

Ecology to Discuss Investigation and Cleanup Alternatives at Meetings for the General Public and Penitentiary

The Washington State Department of Ecology entered into an Agreed Order with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) that required DOC to conduct a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) at the penitentiary site.

The purpose of the investigation was to determine the type of contaminants and where they were located. The Feasibility Study evaluates cleanup options. The RI/FS report is now available for public comment. The site is located at 1313 North 13th Street, in the city of Walla Walla, Washington.



Meetings Planned and Public Comments Invited

The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study report is now available for your review and comment. You are invited to:

- **Review** the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Report.
- **Send** your comments to Ecology for consideration. *Comments will be accepted December 3, 2012 through January 8, 2013.* See the shaded box on page one for details about where to review documents and submit comments
- **Attend** a meeting to learn about the results of the investigation and proposed cleanup options.

Meetings are planned for the community and at the prison for staff and offenders. The meeting for the ***general public*** will be held on **December 10 at 7 p.m.** The meeting is at the Whitman College, Reid Campus Center, 280 Boyer Avenue, in the Reid G02 Room.

A meeting for ***penitentiary staff*** will be held on **December 20, 2012** at 10:00 a.m. in the West Complex Visiting Room.

Comments Accepted

December 3, 2012 through
January 8, 2013

For **ADA** accommodations or documents in an alternate format call 509/329-3546, 711 (relay service), or 877-833-6341 (TTY).

Para asistencia en Español

360/407-7528

Если вам нужна помощь на русском, звоните 509/710-7552

Submit Comments and Technical Questions to Sandra Treccani at

WA Department of Ecology
4601 North Monroe
Spokane WA 99205-1295
509/329-3412 satr461@ecy.wa.gov

Document Review Locations

WA Department of Corrections
Library, 1313 North 13th Street
Walla Walla, WA and 9 Additional
Corrections Libraries in Washington

WA Department of Ecology

4601 North Monroe
Spokane, WA 99205-1295
Call 509/329-3415

Walla Walla Public Library

238 East Alder Street
Walla Walla WA 99362

Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Website

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=4971>

Facility Site ID No. 779

Cleanup Site ID No. 4971

Several meetings for *penitentiary Offender Communication Liaisons (OCLs)* will be held **December 20, 2012** in the East and West Complex Visiting Rooms. WA Department of Corrections staff will provide the meeting times to OCLs prior to December 20, 2012. If offenders have questions, they may give them to the OCLs to ask at the meeting, and the OCLs will bring the information back to the offenders.

Meeting times for OCLs may be adjusted during the comment period, if necessary.

Penitentiary Overview

The Penitentiary property covers 540 acres. The facility began operating in 1887 and provides jobs for more than 1,000 staff as well as various services to the state of Washington through Correctional Industries. Some of the services include building and refinishing furniture, making license plates for the state, and farming.

Chemicals (TCE and PCE) were identified in groundwater outside the exterior prison fences and upgradient of the Sudbury Road landfill. Some of these chemicals were used in furniture refinishing and repair, license plate manufacturing, dry cleaning, motor pool maintenance, metal working and welding, photo processing, sign manufacturing, and medical and dental labs.

The city of Walla Walla regularly tests the drinking water that supplies the community and the prison. The city tested for certain chemicals called volatile organic compounds that might be related to contamination at the site. None of these contaminants, including PCE and TCE were found in the drinking water supplies.

The Remedial Investigation

The WA Department of Corrections began further investigations at the prison to more fully understand the types of contaminants at the site, where they were located, where they were

coming from, and whether they exceeded state standards. Originally PCE and TCE exceeded state standards for groundwater in certain monitoring wells. These wells are different than the wells used for the drinking water supplies. Ecology wanted to know more about these contaminants.

Remedial Investigation Results

The following were objectives of the Remedial Investigation:

1. Understand what contaminants are present in certain locations at the site and how much is there.
2. Determine whether historical activities at the penitentiary contributed to soil, soil vapor, and groundwater contamination at the site which resulted in contamination in areas outside the site.
3. Identify the source of chlorinated solvents in downgradient groundwater wells.
4. Determine whether contaminants at the site are coming from an upgradient source.

The investigation showed that groundwater meets state standards, and PCE and TCE no longer pose a concern.

Ecology uses complicated formulas to determine if contaminants might cause harm to humans and the environment. The numbers used in the formulas changed based on new scientific research, including information from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

New science from the EPA studies show levels of PCE and TCE in certain groundwater monitoring wells no longer pose a health concern to humans or the environment. Gasoline and lead in soil exceed state standards at certain locations.

The following are suspected sources of contamination in soil:

- The former landfill
- Historical releases and remaining contamination from small spills from the motor pool operations near the Capital Projects building
- Former dry cleaning operations near the Hobby Craft Center.

A person might become exposed through direct contact with contaminated soil, inhaling dust, or ingesting soil.

Feasibility Study Report

Three cleanup alternatives were evaluated to address soil contamination at the site. These alternatives are designed to protect human health and the environment.

Ecology will select one of these alternatives after reviewing and considering public comment. The alternatives evaluated are outlined below:

Alternative 1: Monitored Natural Attenuation, Land Use Controls, and Permeable Cover Improvements. The landfill would receive an enhanced permeable cover of 6" to 2' of soil over 1.8 acres, and the existing gravel layer will be maintained near the Capital Projects building. Work that might disturb these areas would require Ecology's approval.

Restrictions called Institutional Controls would be used where soil exceeds state standards. They would require that soil and gravel covers around the Capital Projects building and over the landfill be maintained. Irrigation well no. 4 and all monitoring wells would be shut down following proper Ecology guidelines.

Soil would be assessed if any excavation took place within the area where the contamination is located.

Alternative 2: Low Permeability Cap with Institutional Controls. This Alternative includes the items in Alternative 1, but uses protective barriers called caps instead of soil and gravel. One barrier would be installed over the existing landfill area that is 8 acres in size. The barrier for the landfill area will be 24 inches of soil with an 8 inch rock armor layer on the slopes.

The other barrier would be a 1 acre area near the Capital Project building. This cap would be made of crushed rock covered with asphalt.

Alternative 3: No Action. There would be no action taken at the site to reduce or monitor soil contamination.

The WA Department of Corrections has chosen Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative to address contamination at the site.

What Happens Next?

Ecology will review and consider all comments received by January 8, 2013. The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Report may be modified based upon public comments. If no changes are made, Ecology will begin developing a Draft Cleanup Action Plan.

The DCAP will evaluate all of the alternatives from the Feasibility Study and identify the alternative Ecology believes is most appropriate. Ecology's selected cleanup action must be based on the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). MTCA is the regulation that governs cleanup of toxic sites in the state of Washington. The selected cleanup must be protective of human health and the environment. If two or more alternatives are equal in benefits, the least costly option is selected, if it meets MTCA requirements.