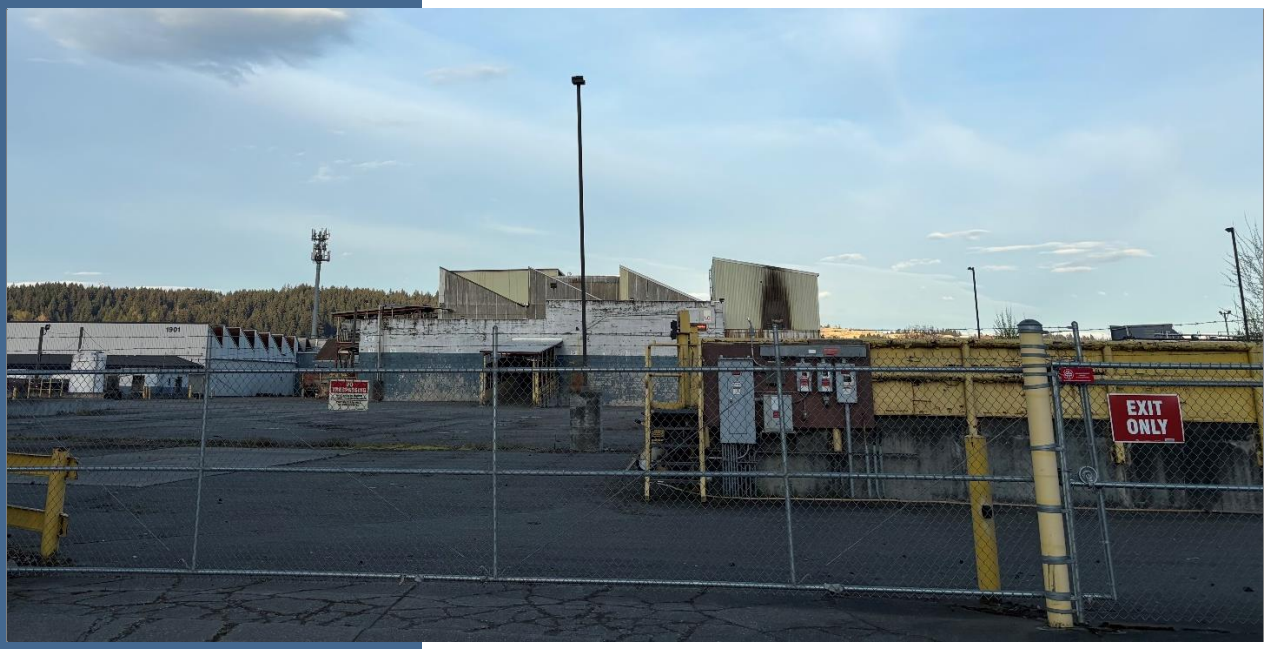

Public Participation Plan

Sonoco Products Co.
1802 Steele Ave
Sumner, WA 98390

Solid Waste Management Program

Washington State Department of Ecology

Headquarters

Lacey, Washington

Publication 26-07-012, August 2026

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's Sonoco cleanup site page.[1]

Cover photo credit

- Aidan McCooey, September 2024

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 17058
- Facility site ID: 39542787

Contact Information

Solid Waste Management Program, Industrial Section[2]

Ecology Headquarters
300 Desmond Dr. SE
Lacey, WA 98503
Phone: 360-280-4325

Tara Roberts, Public Involvement Coordinator
(360) 280-4325, tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov

Aidan McCooey, Site Manager
564-233-5597, aidan.mccooey@ecy.wa.gov

ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to our information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of state and federal laws.

To request an ADA accommodation, email tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov, call 360-280-4325, or dial 711 to call through the Washington Telecommunications Relay for services like text telephone (TTY). Visit Ecology.wa.gov/ADA for more accessibility information.

Language Access

The Department of Ecology offers free translation and interpretation services. If you need help in your preferred language, please call Tara Roberts at (360) 280-4325 and request an interpreter, or email tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov.

