

Asarco Settlement Update and Cleanup Plans

In late 2009, the State of Washington received a settlement from Asarco for environmental damage from its mining and smelting operations in Ruston. The Department of Ecology plans to use over \$90 million for cleanup of the Tacoma Smelter Plume, over ten years. The public will have a chance to comment on a cleanup plan later in 2011 (see page 2 for more details).

Ecology is currently moving forward with existing programs to clean up child play areas and provide outreach and education through the **Dirt Alert** program. This update describes current work funded by the settlement and future cleanup plans.

Cleaning Up Soils Where Children Play

Ecology created the **Soil Safety Program** in response to a 2005 law to keep children safe from polluted soil. Under this program, Ecology has sampled nearly 900 schools and childcares and cleaned up 101. School and childcare work is almost complete. With funding from the settlement, the agency is now sampling play areas at parks, camps, and multi-family public housing.

Soil sampling began in the summer of 2010 at Tacoma parks. This fall, a contractor started sampling parks in King County. All park sampling will be completed by June 30, 2011. Ecology will start cleanup at some parks in Pierce County in the spring and fall of this year. Some park districts will integrate cleanups with existing park district projects.

Planning for More Cleanup

Ecology is working on an Interim Action Plan—a plan for cleaning up part of the Tacoma Smelter Plume. The area is too large to clean up all soils. Ecology will focus most of the funding on child play areas and residential yards. The plan has four main pieces:

1. Continue the Soil Safety Program.
2. Sample and clean up residential yards in the most highly contaminated areas of the plume.
3. Provide ongoing outreach and education.
4. Encourage cleanup during property development or redevelopment, when soils are already being disturbed.

More Information

General information

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Tacoma Smelter Plume website

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/tacoma_smelter/ts_hp.htm

Soil Safety Program information

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Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Phone:
(253) 798-6492

E-mail: DirtAlert@tpchd.org

Website: <http://www.tpchd.org/DirtAlert>



Public Health—Seattle & King County

Phone: (206) 205-4394

Website: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/toxic/TacomaSmelterPlume.aspx>

Thurston County Public Health

Phone: (360) 867-2586

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehdsp/index.html>

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Outreach and Education

Ecology provides funding to local health departments to do outreach to their communities. Health departments in King, Pierce and Thurston counties provide a wide range of materials and services. See page 1 for health department contacts.

Healthy Actions can help protect your family from contaminated soil if you live in the Tacoma Smelter Plume:

- Wash hands after working or playing outside.
- Take off shoes or use a doormat.
- Vacuum and damp dust regularly.
- Keep children's toys free of dirt.
- Wash fruits and vegetables from your garden.



Tacoma Smelter Plume Cleanup Priorities

Areas where children play: Children are more at risk from arsenic and lead in soil than adults. They spend more time closer to the ground and often put their dirty hands and toys into their mouths. Their growing bodies are also more vulnerable to the effects of arsenic and lead.

Areas with the highest arsenic levels: In general, areas closer to the former smelter have higher levels of arsenic. Winds also blew arsenic northeast and southwest (see map on page 3).

What Happens Next?

Ecology plans to hold a public comment period on the Interim Action Plan in late 2011. After considering public comment, Ecology will finalize the plan and begin designing a program to sample and clean up residential yards. This plan will also be open for public comment.

Ecology needs input from communities throughout the Tacoma Smelter Plume. Your suggestions and help in spreading the word are appreciated!

Do I Live inside the Plume?

Ecology has an **interactive map** of the Tacoma Smelter Plume. You can type in your address and find out if you are inside the boundary. Please visit

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/tacoma_smelter/ts_hp.htm.

If you are viewing this fact sheet on a computer, [click here](#).

