Northern State Multi Service Center Cleanup Site

Former Northern State Hospital – Source: A. Muia

Comments accepted

12:00 a.m. June 15 –
11:59 p.m., July 16, 2026

Submit comments

Online:
www.go.ecology.wa.gov/NorthernStateComments

By mail or email:
Chris DeBoer, LHG
Site Manager
WA Department of Ecology
PO Box 330316
Shoreline, WA 98133-9716
Chris.DeBoer@ecy.wa.gov
425-466-8732

Document review

www.go.ecology.wa.gov/NorthernState
Central Skagit
Sedro-Woolley Library
110 W State Street
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
360-755-3985

Site info

Facility Site ID: 65415931
Cleanup Site ID: 10048

Public Outreach Contact

Kristen Forkeutis,
Outreach Specialist
Kristen.Forkeutis@ecy.wa.gov
425-240-4353

Documents ready for public review and comment

The Department of Ecology is overseeing the cleanup of the Northern State Multi Service Center site in Sedro-Woolley, WA. The Port of Skagit is the responsible party cleaning up contamination at the site. Ecology invites you to review and comment on the following documents:

- **Interim action work plan:** a document outlining the scope of work and schedule for the interim action (early partial cleanup).
- **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Nonsignificance:** our determination that the cleanup work is not likely to harm the environment.
- **Updated public participation plan:** describes how we will inform the community about the site activities and ways to become involved.

The public may request a meeting about the documents. Ecology will consider requests and schedule a meeting when appropriate. To make a request, contact Kristen Forkeutis before July 16, 2026. See the blue box to the left for public outreach contact information.

Language services

We offer translation and interpretation services at no cost. To request a translated copy of this material, email Kristen.Forkeutis@ecy.wa.gov or call 425-240-4353. If you call, ask for an interpreter to be connected with one.

Español: Una copia traducida de este material podría estar disponible en otros idiomas sin costo. Para solicitarla, envíe un correo electrónico a Kristen.Forkeutis@ecy.wa.gov o llame al 425-240-4353.

Site background

The 220-acre Northern State property sits on the northeastern edge of Sedro-Woolley in Skagit County, WA. The property was developed in 1909 for the Northern State Hospital, which was owned and operated by Washington State. The hospital treated individuals with mental health issues and employed more than 400 people. It was a self-sustained, residential community with a farm, creamery, shop, and more. It closed in 1973 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2015 the City of Sedro-Woolley annexed the Northern State property, and in 2018, Washington State transferred ownership of the property to the Port of Skagit. The port, city, and county are working together to turn the property into the Sedro-Woolley Innovation for Tomorrow (SWIFT) Center,[1] a mixed-use campus for education, research and development, manufacturing, hospitality, and commercial venues. Many of the property's buildings are currently leased to tenants.

