

Georgia Pacific West Site



Georgia Pacific West Site facing east, October 2017

CONTACT & INFORMATION

Comments accepted:
MARCH 12 – APRIL 10, 2018

Submit comments online at:
bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest-Comments

Or by mail to:
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WA Department of Ecology
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
Phone: 425-649-7265
Email: Brian.Sato@ecy.wa.gov

Document review locations:
Bellingham Public Library
210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360-778-7323

Ecology-Bellingham Office
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101
Bellingham, WA 98225
By appointment, call 360-255-4400

Ecology-Bellevue Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
By appointment, call 360-649-7190

Website: bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest

Facility Site ID: 14

Site Cleanup ID: 2279

Environmental report ready for public review

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites you to comment on a feasibility study (environmental report) that evaluates cleanup alternatives for contamination within the Chlor-Alkali area of the Georgia Pacific West (GP West) site in Bellingham (see page 3).

The Port of Bellingham (Port) prepared the report with Ecology oversight. The Port identified and evaluated a range of cleanup alternatives, leading to a preferred alternative. All of this work is detailed in the report, and Ecology will accept comments on it from March 12 – April 10, 2018.

Ecology will hold a public meeting to provide more information and collect comments:

Thursday, March 15, 2018; 6-8pm

Ecology Office (New location next to Squalicum Creek Park)
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101, Bellingham, WA 98225

Background

The 74-acre GP West site is located at 300 West Laurel St, on Bellingham's waterfront. A pulp and tissue mill operated on the site from 1926 through 2007. In 2005, the Port acquired property within the site from the Georgia Pacific Corporation.

In 2013, an environmental investigation of the site showed contamination in two separate and distinct areas—the Pulp and Tissue Mill area and Chlor-Alkali area (see pages 2 and 3). Cleanup of the Pulp and Tissue Mill area was completed in 2016.

The site is one of 12 sites coordinated through the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot. The Pilot is a bay-wide multi-agency effort to clean up contamination, control pollution sources and restore habitat, with consideration for land and water uses.



Georgia Pacific West Site, Chlor-Alkali Area facing northwest, 1969.



Georgia Pacific West Site, Chlor-Alkali Area facing southeast. June, 2006.

Chlor-Alkali area

A chlor-alkali plant operated in this area from 1965-1999. It used mercury to produce chlorine and sodium hydroxide for use at the pulp & tissue mill. Petroleum was also stored there. As a result the 43-acre Chlor-Alkali area contains mercury, high pH (caustic), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and petroleum hydrocarbons at potentially harmful levels. These contaminants must be addressed under Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.

Previous cleanup work

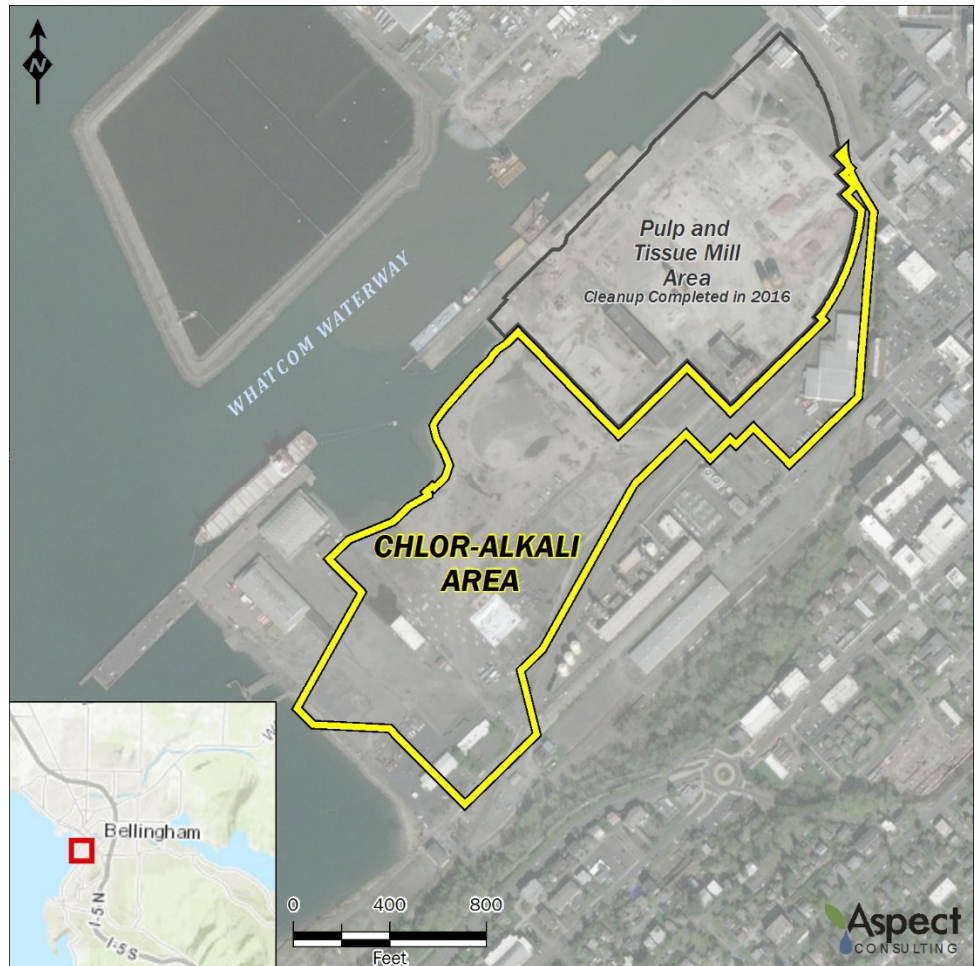
Over the years, the Georgia Pacific Corporation and the Port addressed contamination in certain portions of the Chlor-Alkali area:

