

Cleanup of Former St. Helens Creosote Site (ECSI 959)



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Department of
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Quality

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Background

This fact sheet describes the status of the former St. Helens Creosote Site located on approximately 42 acres currently owned by the Port of St. Helens at 1550 Railroad Ave. in St. Helens. The site is along the confluence of Scappoose Bay and the Multnomah Channel. Milton Creek borders the site's western portion.

The site was used for wood treating from 1912 to 1960, with creosote being the primary wood treating compound. The plant was mostly dismantled and the equipment was sold in late 1960.

The Port of St Helens purchased the property from Pope and Talbot in 1963. The Port removed the remaining upland structures and filled much of the site with dredge sands between 1963 and 1973. Niedermeyer-Martin Company leased the site from the Port in 1973 and built a pole peeling facility over the entire site. Niedermeyer-Martin operated at the facility until 1991. The property is currently vacant.

Environmental investigations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) started environmental investigations at the site in 1989 at DEQ's request. EPA's investigation included sampling of on-site soils, and surface water and sediments in Milton Creek and the Multnomah Channel. Results of EPA's investigation showed significant contamination of the subsurface soils and sediments with polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon compounds, which are the primary constituents of creosote. Pentachlorophenol, arsenic and other metals were also present in subsurface soils at elevated levels. EPA recommended that further investigations occur to determine the extent of contamination in soils, groundwater, surface water and sediments.

DEQ issued an administrative Consent Order to Pope and Talbot and the Port of St. Helens in April 1995 to perform a remedial investigation and feasibility study.

Pope and Talbot completed the bulk of the property's upland cleanup investigation. Creosote was the main contaminant found at the site. The investigation concluded that cleanup was necessary to control the discharge of

creosote contamination in the subsurface out into the bay. Pope and Talbot prepared a draft feasibility study work plan for DEQ review and approval that outlined several cleanup strategies for the site. The draft feasibility study did not consider alternatives for sediment which is the subject of current discussions with DEQ.

Pope and Talbot declared bankruptcy in November 2007. The company has since been liquidated. The Port retains responsibility for environmental contamination at the site.

Current project status

Additional investigation was required by DEQ to better characterize the extent of contamination in sediments of Milton Creek and Scappoose Bay in order to develop remedial alternatives for sediment. The Port has completed the additional investigation and in May 2014 submitted to DEQ the Draft Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report, including updates of the human health and ecological risk assessments. DEQ reviewed the report and submitted comments in April 2015 and follow-up comments in September 2015.

What happens next?

DEQ and the Port of St. Helens are working to identify additional sediment data gaps and sampling efforts needed to complete the feasibility study. A sampling and analysis plan will be prepared and implemented to address these data gaps. Following completion of the additional investigation and preparation of the final Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report the final revised feasibility study will be prepared and submitted to DEQ for review. The feasibility study will provide support of a final cleanup plan to be selected by DEQ in 2019.

Further information

Documents about this site are available for review at DEQ's Northwest Region Office, 2020 S.W. Fourth Ave., Portland. The site documents can be found in the Northwest Region Office and on the Environmental Cleanup Site Information (ECSI) database under ECSI No. 959. To access the site summary information in DEQ's ECSI database, go to <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ECSI/ecsiquery.asp> then enter 959 in the Site ID box and click "Submit" at the bottom of the page. Next click the link labeled 959 in the Site ID/Info column.

If you have questions please contact Debbie Bailey at 503-229-6811 or bailey.deborah@deq.state.or.us

Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



2014 Photograph provided by the Port of St. Helens