Northern State Hospital dedication, May 1912 – Source: WA State Archives

[1] https://www.swiftcenterskagit.com

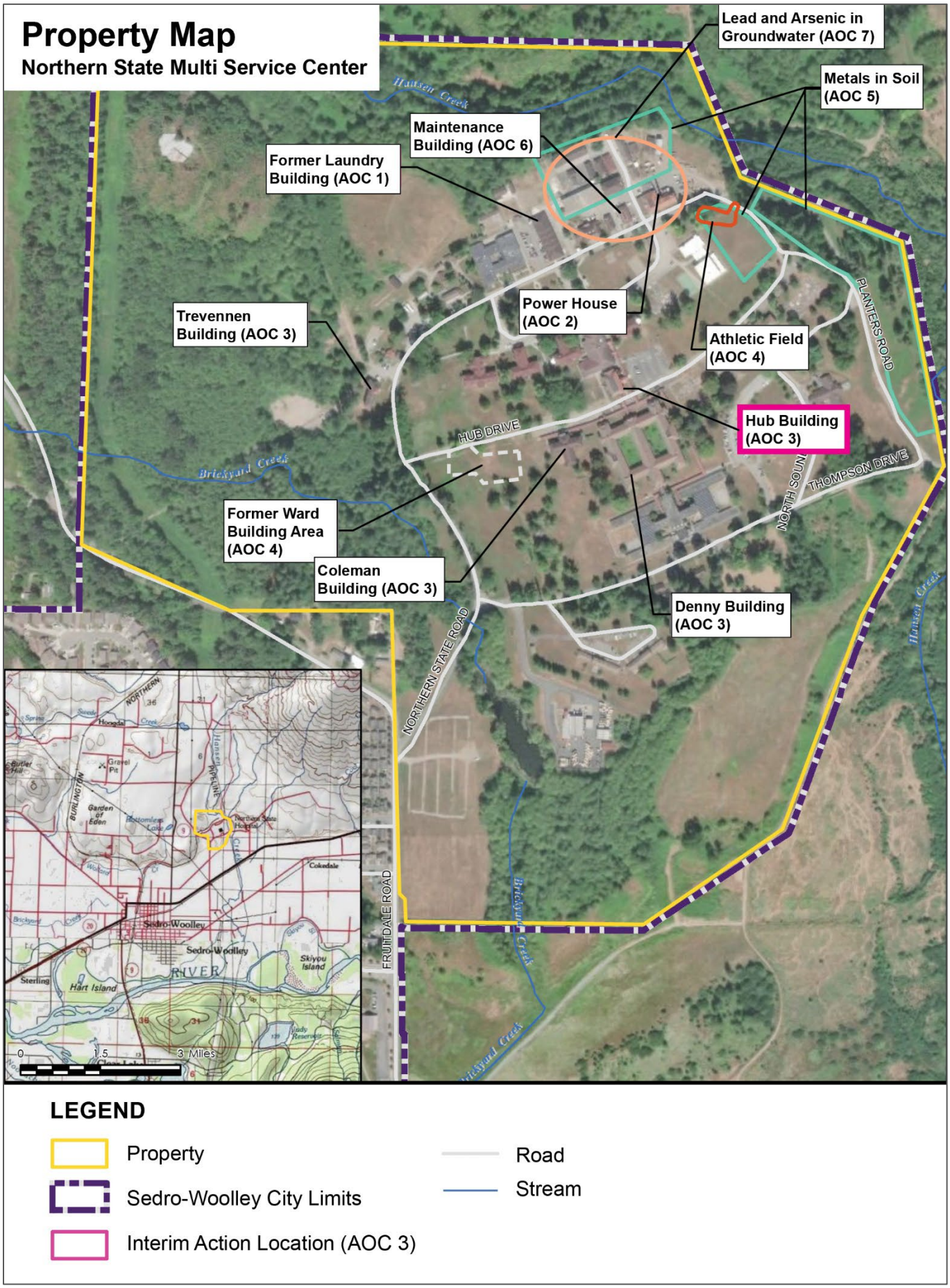


Figure 1: Map of the Northern State Multi Service Center property showing the seven areas of concern (AOC)

Contamination

Decades of hospital operations and maintenance for a powerhouse, a water treatment facility, a fueling station, maintenance and paint shops, and a laundry facility contributed to contamination on the property. Debris from demolished buildings was also reportedly buried or disposed of on site.

Environmental investigations found contaminated soil, groundwater, and soil vapor. The following contaminants are above WA State cleanup levels established to protect human health and the environment:

- **Soil:** metals, carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs), tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), and petroleum products
- **Groundwater:** metals, PCE, and petroleum products
- **Soil vapor:** PCE and TCE

Testing identified contamination within seven areas of concern (AOC) at the site (see Figure 1).

- **AOC 1:** Former Laundry Building
- **AOC 2:** Power House Building
- **AOC 3:** Hub Building, Trevennen Building, Coleman Building, and Denny Building
- **AOC 4:** Former Ward Building Area and Athletic Fields
- **AOC 5:** Metals in Soil
- **AOC 6:** Maintenance Building
- **AOC 7:** Lead and Arsenic in Groundwater

Interim action work plan

The interim action work plan describes how to clean up soil contaminated with lead from old paint chips around the historic Hub Building in AOC 3 (see Figure 1). The following cleanup actions will stop people and wildlife from coming into contact with lead contaminated soil, prevent impacts to groundwater, and support renovations for the building:

- Excavate 170 tons of soil to about 1.5 feet below the surface and about 5 feet from the exterior of the building.
- Test the excavated soil for lead levels, and if needed, treat the soil on-site.
- Dispose of excavated soil at a permitted landfill.
- Backfill excavated areas with clean soil from a local source.