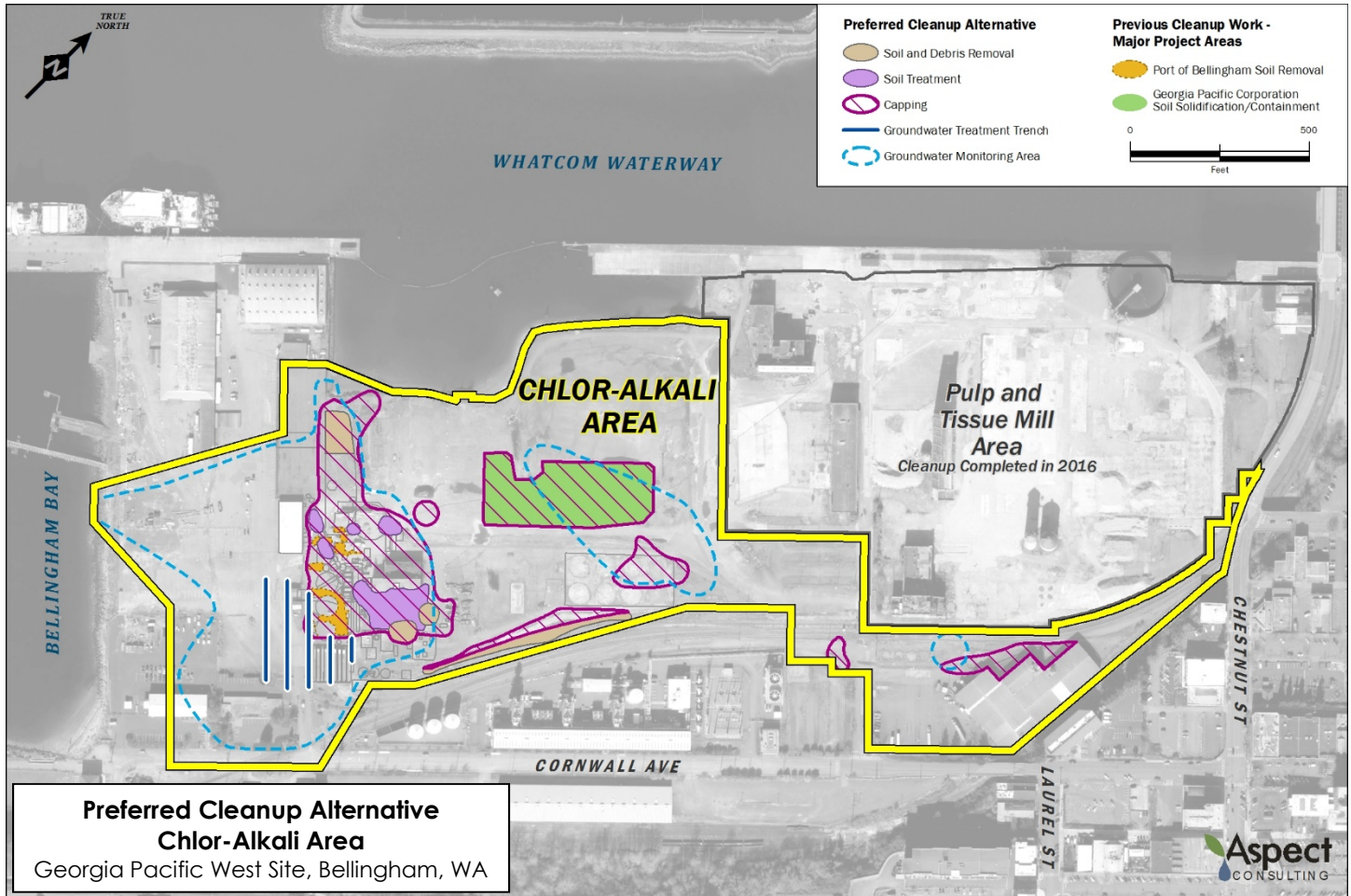
- Georgia Pacific Corporation—In 1976/1977, mercury-contaminated soil was solidified and contained in a 2-acre area. From 1993 through 2002, a number of projects included removal and proper disposal of mercury and petroleum contaminated soil.
- Port of Bellingham—In 2013/2014, about 2,300 cubic yards of mercury-contaminated soil and a mercury-contaminated building shell and floor were removed. In 2017, an additional 430 cubic yards of mercury-contaminated soil was removed.