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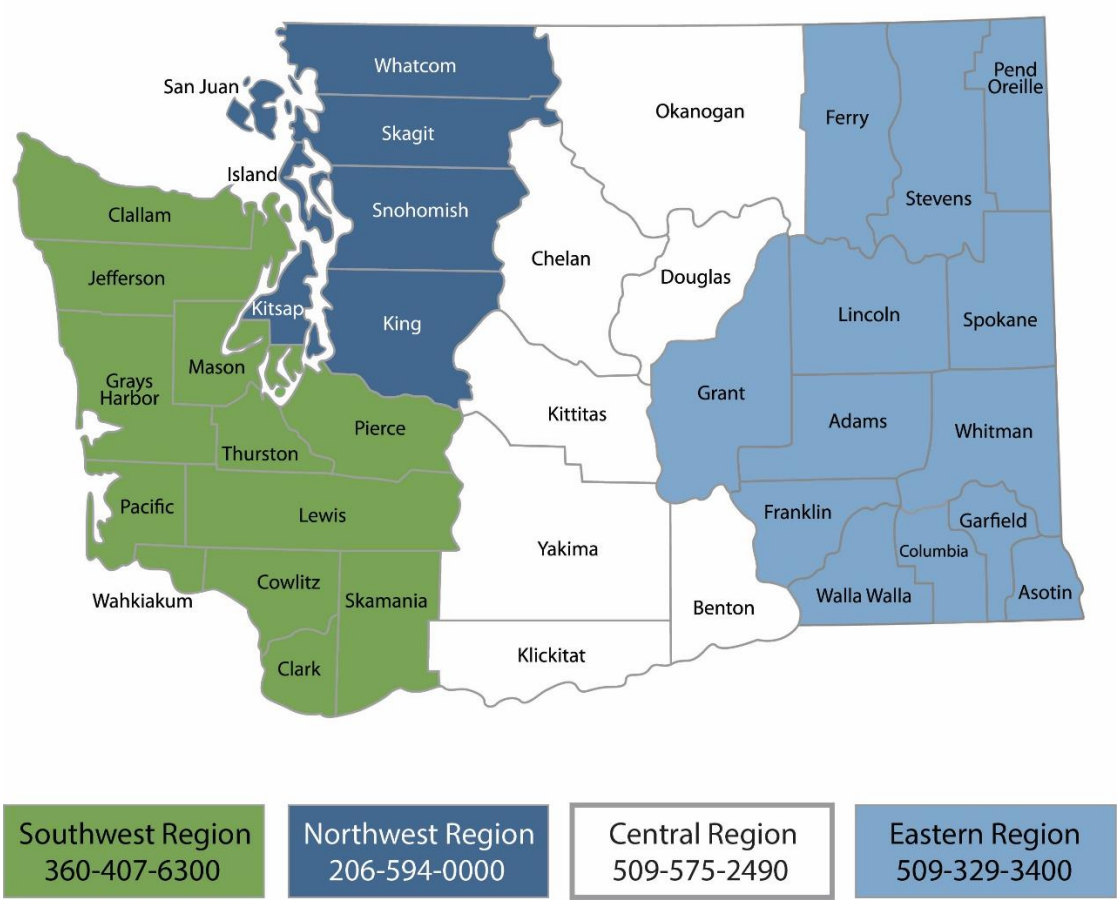
[1] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17058
[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/permits-certifications/industrial-facilities-permits

Department of Ecology's Region Offices

Map of Counties Served



Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Across Washington	PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

Public Participation Plan

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State of Washington

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Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this Public Participation Plan in collaboration with Sonoco Products Co. (Sonoco), the parties responsible for cleanup costs. The goal of this plan is to ensure meaningful community involvement throughout the cleanup of the Sonoco Products Co. (site).

This plan outlines how Ecology will keep the public informed about contamination investigations and cleanup options at each stage of the process. Please review Appendix A for more information about the cleanup process. The plan also details when and how the community can participate in the cleanup process. We encourage the public to engage with the decision-making opportunities and provide input.

Site contacts

To be included in the site record, comments about the cleanup process must be submitted during comment periods. Questions and informal comments or information about the site's history are welcome anytime.

