



News Release

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Proposed cleanup of old Scott Paper mill site could spur new era for Anacortes waterfront's environment, economy

OLYMPIA – Comments are being sought on a possible cleanup plan for an old mill site on Fidalgo Bay that could remake the Anacortes waterfront's environmental and economic future.

The proposed cleanup of the former Scott Paper mill site is the largest single cleanup effort to date planned under the Puget Sound Initiative. The initiative is a comprehensive effort by local, tribal, state and federal governments, business, agricultural and environmental communities, scientists, and the public to restore and protect the Sound.

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is working with the Port of Anacortes, Kimberly-Clark and MJB Properties to clean up the site. The Scott site totals about 41 acres between 17th and 20th streets, and east of Q Avenue in downtown Anacortes.

Ecology will seek public comments on some key proposed cleanup documents: a Draft Cleanup Action Plan, which describes recommended cleanup, restoration and follow-up actions; and the Consent Decree, the legal agreement that guides the cleanup effort. A public comment period starts Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2009. Ecology staff will host an open house for community members on March 3. On March 17, 2009, Ecology will hold two public meetings/hearings on the proposed cleanup.

“The work we’re doing to clean up the Scott site is a model for restoring and protecting Puget Sound,” said Tim Nord of Ecology’s Toxics Cleanup Program. “The Anacortes community will enjoy better beaches and shorelines, more and improved recreational opportunities, a healthier environment, and improved marine habitat throughout Fidalgo Bay.”

Bob Elsner, Port director of engineering, said: “This project is a prime example of how the Port can work together with regulatory agencies and local governments to benefit Anacortes. The work illustrates our commitment to environmental stewardship and to our core mission of economic development. Not only will cleanup provide jobs and economic activity, it will open up the site to possible future development.”

Ecology’s Nord said, “The Scott cleanup is a great example of how building partnerships will lead to cleaning up Fidalgo Bay and the other high-priority bays around the Sound. This project would not be possible without the help of the Port, MJB Properties, Kimberly-Clark, and

the Samish and Swinomish tribes. We took advantage of state, local and tribal government expertise and other resources, and added state cleanup money to help the project move forward.”

Site background

A lumber mill started operating at the site in 1890. In 1925, a pulp mill operation was added. In 1940, Scott Paper Co. bought the mills. The company closed the lumber mill in 1955 and the pulp mill in 1978. Scott sold the mill properties in 1979. In 1995, Scott merged with Kimberly-Clark.

In 1979, the Port of Anacortes bought the site’s north portion and used part of it as a log yard from 1990 to 1993. In 1998, this portion was divided into three parcels. Sun Healthcare Systems Inc. bought one of these parcels. In 1999, the port and Sun Healthcare Systems removed petroleum-contaminated soil and wood debris from the company’s parcel. They installed a 2-foot-thick soil cover and a soil containment wall along the shoreline.

In 1979, Scott Paper sold the south portion. The property was used in the early 1980s as a staging area for oil field equipment, boat manufacturing and storage. In 1990, MJB Properties bought the property and used it for assembling modular homes.

In 2008, Ecology investigated contamination at the site and in nearby aquatic sediments. The investigation showed:

- Soil is contaminated with metals, petroleum products, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins/furans.
- Groundwater shows sporadic low level contamination from petroleum products, arsenic, bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate, sulfide, ammonia, and 4-methylphenol.
- Aquatic sediments contain metals, PCBs and wood debris.

Proposed cleanup

The Draft Cleanup Action Plan’s recommendations include:

- Digging up and removing contaminated soil, then backfilling with clean soil.
- Monitoring groundwater for at least a year after the cleanup action is completed.
- Dredging and removing contaminated surface sediments from intertidal and subtidal areas.
- Dredging and removing wood debris, brick and pilings from the intertidal and subtidal areas.
- Softening the beach for habitat by backfilling dredged areas with clean sand and gravel.
- Controlling potential future shoreline erosion by placing structures offshore of the site’s north portion and using rock on the site’s south portion.
- Digging up additional contaminated sediments and placing a minimum 2-foot-thick layer of clean sand, gravel and stone as needed along the shoreline.
- Replanting damaged eelgrass habitat.

In addition, Ecology, the Port, Kimberly-Clark and MJB Properties propose a settlement to address natural resource injuries at and around the site. The settlement includes:

- Establishing 4 acres of eelgrass habitat offshore of the site.
- Restoring 2 acres of beach habitat with a minimum of 2 feet of clean sand, gravel and cobble.
- Giving money to carry out education projects. Anacortes School District would receive \$100,000 to improve K-12 math, science and engineering programs. Western Washington University would receive \$100,000 to support scientific research, K-12 education and public outreach.
- Providing \$500,000 to the Northwest Straits Foundation for environmental restoration projects in Fidalgo and Padilla bays.

How you can get involved

Review and comment on documents: Public comments will be accepted through March 25. Here's how you can view the proposed documents for the former Scott Paper site:

- Department of Ecology, Toxics Cleanup Program, 300 Desmond Drive, Lacey, WA; for appointments contact Carol Dorn at (360) 407-7224 or cesg461@ecy.wa.gov.
- Anacortes Public Library, 1220 10th St.
- Ecology's website:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/scott_paper/scott_hp.html

You may submit comments to Panjini Balaraju, Site Manager, Toxics Cleanup Program, Washington Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600; e-mail pbal461@ecy.wa.gov.

Ecology will review and respond to all comments. The plans could be amended based on comments Ecology receives.

Open house for community questions: 4 to 7 p.m. March 3 at Cannery Building, Suite 101, 715 Seafarers Way, Anacortes

Public meetings/hearings to gather comments: 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. March 17 in Anacortes City Council Chambers, 6th Street and Q Avenue

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Tim Nord, Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program, 360-407-7226

Learn about Ecology's Fidalgo Bay cleanup efforts:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/psi/anacortes/psi_anacortes_bay.html

Read more about work to restore and protect Puget Sound:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/index.html