

UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER VALLEY AIR QUALITY



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LEARN MORE ONLINE

Air Quality Assessment

Report: [https://
fortress.wa.gov/ecy/
publications/
SummaryPages/1702003.html](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1702003.html)

Investigation Information

Ecology: [https://
fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/
Sitepage.aspx?csid=12125](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=12125)

EPA: [www.epa.gov/
columbiariver/upper-columbia-
river-remedial-investigation-
feasibility-study](http://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/upper-columbia-river-remedial-investigation-feasibility-study)

Teck: www.ucr-rifs.com/

Ecology responds to citizen concerns

A large metals smelting facility operates about seven miles directly north of the U.S.-Canadian border in Trail, British Columbia (B.C.). Concerned residents of the greater Northport-area community living along the upper Columbia River valley have requested more information about current air quality.

In response, the Washington Department of Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program asked our Air Quality Program specialists to use existing air monitoring data to evaluate conditions and assess whether more air monitoring is needed.

What's the outcome of Ecology's air quality assessment?

We recommend additional air monitoring in the upper Columbia River valley. Air monitoring in this area last occurred in early 2009 at a single station near Northport, which is about 9.5 miles down the river valley from the U.S.-Canadian border.

Trail smelter upgrades significantly reduced emissions in the late 1990s. However, our air quality evaluation using data from the station near Northport and more current data from B.C. stations along the Columbia River valley indicate that lead, arsenic, and cadmium may remain above natural conditions.

Collecting new, reliable measurements of metal particles in the air within the upper Columbia River valley will be the best way to understand current conditions.

Is there is an immediate risk to human health?

Ecology does not believe current air quality conditions in this area pose acute health risks. However, current conditions cannot be fully evaluated

Cleanup site ID: 12125
Facility site ID: 17013



A metals smelter is operated by Teck Resources about seven miles north of the U.S.-Canadian border in Trail, British Columbia.

Special accommodations

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without new data. Existing air monitoring data suggest that certain metals may remain above natural conditions — which is why Ecology is asking to resume air monitoring.

What are the next steps?

Ecology shared our analysis with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Teck Resources owns the Trail smelter. Teck and EPA have an ongoing agreement to evaluate smelter-related pollution impacts in Washington. Ecology believes additional air monitoring is an important part of this agreement and associated remedial investigation.

Our goal is to seek a new phase of air quality monitoring in the upper Columbia River valley. This information will allow EPA and Ecology to better assess current conditions and potential health risks to the community.

What would an air monitoring program look like?

The specific details of a new program need planning. Ecology has requested that EPA coordinate with other parties and us to design a limited-duration monitoring program for the upper Columbia River valley. Air samples would be collected for a timeframe that ensures seasonal air quality changes can be assessed.

How would the new data be used?

Ecology would work with EPA and public health officials to further assess health concerns once additional monitoring is performed. Ecology expects EPA would use the data to inform a human health risk assessment.

Where can I get more information?

Our Air Quality Program published the report *Preliminary Review and Evaluation of Available Air Quality Monitoring Data and Consideration of Potential Present-Day Health Risks: Upper Columbia River Valley, near Northport, Washington* (Ecology publication no. 17-02-003, March 2017). The report details their evaluation of existing air monitoring data that is mentioned in this focus sheet. You can read and download that report from our website:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1702003.html>