Ecology

Headquarters
300 Desmond Dr. SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Aidan McCooey, Site Manager
(564) 233-5597
aidan.mccooey@ecy.wa.gov

Tara Roberts, Public Involvement Coordinator
tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov
(360) 280-4325

Sonoco Products Co.

Sonoco Products Co
1802 Steele Ave
Sumner, WA 98390

John Florence Jr., General Counsel and Vice President
john.florence@sonoco.com

Tim Trumbull, Environmental Principal
tim.trumbull@sonoco.com
(843) 339-6006

If you are unable to reach these contacts, please visit the cleanup site page[3] for up-to-date contact information.

[3] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17058

Public Participation Activities

Members of the public may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. Interested parties do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact Ecology.

However, to be included in the formal site record, comments about the site investigation, cleanup alternatives, or cleanups must be submitted during formal comment periods. In addition, the public is invited to review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in the cleanup's decision-making.

How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the cleanup, Ecology will mail notices about public comment periods to addresses surrounding the site. The mailing list area will vary depending on the type of contamination and where it's located. However, the list will at least include addresses within a 3/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals. These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if not yet scheduled.

Comment period notices will be available online and at document repositories (for example at the library closest to the site). Notices may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, or post offices).

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the site's status. These informational documents will be available online and print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Postal mailing list

Ecology maintains a mailing list that includes addresses within a 3/4-mile radius of the site and relevant local, state, and federal government contacts.

People on the mailing list receive public comment notices when draft documents are available.

We will add additional individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list as requested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Tara Roberts at 360-280-4325 or tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's *Contaminated Site Register*.[4] To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please subscribe online,[5] or contact Sarah Kellington at sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events for this site in ads or notices published in the Bonney Lake Courier-Herald e will also publish notice on our Public Input & Events Listing.[6]

Email lists

Ecology maintains an email list to update interested persons about this site. If you would like to be added to the email list for this site, please contact Tara Roberts at 360-280-4325 or tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov.

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a website for the Sonoco site.[7] The website provides site information, and you may download cleanup documents.

We may also share information about cleanup sites through news releases, our blog, and social media.[8]

Automatic site updates

You can subscribe to this site from our cleanup webpage[8]. You'll receive a weekly email if we change the site's status, add documents to the site's webpage, or open a comment period.

Places to see print documents

During public comment periods, you can find print documents at the following locations:

Sumner Pierce County Library
1116 Fryar Ave.
Sumner, WA 98390
253-548-3306

Washington Department of Ecology
Headquarters
300 Desmond Dr. SE
Lacey, WA 98503

To schedule an appointment, please contact Tara Roberts at 360-280-4325 or tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov.

Signs around the cleanup site

[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data
[5] https://ecology.wa.gov/site-register
[6] https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing
[7] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/17058
[8] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News

We may also install signs displaying information about project status, traffic impacts, and health risks around the cleanup site.

How you can share information with us

We hold public comment periods and sometimes public events to learn your thoughts, opinions, and concerns about cleanup at a site. We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Aidan McCooey at 564-233-5597 or aidan.mccooey@ecy.wa.gov.Public comment periods

At a minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 7 for more information) requires 30-day comment periods to allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, Ecology may extend the public comment period.

When Ecology oversees State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determinations (see page 8 for more information), we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other cleanup documents are concurrently available for review.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, the documents will become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings based on community interest. At meetings, workshops, and open houses, attendees can ask questions, learn more about the site, and submit written comments when a comment period is open. At a public hearing, verbal comments are transcribed for the record, and Ecology responds to them after the comment period in our response to comments.

If we have not scheduled an event, we will hold one if 10 people request it. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the event occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public events are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

Public Participation Grants

Grants may be available to neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site. For contaminated sites, these funds can be used to:

- Hire an expert to help interpret technical information

- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process

For more information about public participation grants, please contact Laura Busby at 360-280-5088 or laura.busby@ecy.wa.gov and Maria Marlin at 360-407-6083 or maria.marlin@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the Public Participation Grant webpage.[9]

Site Information

Historical use

Northern Paperboard constructed the facility in 1915. In a letter dated March 3, 1980, Sonoco notified Ecology that Sonoco purchased the Site from the Fibreboard Division of Louisiana-Pacific (Fibreboard) and is the current owner and operator of the Site. The Site operated as a mechanical pulping mill from 1915 to 2024. See Appendix B for a map of the Site.

