

Georgia-Pacific West Site



Comments accepted:

July 6 – August 4, 2021

Submit comments:

Online at: www.bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest-Comments2021

Or by mail to:

John Guenther, Site Manager
 WA Department of Ecology
 913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101
 Bellingham, WA 98225
 Phone: 360-255-4381
 Email: John.Guenther@ecy.wa.gov

Document review options:

www.bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest

For document review assistance,
 please contact:

Ian Fawley
 Outreach Specialist
Ian.Fawley@ecy.wa.gov
 425-324-5901

Site info:

Facility Site ID: 14
 Cleanup Site ID: 2279

Cleanup Action Plan ready for public review

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) invites you to review a draft cleanup action plan and associated documents for the Chlor-Alkali Area of the Georgia-Pacific West site (Site) on the Bellingham waterfront. The plan calls for treating, removing, and capping contaminated soil; treating and monitoring groundwater; and restricting future activities in certain areas.

The following documents are available for review:

- **Cleanup Action Plan:** Ecology's plan that describes the cleanup work to address contamination at the Chlor-Alkali Area of the Site.
- **Agreed Order Amendment:** Legal agreement between Ecology and the Port of Bellingham (Port) requiring design of the work described in the cleanup action plan. The Port will sequence this design through four separate projects.
- **State Environmental Policy Act-Determination of Non-Significance:** Ecology determination that the cleanup work is not likely to harm the environment.

Online public meeting – registration required



In consideration of public health and safety, Ecology will hold an online public meeting to provide more information and answer questions:

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

- **6:30 – 7:30 p.m.:** presentation
- **7:30 p.m.:** question/answer time (as needed)
- Visit www.bit.ly/Ecology-GPWest to register and join meeting.
- Call Ian Fawley, Outreach Specialist, 425-324-5901, for dial-in options and other online meeting support.

Online Site tour



- View a virtual Site tour including informational videos created by RE Sources:
www.re-sources.org/gpwest
- These videos are funded through a Public Participation Grant from Ecology.

Cleanup Action Plan

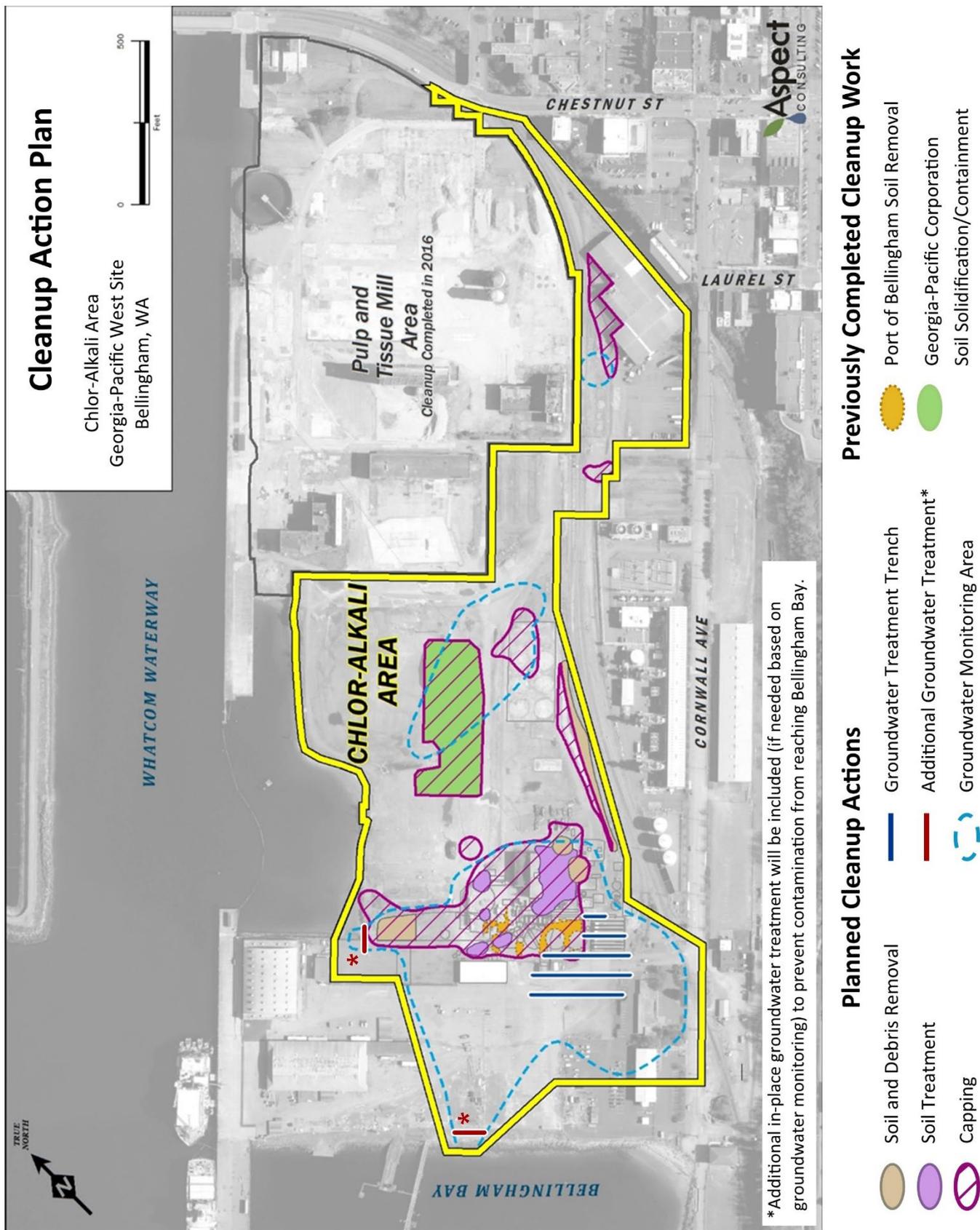
In June 2018, the Port, with Ecology oversight, completed a Feasibility Study assessing a range of cleanup options for the Chlor-Alkali Area of the Georgia-Pacific West site. Based on this work and an environmental study (Remedial Investigation) completed in 2013, Ecology has prepared a cleanup action plan to address contamination at the Chlor-Alkali Area.