Hub Building– Source: A. Muia

Best management practices (BMPs) like silt fences and stockpile covers will minimize impacts from soil during excavation and temporary onsite storage. BMPs will protect people and the environment by reducing the potential for soil erosion, dust, runoff, and contact.

Cost and funding

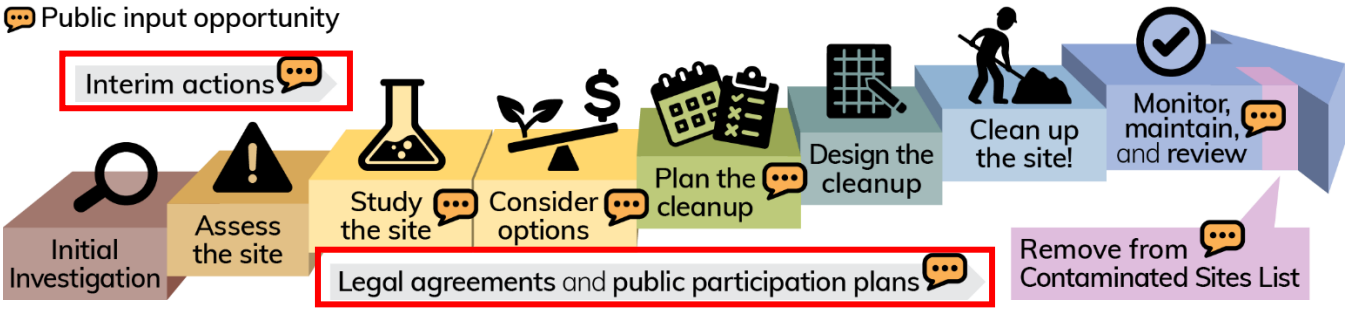
The port is eligible for 90% reimbursement of their costs from Ecology through the state's Remedial Action Grant Program,[2] which helps pay for the cleanup of publicly owned sites. The Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a tax on hazardous substances.

The port also received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cleanup grant to support interim cleanup actions.

Ecology's cleanup process

The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA)[3] is Washington's environmental cleanup law. It provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect human health and the environment. Ecology is responsible for administering MTCA, including the oversight or management of cleanups. The MTCA cleanup process[4] is completed in steps (see graphic below) over a variable timeline.

After the interim action work plan and updated public participation plan—both outlined in red below—are finalized for the site, the cleanup process will continue, and the interim action will take place.



Washington's formal cleanup process

What happens next?

We will consider all the comments received during this public comment period and may make changes to the documents. If the documents require significant changes, we will hold another public comment period. Otherwise, we will finalize the documents.

The next steps include studying the site (remedial investigation), considering options for cleanup (feasibility study), and planning the cleanup (cleanup action plan). Currently, the site continues to be studied and options for cleanup are being evaluated.

Automatic site updates

You can subscribe from the site's webpage.[5] 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.

[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/grants-ORAG
[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/mtca
[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/mtca-process
[5] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/10048

Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 330316
Shoreline, WA 98133-9716

Northern State Multi Service Center Cleanup Site

Provide your feedback on documents about the cleanup.

Información en español incluida

Scan for details

Public comment period:

12:00 a.m., June 15 –
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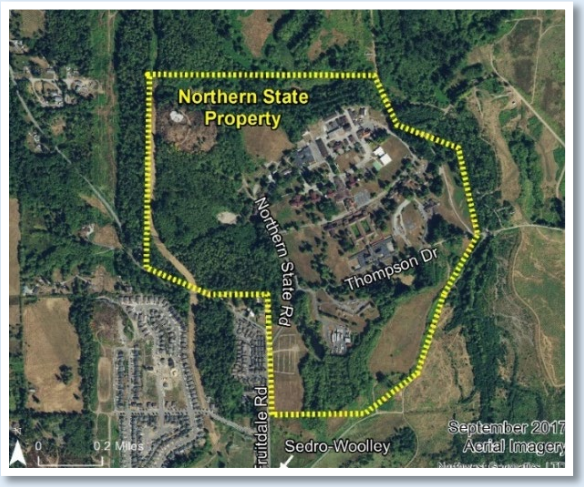

Northern State property, September 2017

ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, email Kristen.Forkeutis@ecy.wa.gov, call (425) 240-4353, 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.