How the site became contaminated

The paper mill on the Site has operated since 1915, before the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) was put into law in 1976. Sonoco has owned and operated the paper mill on the Site since 1980, before the 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) and the 1988 MTCA initiative were put into law. Prior to these regulations, it is unclear if historical releases were reported or documented.

In 1971, Fibreboard stated that the Sumner mill's office received complaints of oil discharged to the White River in 1953, 1956, and 1963. Fibreboard stated that the mill found the 1963 discharge to be the result of an accidental oil spill. No cleanup information was included in the letter, except that the company took immediate action upon discovering the oil loss. In 1971, Fibreboard stated that on March 8, 1962, the Mill conducted a survey and found fibers suspended in the White River below the Mill's outfall. Fibreboard stated in the winter of 1961-1962, the Mill received multiple complaints from fisherman about fibers suspended in the White River. In 1991, Sonoco stated that on August 19, 1991, Sonoco released about 6,000 gallons of untreated plant effluent to the White River. Sonoco stated that the primary sump overflowed into a storm drain. Sonoco stated the effluent contained 72 lbs of biological oxygen demand (BOD) and 10 lbs of total suspended solids (TSS). On April 5, 2015, Ecology received a report of concern with photos documenting a milky discharge from Outfall 001. Sonoco stated that the visible effluent reported to Ecology was the result of solids that passed through Sonoco's secondary clarifier.

In 1988, Ecology advised Sonoco to cease the application of used oil as a dust suppressant at the Site. It is unclear why Ecology sent this letter; to date, Sonoco and Ecology have not found

[9] https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG

documentation that further indicates the onsite use or non-use of used oil as a dust suppressant. In 1996 Sonoco notified Ecology of a release of about 355 gallons of #5 fuel oil from the primary clarifier feed pump station. A letter from Ecology dated December 18, 1996 advised Sonoco implement procedures and equipment to mitigate future contamination to waters of the state. First responders could not fully contain the #5 fuel oil released during the event and contamination may persist on site and in the surrounding area. In 1996, Don Nelson of Ecology Industrial Section reported a spill of 15 to 20 gallons of diesel fuel oil at the southwest corner of the weigh scales that occurred on May 1, 1996. The incident history report stated the spill was "Not cleaned up to MTCA levels at 200 ppm. Will be trying to clean up more." No further details are available in the incident history report. In 1997, Sonoco mentioned an oil leak at the mill that occurred in the months of December 1996 and January 1997.

In 1976 and 1977, Ecology documented several polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) sampling analyses conducted by Ecology. Ecology reported PCB levels in the effluent that ranged from 10 ppb to 290 ppb. Ecology found a concentration of 15 ppb in the Mill's raw well water supply. Ecology did not detect PCB's in sediment samples taken above and below the Mill's White river outfall.

Contamination

Due to historic land use and industrial practices, soil and groundwater may be contaminated with:

- Total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) from diesel, gasoline, and oil
- Metals (arsenic, barium, chromium, zinc, etc.)
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)
- Non-Halogenated Organics (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, other)

Cleanup plans

Ecology has named Sonoco as a potentially liable party (PLP) and has finalized an Agreed Order with Sonoco. Please see Ecology's website[10] for a list of opportunities for the public to comment on actions associated with the cleanup at this Site.

Area community

- Sonoco is located at 1802 Steele Avenue in Sumner, Washington. The property is considered industrial in a light industrial neighborhood. The facility is located less than 1/4 of a mile from the White River and about three-tenths of a mile from Seibenthaler Park which is located in a residential neighborhood just on the other side of the railroad tracks from the light industrial neighborhood.