Chlor-Alkali Area of the Georgia-Pacific West Site facing southwest, May 2021

The planned cleanup actions shown on Page 3 include:

- Removal of below ground objects, followed by in-place treatment of mercury-contaminated soil.
- Removal and disposal of approximately 7,000 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.
 - Additional in-place groundwater treatment will be included if needed to prevent contamination from reaching Bellingham Bay.
- Administrative requirements:
 - Requirements for existing and future buildings to address potential 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.

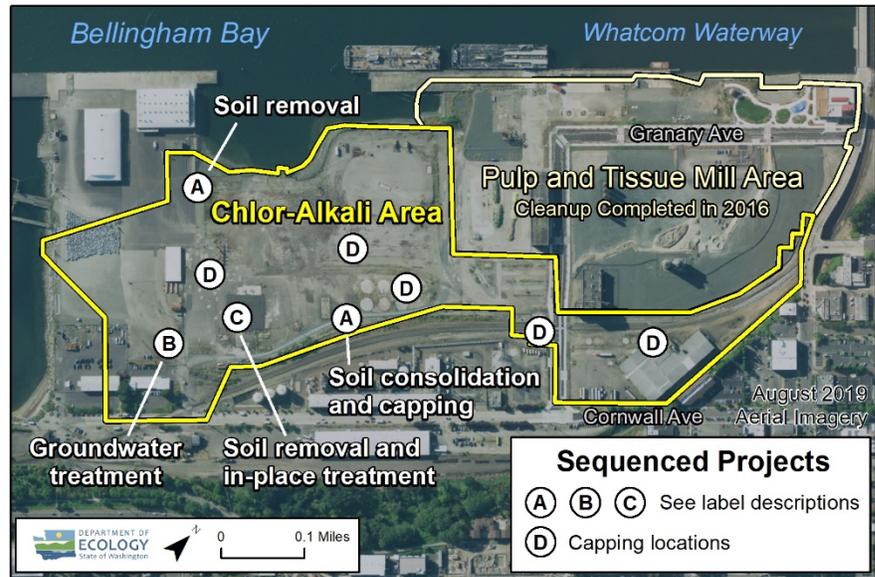


Toxics Cleanup Program

Agreed Order Amendment

The legal agreement amendment between Ecology and the Port includes an updated schedule of four sequenced engineering design projects. The figure to the right shows the project locations within the Chlor-Alkali Area:

- A. Soil removal, consolidation, and capping
- B. Groundwater treatment
- C. Soil removal and in-place treatment
- D. Site-wide capping of multiple locations (following completion of other planned cleanup actions)



Locations of sequenced engineering design

Sequencing design and implementation (construction) for the four components of the cleanup action will enable construction to proceed for the more straightforward components while engineering design continues for the more complicated components.

Costs and funding

The Port has already spent about \$6 million on cleanup work in the Chlor-Alkali Area. The design and cleanup of remaining areas of this area is expected to cost about \$13 million. The Port is eligible for reimbursement of up to half of their cost from Ecology through the state’s remedial action grant program. This funding helps to pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

What happens next?

- **July 6 – August 4, 2021:** Hold a 30-day public comment period.
- **July 14, 2021:** Host an online public meeting.
- **Late 2021:** Finalize the cleanup action plan and associated documents. Ecology will review and consider all comments received and respond accordingly.
- **2021-2023:** Estimated time to complete design of the cleanup action. The Port will sequence completion of engineering design documents for four separate components of the cleanup action.
- **2023-2025:** Estimated timeframe for sequenced implementation (construction) of the cleanup action

Implementation of the cleanup action will occur under a future separate legal agreement, which will be issued for public review and comment.

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 al 509-329-3444 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.

Toxics Cleanup Program

Background

The 74-acre Georgia-Pacific 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 (Remedial Investigation) of the Site showed contamination in two separate and distinct areas—the Pulp and Tissue Mill Area and Chlor-Alkali Area. 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.



Aerial view of Georgia-Pacific West cleanup site

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 36-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 ([MTCA](#)¹).



Chlor-Alkali Area operations facing northwest, 1969

Previously completed 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 with debris and a mercury-contaminated building shell and floor were removed. In 2017, an additional 430 cubic yards of mercury-contaminated soil was removed.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Rules-directing-our-cleanup-work/Model-Toxics-Control-Act>

Toxics Cleanup Program
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101
Bellingham, WA 98225

Georgia-Pacific West Site *Cleanup Action Plan ready for public review*



Aerial view of Georgia-Pacific West cleanup site

Public comment period

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Online public meeting



July 14, 2021; 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Visit Ecology's webpage listed above for registration and login details. (See page 1 for more information.)

Online Site tour



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Información en español incluida (página 4)

Accommodation Requests: To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-255-4382 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.