

RG Haley Video Script

Introduction Video with Eleanor Hines and Kirsten McDade (RE Sources):

EH: Hi - I am Eleanor Hines, North Sound Baykeeper/Lead Scientist at RE Sources

KM: And I am Kirsten McDade, Pollution Prevention Specialist also at RE Sources. And here we are looking out at Bellingham Bay but we are on the RG Haley cleanup site. In this video you will learn about how this site became contaminated, what the cleanup plans are, and what is going to happen to this remarkable piece of land. And lastly, you're going to learn how you can get involved in the cleanup process.

EH: Currently RG Haley is in the Engineering Design Report phase. It is a Model Toxics Control Act Site (or MTCA). So, there have been all of these other steps before we got to the Engineering Design report that also had public comments open. So, the Engineering Design is really just finalizing those final pieces for the cleanup that will happen in a short time to come.

MTCA Cleanup Process Video: <https://youtu.be/XHfnFs-JsOo>

KM: We hope you enjoy the video.

Historical Contamination with Kirsten McDade (RE Sources)

The RG Haley cleanup site is located at the bottom of a large bluff that actually originates up at Sehome Hill. Perhaps you have seen this site as you walk along the South Bay Trail - it is the site just north of where those prominent white tarps are. Right now, there's not a whole lot to see - remnants of old buildings, wire fencing, barrels of contaminated materials from past environmental investigation work, and a rip rap shoreline made from concrete, old bricks, and refuse. Currently, it is off limits to the public until the contamination of the site is addressed.

Hundreds of years ago this landscape looked quite different. It actually was a very productive tidal flat where the Coast Salish hunted and gathered fish, shellfish, and seaweed. When European settlement occurred in the 1850's the shoreline began to change dramatically. A railroad line was built in the 1890's and a large, wood wharf was built that provided boat access to this area to support the various timber mills that operated here as

well as to transport coal from historical coal mines. Filling along the shoreline also began in the late 1800's and extended into the 1970's, creating the upland property that is within the RG Haley site. The City of Bellingham currently owns most of this upland property and the State of Washington owns most of the in-water property within the RG Haley site.

How did this site get contaminated? Well the RG Haley site was where trees were milled, stored, and most importantly treated. The chemicals that were used to treat wood such as pentachlorophenol and petroleum hydrocarbons are present in soil, groundwater and marine sediments at potentially harmful levels. Other chemicals are also present - polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, dioxins and furans, phthalates, metals, municipal refuse, and PCBs. Some of these contaminants actually come from overlapping cleanup sites. The Cornwall Avenue Landfill site is located to the south and the Whatcom Waterway site is located to the west - within Bellingham Bay.

The Department of Ecology has been overseeing cleanup activities to address the contamination for a number of years, and in 2018 they finalized a Cleanup Action Plan for the RG Haley site. The site has two main cleanup sections -the upland site where soil and groundwater contamination will be addressed and the in-water site where contaminated sediments will be managed. Cleanup Action Plans have also been finalized by Ecology for the overlapping Cornwall Avenue Landfill and Whatcom Waterway sites.

Every cleanup site in Washington has a unique personality and the RG Haley site is not an exception. The upland area has been filled with an assortment of wood waste products including old wood pilings from the historic pier that makes soil extraction tricky. In addition, this site also has productive eelgrass beds all along the intertidal zone. Eelgrass beds are critical nurseries, food sources, and wave moderators - the cleanup work will preserve and protect these beds as much as possible, and mitigate adverse impacts if necessary.

We are now going to hear from 2 experts who can tell us more about the roles they play in the cleanup process and some of the finer details about the RG Haley site.

Kirsten McDade (RE Sources) interviews Craig Mueller (City of Bellingham):

KM: We are here with Craig Mueller, Public Works Project Engineer for the City of Bellingham - the City of Bellingham owns the RG Haley site. So, Craig, can you tell us what role you and the City play in the clean up of this site?

CM: Yes, again, I am Craig Mueller, I am the Project Manager for the City of Bellingham Public Works. I manage the design and construction of the RG Haley site and the Cornwall Landfill site for the City. The City has voluntarily taken on part or all of the work of cleaning up of these two sites and it will protect Bellingham Bay as well as ultimately provide a fantastic green space to residents. The City is partnering with the Port on the Cornwall Avenue cleanup site and the RG Haley cleanup will be accomplished through excavation of the shoreline as well as capping both the upland and in-water portion of the site to keep contaminants from harming people and the environment.

KM: Some cleanup has already occurred at this site. Can you explain what that activity was and why it was done?

CM: Several years ago there was a petroleum leak that was noticed from above, half-way through the site, that was entering the Bay. Then an emergency interim action was done at that time to place an oil-absorbing armored cap over the location of the seep. This work prevented further seepage and will be ultimately replaced when the permanent cap is done. The permanent cap will also, in the upland area, involve encapsulating some of the areas in a concrete slurry to make sure that nothing can move and then a synthetic cap goes over everything, then covers soils. The in-water cap will consist of soil layers which will trap any potential migrating contaminants before it can enter the bay.

KM: This site is adjacent to the Cornwall Landfill, which is also undergoing the cleanup process. It is our understanding that these two sites share a joint future. Could you talk about what the City envisions for these sites in the future after the cleanup has occurred, and how the site will be protected from getting recontaminated?

CM: The City has completed a master plan to ultimately develop the site into a city park. The design for the park is underway and will include large open green space, looped trails and water access in addition to fantastic views of Bellingham Bay and the San Juan Islands. The installation of the cap over the site before park development ensures that there will be no contact between the site contaminants and park users. The park is scheduled to begin construction as soon as the cleanup is completed.