[10] https://ecology.wa.gov/spills-cleanup/contamination-cleanup/cleanup-process

- Sumner is a growing community just beyond the City of Puyallup and located between Hwy 167 and Hwy 410 with a population close to 11,000. The median household income is between $98,000 and $99,000. The largest industries in Sumner are retail trade, manufacturing, and construction with the highest paying industries being Public Administration, Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services, and Educational Services. Its largest ethnic group is White (non-Hispanic) which makes up approximately 74 percent of the population. White (Hispanic) makes up an additional 6 percent of the population with the remaining 20 percent being mixed race(s) of mixed descent.
- In 2023 none of the households in Sumner reported speaking a non-English language at home as their primary language, but this does not account for multi-lingual households.
- There are several Tribes that are in the area or have historically relied on resources from the area: the Puyallup, the Muckleshoot, the Nisqually, the Snoqualmie, the Suquamish, the Squaxin, and the Yakama. Of these, the Muckleshoot and the Puyallup both have their headquarters located in nearby cities.

According to the current data, there is not a need for translation in this community; however, Ecology will reach out to community organizations to determine whether there is a growing translation need within the community. To request information in another language, call Tara Roberts at 360-280-4325 or tara.roberts@ecy.wa.gov, and wait on the line while we connect an interpreter.

We strive to make our public participation efforts as inclusive as possible and welcome your input about how to best reach the nearby community.

Tribal engagement

We will reach out to Tribes to offer opportunities to engage in the cleanup process that are separate from the public involvement process. This engagement is described in a site-specific Tribal Engagement Plan, as required by WAC 173-340-620.[11] We invite Tribal members and other indigenous peoples to engage in the public involvement process as well.

Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)[12] and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. Passed in 1989, MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington state. This law sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects people and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this plan.

[11] https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340-620
[12] https://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca

Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began in 1988 as a citizen-led effort to clean up contaminated sites in Washington state. The law holds property owners or operators responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property.

Ecology carries out MTCA, making sure cleanups happen according to state rules and regulations. These rules are found in Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code (WAC).[13] Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and the property is placed on the Contaminated Sites List[14] if the pollution is determined to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. This starts the cleanup process at the site.

The cleanup process under MTCA includes several steps (Appendix A). Public involvement is a key part of MTCA's cleanup process.[15] Nearby residents, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties can review and comment on documents related to steps that make crucial decisions or plans about the cleanup.

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).[16] Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

Plan Amendments

Ecology developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Aidan McCooey at 564-233-5597 or aidan.mccooey@ecy.wa.gov.

We intend for this plan to provide the public with information on opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed reflect Ecology's current plans to keep the public informed. It also provides ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms found in this plan are insufficient or would like to modify them in some way, please contact us. We will work to find solutions. We can implement new activities or outreach tools right away, with or without amending this plan.

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[13] https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340
[14] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated
[15] http://www.ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process
[16] https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11

Appendix A. Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law. See the attached, accessible PDF for details.

Washington's Cleanup Process

Public participation plans and comment periods are only required for cleanups under a legal agreement with Ecology. Otherwise, all cleanups follow the same steps. The steps are defined by Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

Public input opportunity

Initial investigation
Find out if there's contamination needing cleanup.

Assess the site
Evaluate potential threat to humans and the environment.

Study the site (remedial investigation)
- Find out what and where the contamination is.
- Determine how contamination might impact living things.

Consider options (feasibility study)
- Compare ways to keep the contamination from harming people or the environment.
- Weigh benefits versus costs of each cleanup option.

Plan the cleanup (cleanup action plan)
- Describe Ecology's selected cleanup option.
- Set cleanup standards that will protect living things.
- Schedule next steps.
- Set requirements for monitoring and maintenance.

Design the cleanup
Make detailed construction plans for the cleanup action.

Clean up the site!
Complete the cleanup action. For example:
- Constructing a multi-layered capping system.
- Installing a treatment system.
- Removing contamination to a special landfill.

Monitor, maintain, and review
- Operate treatment systems and monitor progress.
- Prevent activities that could disturb the cleanup.
- Review regularly to ensure cleanup still protects living things.

Remove from Contaminated Sites List
Move to No Further Action list if site meets all standards and requirements.

Interim actions may clean up some contamination before the final cleanup.

