture of lead and arsenic were used on orchard lands from 1905 until the late 1940s. Lead and arsenic at certain concentrations are harmful to human health, especially children.

Fact Sheet May 2007

Comments Accepted
May 9, 2007 through June 8, 2007

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Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Web site:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/progress_es/progress_es_hp.htm

To learn more about lead and arsenic see Ecology's Dirt Alert brochure at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0609048.html>

Comments and Technical Questions
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Results of Testing

In 2005, Spokane Regional Health District sampled soil at Progress Elementary because the property was a former orchard.

- Results of soil testing showed elevated levels of lead and arsenic in various locations on the Progress Elementary playground.
- The amount of lead and arsenic in the soil is above safe levels allowed by the state.
- The Spokane Regional Health District conducted a Site Hazard Assessment. The site ranked a 3 due to the levels of lead and arsenic contamination and the site's location over the Spokane Aquifer. A rank of 1 is the highest level of concern and 5 the least concern. The site is now on the state's Hazardous Sites List. The site may be removed from this list after state cleanup requirements are met.

Health Risks Considered Low

Public health officials believe exposure to lead and arsenic in soil at Progress Elementary is low because it is covered by existing grass and pea gravel. These materials provide a temporary barrier to potential exposure. However, these materials do not ensure long-term protection and may become less protective if not properly maintained over time.

Children Not Impacted

Public health officials also believe there is no evidence children have been adversely impacted by the contaminated soil underneath the Progress Elementary playground.

Why Cleanup is Necessary

Health risks to children and staff are considered low. However, completing the cleanup provides three important results:

- The new protective barrier is more reliable and provides greater long-term protection from contamination for human health and the environment. This material does not rely as heavily on maintenance to remain protective.
- It achieves state cleanup requirements for lead and arsenic contamination.
- Cleanup improves current conditions in the playground areas at the school.

Cleanup Steps to be Taken

Ecology evaluated several cleanup alternatives for the lead and arsenic in soil at Progress Elementary. The selected option is to cover the contamination with a cap of safe materials designed to reduce potential exposure. The following tasks are part of the cleanup:

- Adjustments to the existing sprinkler system as necessary.
- Removal and disposal of gravel and concrete curbing in play areas.
- Placement of a special man-made cover over existing soil or grass.
- Placement of clean topsoil over the entire site at a depth of 6 inches.
- Placement of a topsoil nutrient amendment to areas receiving hydroseed or sod.
- Replacement of ground covering with similar materials; for example, grass removed will be replaced with new grass.
- Deed restrictions on the property to prevent damage to the protective barrier. This includes a document called a Restrictive Covenant that shows the type and location of contamination on the property and may limit the type of *future* land uses.

NOTE: Once the project is complete and the grass is established, children will have full use of the playground areas.

Learn More about the Area-Wide Project, Potential Health Risks, Testing for Homeowners

Answers to many questions may be found on Ecology's Web site for the Area-Wide Soil Contamination Project at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/area_wide/area_wide_hp.html

You may also contact the individuals listed in the shaded box on page one for answers to technical, health, and community outreach questions.

What Happens Next?

After the 30-day comment period, Ecology issues a Responsiveness Summary answering the questions or comments submitted by the public. Based on public input, Ecology may modify the proposed work. If no modifications are necessary, Ecology plans to complete the work before school begins in the fall of 2007.

Figure 1 School Location Map

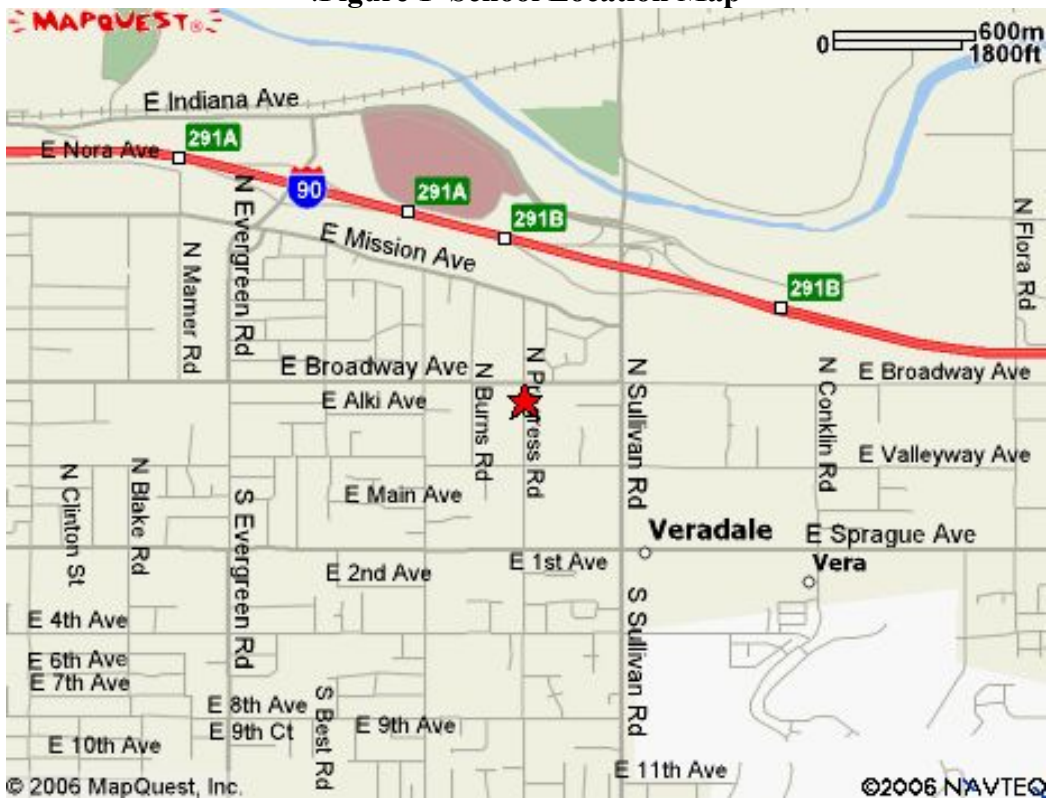


Figure 2
Overhead View of School Play Area (highlighted)