Cleanup alternatives

To address remaining contamination within the Chlor-Alkali area, the Port evaluated eight different cleanup alternatives, comprised of various combinations of treating, removing, and isolating (capping) contaminants. The costs and environmental benefits of the alternatives were then compared, leading to a preferred alternative. The preferred alternative includes:

- treating or removing higher-level contaminated soil
- capping lower-level contaminated soil
- groundwater treatment
- groundwater monitoring to ensure natural processes continue to reduce contaminant levels





Preferred cleanup alternative

The preferred cleanup alternative shown above includes:

- The previously completed cleanup work described on page 3.
- Removal of below ground objects, followed by in-place treatment of mercury-contaminated soil.
- Removal and proper disposal of approximately 6,600 cubic yards of mercury and petroleum contaminated soil and debris.
- Capping contaminated soil to prevent:
 - rainwater from flowing through the soil and carrying contaminants to groundwater,
 - people, plants, and animals from coming into contact with contaminants, and
 - erosion into Bellingham Bay.
- Groundwater treatment to neutralize high pH (caustic) that can dissolve and mobilize contaminants.
- Groundwater monitoring to ensure natural processes continue to reduce levels of contamination.
- Requirements for existing and future buildings to address mercury and naphthalene vapors.
- Restrictions to prohibit groundwater use and disturbance of caps without prior Ecology approval.
- Requirements to inspect and maintain the cleanup elements and provide for long-term monitoring.



Georgia Pacific West Site, Chlor-Alkali area facing southwest. November, 2016.

Cost and funding

About \$5 million has already been spent on previous cleanup work conducted by the Port. The cleanup of remaining areas of the site is expected to cost about \$13 million. The Port is eligible for reimbursement of up to half of this cost from Ecology through the state's Remedial Action Grant Program, which helps pay for the cleanup of publicly-owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

Next steps and project timeline

- **March 12 – April 10, 2018:** 30-day public comment period
- **March 15, 2018:** Public meeting
- **Mid 2018:** Finalize the environmental report
- **Late 2018:** Based on the information in the environmental report, Ecology will select a cleanup action for the Chlor-Alkali area of the site. Ecology will issue our selected action and an associated legal agreement for public review. The legal agreement will require the Port, and possibly others, to design the cleanup action.
- **Late 2019:** Complete design activities.

En Español

El Departamento de Ecología le invita a comentar sobre un reporte ambiental para el sitio que está contaminado Georgia Pacific West en Bellingham.

Si le gustaría recibir este documento en español, por favor llame a Gretchen Newman al 360-407-6097 o envíe un correo electrónico a preguntas@ecy.wa.gov. Traducciones de avisos públicos para los sitios de limpieza de la Bahía de Bellingham se preparan bajo solicitud.

913 Squalicum Way Unit 101
Bellingham, WA 98225

Georgia Pacific West Site – report ready for review



Public Comment Period

March 12 – April 10, 2018

bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest

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Public meeting

Thursday, March 15, 2018; 6-8pm

Ecology Office– New Bellingham Location

913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101

Bellingham, WA 98225

Ecology invites you to comment on an environmental report for the Georgia Pacific West contaminated site in Bellingham.

The report evaluates cleanup alternatives and describes a preferred alternative for the Chlor-Alkali area of the site.

Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation for disabilities, call Ecology at 360-255-4382. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.