Kirsten McDade (RE Sources) interviews Lucy McInerney (Ecology):

KM: Hi! This is Kirsten McDade again from RE Sources and we're here with Lucy McInerney, the Site Manager for the RG Haley site. Before we start with the technical aspects of this

tour stop, could you give us a quick overview Lucy of what are some of the responsibilities of a Site Manager with the Washington State Department of Ecology?

LM: Site managers oversee cleanup work performed by those legally liable for contamination in the environment (known as potentially liable persons or PLPs). We make sure the work is performed in accordance with Washington's environmental cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act. This law provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect human health and the environment.

As part of our oversight work we review technical documents generated by the PLPs, as well as related legal and funding documents. We also interact with attorneys, public outreach specialists, technical specialists, and grant administrators. Most importantly we regularly interact with the PLPs and the environmental consultants they hire to conduct the required cleanup work.

KM: The draft Engineering Design Report is out for public review, however this is not required under the MTCA cleanup process. Could you explain what this document is and why you are issuing it for public review?

LM: Ecology selected the cleanup action for the RG Haley site in 2018, following public review. Since then the City of Bellingham, the PLP, has conducted additional investigation work to begin the design of the cleanup action. The draft engineering design report represents 30% complete design and provides details that refine the 2018 cleanup action.

Public participation is not required at the engineering design step of the MTCA cleanup process because this step provides design details that refine Ecology's previously selected cleanup action. In other words, this is not a decision-making step where Ecology is required to solicit input from the public prior to making a decision, the decision has already been made. We have elected to issue the report for public review because we thought the community may be interested in learning about where the project is in the cleanup process and about the cleanup action design details.

KM: Given this special review opportunity for the draft Engineering Design Report, what public comments do you anticipate?

LM: We hope the comments relate to understanding the process that led to this step and to understanding the cleanup action design details.

Comments on Ecology's 2018 cleanup decision will not be useful since this is a past decision.

KM: What contaminants are present and generally what are some of the cleanup action design details in the draft Engineering Design Report to address these contaminants?

LM: There's a variety of chemicals present in soil, groundwater and sediment from past wood treating operations, including petroleum hydrocarbons, pentachlorophenol, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and dioxins/furans.

To address the contamination the draft Engineering design report details: how much soil will be treated; how much sediment will be relocated; and how many acres of soil and sediment will be isolated with specific types and thicknesses of capping materials.

KM: Thank you Lucy for joining us and thank you for that information.

Public Participation with Ian Fawley (Ecology):

Hi, this is Ian Fawley, Outreach Specialist with the Washington State Department of Ecology. I'm here on the Bellingham waterfront, with the RG Haley site behind me.

Ecology has some good news to share with you about the progress we're making at this cleanup site! We have an Engineering Design Report ready for your review. During Ecology's 30-day comment period, RE Sources will host an in-person walking tour through their Public Participation Grant from Ecology.

In this video, I'll explain about how you can participate in those outreach opportunities.

The RG Haley cleanup site that you see labeled here is continuing through Washington's formal cleanup process. The Model Toxics Control Act - or MTCA for short - is Washington's environmental cleanup law. Public participation is built-in at specific steps - highlighted here in this infographic by orange comment bubbles.

But as you can see, public participation is not required at the engineering design step of the MTCA process because this step provides design details that refine Ecology's previously selected cleanup action described in a Cleanup Action Plan. However, Ecology has elected to issue the RG Haley engineering design report for public review due to anticipated community interest.

For 30 days, beginning **January 31st** through **March 1st of 2022** Ecology welcomes comments on the engineering design report. This report represents 30% completion of the design work and provides details, refining the cleanup action selected by Ecology in 2018.

The report is available for review and digital download from Ecology's cleanup site webpage listed here: <http://www.bit.ly/Ecology-RGHaley> For other review options, please contact me directly. ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov; 425-324-5901

During this 30-day comment period, you can comment in one of two ways:

1. You can submit a comment directly through Ecology's eComments online form via the weblink here: www.bit.ly/Ecology-RGHaley-Comments
2. Or you can submit comments to Ecology's site manager, Lucy McInerney, through email or mail.
 - a. Email: lucy.mcinerney@ecy.wa.gov
 - b. Mail: PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133-9716

Commenter contact information is optional. However, if you want to receive future notices or responses, your contact information is necessary.

RE Sources will host a walking tour at the RG Haley site on **Tuesday, February 8, 2022 starting at Noon**. The walking tour will meet at the end of Cornwall Avenue by the pocket beach.

Ecology and City of Bellingham staff will join RE Sources to share about the cleanup action design details and answer questions.

Thanks for watching, and I hope to connect with you all through one of our outreach opportunities.

If you have any questions about this comment period or any future Ecology outreach, please feel free to contact me via email or phone listed below.

ian.fawley@ecy.wa.gov; 425-324-5901

I know we've been separated a lot lately, but Ecology wants to make sure you're connected to the progress we're making on cleaning up Bellingham Bay.

Thanks again for watching and take care!

Learn more about the cleanup progress at www.ecology.wa.gov/BellinghamBay

This material is funded through a Public Participation Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology. The content was reviewed for grant consistency but is not necessarily endorsed by the agency.

Este material ha sido financiado por una Subvención de Participación Pública del Departamento de Ecología del Estado de Washington. El contenido de la subvención fue revisado para verificar su coherencia, pero no es necesariamente endosado por la agencia.