

BUFFALO DON MURPHY

Waller Road



Public comment sought on proposal to remove cleaned-up site from state's Hazardous Sites List

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has prepared this fact sheet pursuant to the Model Toxics Control Act, Chapter 70.105D RCW, to provide you with information about a proposal to remove the Buffalo Don Murphy Waller Road site from its list of contaminated sites (known as the Hazardous Sites List).

The Buffalo Don Murphy Waller Road site is ranked "1" on the Hazardous Sites List. A rank of "1" represents the highest level of concern compared to other sites on the list and a rank of "5" the lowest. You are welcome and encouraged to comment on this proposal through May 15, 2002.

If substantive comments are received, further investigation or cleanup may occur at the site.

Site background

The site is approximately five acres in size and is located at 6401 Waller Road East in unincorporated Pierce County.

The site was initially owned by Donald "Buffalo Don" Murphy who operated a building demolition salvage business on the site during the 1960s and 1970s. Murphy also stored drums of industrial waste on the site.

In the early 1980s and up until the mid-1990s, the site was leased by Service Fuel Company who used it for storing wood chips, firewood, and bark.

By 1995, the site was nearly vacant, except for some old cars and other debris stored on the site. In 1999, Reichhold Chemical, Inc. (Reichhold) purchased the property.

The contamination

Drums containing industrial waste products were stored on the property. The drums had leaked and/or spilled and contaminated the soil. Many of the drums came from Reichhold and contained waste products from the manufacture of disinfectants. Other drums came from unknown sources and contained oil, rust preservatives, paints, and other unknown materials.

The cleanup

Some 1,000 drums and contaminated soil were removed from the site between 1976 and 1979. In the 10 years following, the results of several sampling efforts indicated that phenol chemicals and dioxins may be present in the soil. Ground water samples indicated no contamination.

April 2002

Public Comment Period

April 17 through
May 15, 2002

Comments should be directed to:

Joyce Mercuri, Site Manager
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Toxics Cleanup Program
Southwest Regional Office
PO Box 47775
Olympia WA 98504-7775
(360) 407-6260
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Information Repositories

Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey WA 98503
Attn: Sherri Greenup @ (360) 407-6365

Pierce County Library
3005 112th St. E.
Tacoma

Citizens for a Healthy Bay
917 Pacific Ave., Tacoma
(253) 383-2429

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In 1999 and 2000, present and former property owners, Reichhold and the Magnuson Estate, had the soil and ground water sampled. The results indicated the only chemical present in soil above state cleanup standards for unrestricted land use was dioxin. (Unrestricted means restrictions on the site are not required to ensure continued protection of human health and the environment.) Attempts were made at sampling the ground water, but the monitoring wells did not produce enough water to get a representative sample.

Cleanup of dioxin-contaminated soils

Last summer, Reichhold conducted an independent cleanup of remaining contamination at the site. (The cleanup plan was approved by Ecology after public notice was completed.) The cleanup involved the following:

- A minimum of six inches of soil was removed from approximately three-quarters of the site.
- Additional soil was removed to a maximum depth of 36 inches in selected areas of the site—based on historical data, visual observations, or analytical results. In total, some 3,570 tons of soil were removed and disposed at a licensed landfill.
- After excavation was complete, samples were collected from areas across the site and evaluated using a statistical method specified in an Ecology guidance document. The samples revealed two locations still had contamination above state cleanup standards. Additional soil was then removed, and samples later taken indicated no contamination above state cleanup standards.
- The excavated area was backfilled and hydro seeded.
- Based on the previous investigations conducted in the 1980s and the nature of the site's geology, Ecology does not

consider ground water to be a pathway of concern at the site.

- No restrictions or limitations for future land use were placed on the property.

Ecology is not aware of any plans for future development at the site.

What are dioxins?

Dioxin is a general term that describes a group of hundreds of chemicals that are highly persistent in the environment.

Dioxins are formed as an unintentional by-product of many industrial processes involving chlorine, such as waste incineration, chemical and pesticide manufacturing, and pulp and paper bleaching. It is formed by burning chlorine-based chemical compounds with hydrocarbons.

Why delist the site

Based on a review of cleanup reports and sampling results, Ecology has determined the site is not a threat to human health or the environment and has recommended removing the site from the Hazardous Sites List.

The public's role in removing the site from the Hazardous Sites List

You now have an opportunity to review the cleanup reports and comment on Ecology's proposal to remove the site from the Hazardous Sites List. Through May 15, 2002, your comments will be accepted in writing by Joyce Mercuri, Site Manager, at the Department of Ecology-TCP, P.O. Box 47775, Olympia WA 98504-7775, phone (360) 407-6260, e-mail jmer461@ecv.wa.gov.