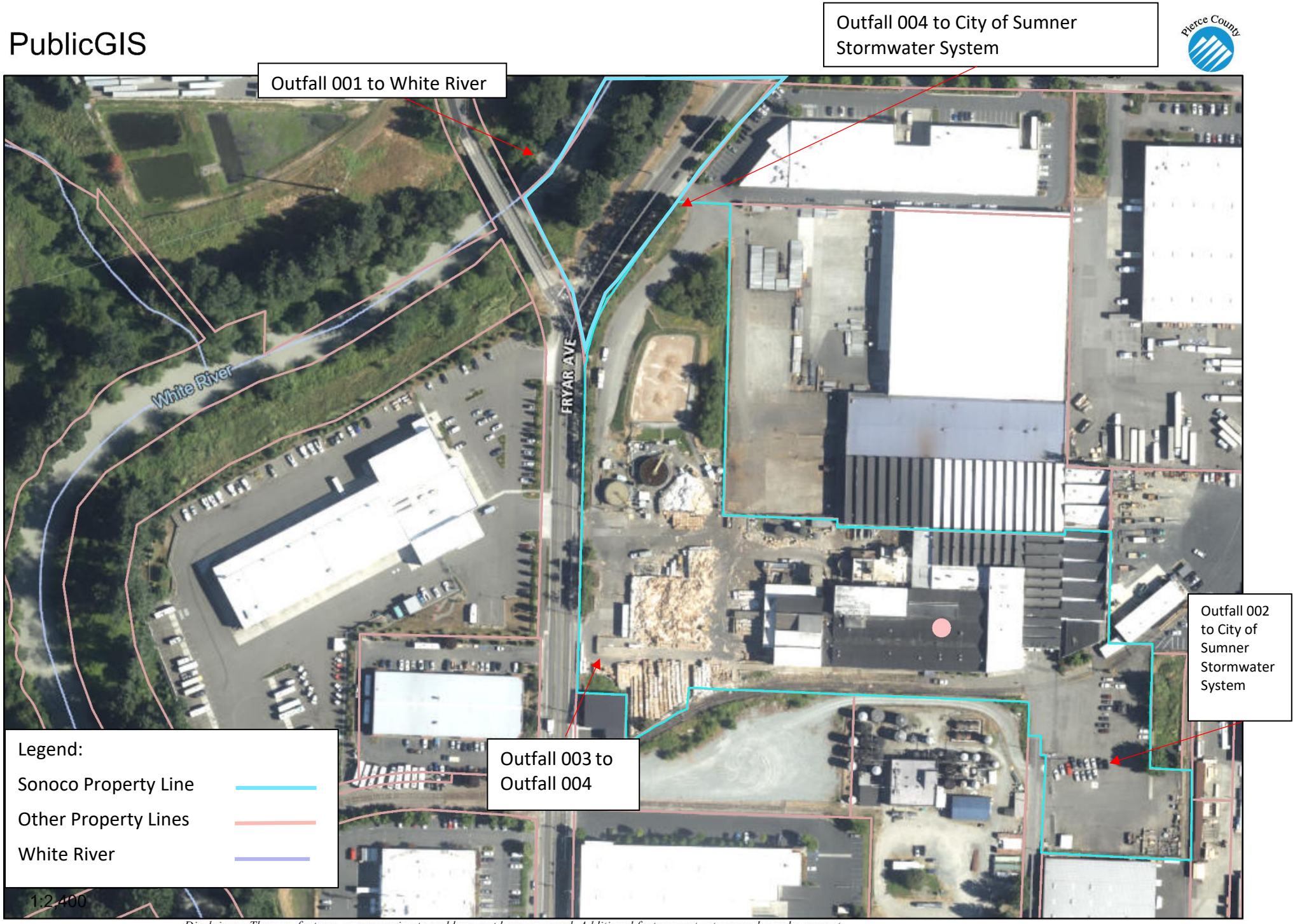
Legal orders or agreements define required tasks and schedules.

Public participation plans explain how Ecology will ask for input from the local community.

January 2024 | publication 19-09-166

Appendix B. Site Map

PublicGIS



Disclaimer: The map features are approximate and have not been surveyed. Additional features not yet mapped may be present. Pierce County assumes no liability for variations ascertained by formal survey.

Date: 3/12/2025 04:54 PM