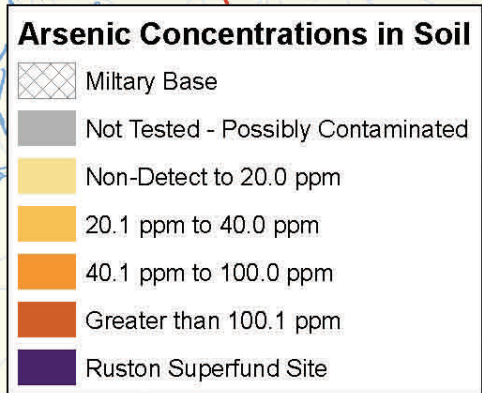
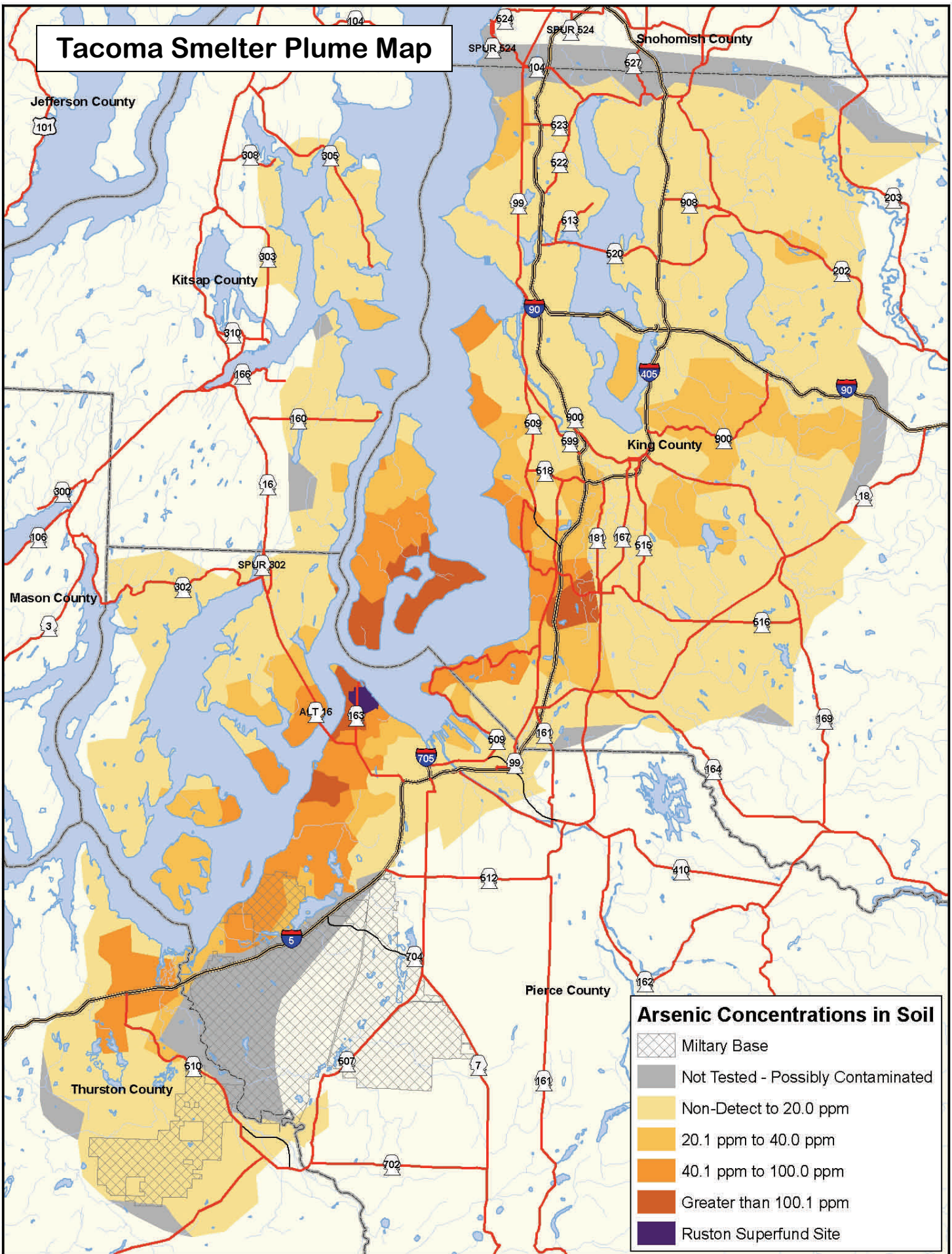
Other Asarco Settlement Cleanups

Everett Smelter: \$33.9 million for yard cleanups near the former smelter in Everett.
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/asarco/es_main.html

B&L Woodwaste: \$22 million for cleanup of a landfill containing wastes mixed with slag (a byproduct) from Asarco's Tacoma smelter.
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/B_L_Woodwaste/B_L_woodwaste_hp.htm

Mines: \$10.8 million for cleanup of Monte Cristo mine (Snohomish County), Van Stone and Cholett mines (Stevens), and Golden King mine (Chelan).

Tacoma Smelter Plume Map






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ECOLOGY
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Tacoma Smelter Plume King, Pierce, Thurston, Kitsap Counties, WA

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Why does it matter?

Asarco's former copper smelter in north Tacoma emitted arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. These pollutants were carried by the wind and settled on surface soils, creating the Tacoma Smelter Plume.

The plume is over 1,000 square miles! If you live inside the plume (see map on page 3), you could be affected. Children are at highest risk. See inside to find out what Ecology is doing and how you can protect yourself and your family.

Join or leave the mailing list:

Contact Hannah Aoyagi, Public Involvement Coordinator at Hannah.Aoyagi@ecy.wa.gov or 360-407-6790.
