Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site

Community Involvement Plan

Bremerton, Washington

April 2013

The US Environmental Protection Agency is doing an environmental investigation at the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site. This investigation will assess the nature and extent of contamination at and around a former gasworks facility that was located about a mile and a half north of downtown Bremerton, Washington.

The gasworks operated from about 1930 to 1963. It produced fuel gas by blending and heating various materials and air. The gas produced was used for multiple purposes, including lighting, heating and cooking. We are at the early part of the Superfund cleanup process, and are beginning what is called the "Remedial Investigation." At this stage, we will do a thorough study to characterize the site. We will find out what contamination exists, and where it is located. (See General Overview of the Superfund Cleanup Process for details on the steps in the cleanup process. The Remedial Investigation is Step 4, page 7.)

This is EPA's initial plan for involving community members in the investigation and cleanup of the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site. In September 2012, EPA met with the public in Bremerton to gather information about how people want to be involved and how they would like to receive information about the site. We also heard people's concerns and what they already know about the site.

Ideas from this session with the public helped shape this Community Involvement Plan.
We designed this plan to align our public involvement efforts with the current needs and interests of the community.

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The plan sets out EPA's overall approach to providing information to the local community and how we will work with them. It is designed to be a flexible, "living" document. We welcome the community's input on the plan or our public involvement efforts at any time.

EPA is committed to working with the local community and all interested parties as the cleanup process moves forward. Community engagement will play an important role as we conduct the Remedial Investigation, and throughout the entire cleanup process. A clear understanding of community issues, priorities, and concerns will help us make informed decisions to create a cleanup plan that reflects community needs.

What the Community Told Us So Far

Thirteen people participated in the EPA community meetings in September 2012. Here is a summary of the information we gathered:

Concerns about Health and Safety

People were concerned about exposure to contaminants for children who play near the site and homeless individuals who have been seen near the site. They asked:

- What are the contaminants at the site and what effect do they have on human health?
- Is there an ecological concern?
- Could local cancers be related to the site?
- Is there a "cancer cluster?"
- Are there signs posted about health risks at the site?
- Is our drinking water safe?
- Is it safe to eat blackberries growing near the site?
- Is it safe to swim in the water at the site?

Information that will help answer these questions will be gathered during the Remedial Investigation.

Questions Related to Superfund Site Designation

- Will our property values depreciate because of the site?
- How long will the Superfund process take and at what cost?
- Who is liable for paying for the cleanup?
- How will the land be redeveloped? Some ideas given were to create a park or develop office buildings.
- What will be the boundaries of this Superfund site?
- How big will it be?
- Will my house be included?

The Community's Suggestions on How to Reach Them

Participants provided suggestions on how to reach them and others in the community:

Outreach Methods

- Local TV station: Channel 12
- Direct mail to homes
- Fliers distributed to homes
- Website postings
- Email updates
- Posters (for meeting announcements, etc.) – place these in neighborhood community centers and/or on telephone poles
- Newspapers (public notices, press releases) – though several said people don't read or pay attention to the newspaper
- Hold bimonthly neighborhood meetings

Outreach Methods

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- Engage District 6 Council members
- Set up regular informal briefings about the site with City of Bremerton officials such as the Mayor and City Council

Outreach Style

- Use simple language
- Make communications routine
- Link to other websites
- Post useful and pertinent site information
- Use established networks and key community leaders

NOTE: *Participants said that Facebook is **not** a great option for communicating with this community.*

Community Involvement Plan

EPA is committed to meaningful community involvement for this project as described in the plan below. Our goals are to:

- Give useful and timely information on site activities and progress.
- Foster open communication, responding to questions and concerns as they come up.
- Be clear about where in the process the public can influence cleanup decisions.
- Provide opportunities for public participation and comment.
- Listen to, understand, and consider local input.
- Evaluate how well community involvement activities work, and make changes if needed.
- Use information from communities to inform decision making.

EPA will use a variety of tools to keep the community informed and engaged in the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site cleanup. These may include:

EPA will develop and mail fact sheets and post cards

EPA will mail information about the site. Most of our mailings will be short fact sheets or post cards, in plain language. These are site updates to keep the community informed.

Typical topics are site-related activities and cleanup progress, announcements of public meetings, and opportunities to comment on key site decision documents. The mailings will include links to websites for more details. Contact Debra Sherbina to be added to our mailing list. See "EPA Contacts," **Page 5**.

EPA will send email messages

EPA will also send fact sheets and post cards by email. In some cases, we may email brief information that is not in a fact sheet. Contact Debra Sherbina to be added to our electronic mailing list.

☎ 800-424-4372, extension 0247

Work with the City of Bremerton to keep the public involved

EPA will keep City officials informed of activities related to the site and explore opportunities to get information to residents with the assistance of the City.

EPA will provide information on a site dedicated to the Bremerton Gasworks cleanup

EPA will post fact sheets, timelines, maps of the area of review, and technical documents on our website: **http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bremerton-gasworks**

EPA will establish an information repository

The "information repository" provides a local site for copies of available site information. EPA will place key technical documents and reports, as well as the Administrative Record for the site (when available) at the **Kitsap Regional Library**

1301 Sylvan Way, Bremerton, WA 98310

☎ 360-405-9100

Site documents will also be available for public review at the **EPA Superfund Records Center**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101,

☎ 800-424-4372, extension 4494

Please call for appointment

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Community Involvement Plan

EPA will hold public meetings

EPA will hold public meetings to get public comments at key times during the cleanup project, to help inform cleanup decisions. We will also hold meetings to give the community information on site-related activities throughout the cleanup.

These meetings will be in the community. As necessary, we will work to partner with other organizations in planning and holding the meetings. We welcome all interested parties to these meetings, including people from business, industry, community, and environmental organizations, as well as area residents and workers.

EPA will provide public comment periods at important times during the cleanup process

Comment periods are the main way EPA gets input from the community on proposed cleanup decisions. Comment periods usually last 30 days and are required at key points in the Superfund cleanup process. In general, the public comments by writing a letter, sending an email, or verbally at a public meeting. EPA plans to take public comments for these actions:

- Release of the proposed cleanup plan
- Any major changes to the cleanup plan
- Any legal agreements handled by a court
- Removal of the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site from the National Priorities List

EPA will periodically run newspaper advertisements

EPA heard that the community prefers ways other than newspaper ads to get information. Acknowledging this preference, we will use newspaper ads in the *Kitsap Sun* on only a few occasions when legally required or in conjunction with other advertising methods.

In addition to the actions EPA plans to take, here are some things you can do to keep the community informed:

Form a Community Advisory Group

People may be interested in forming a community advisory group to represent the interests of communities around a Superfund site and provide input to EPA. A Community Advisory Group is made up of representatives of diverse community interests.

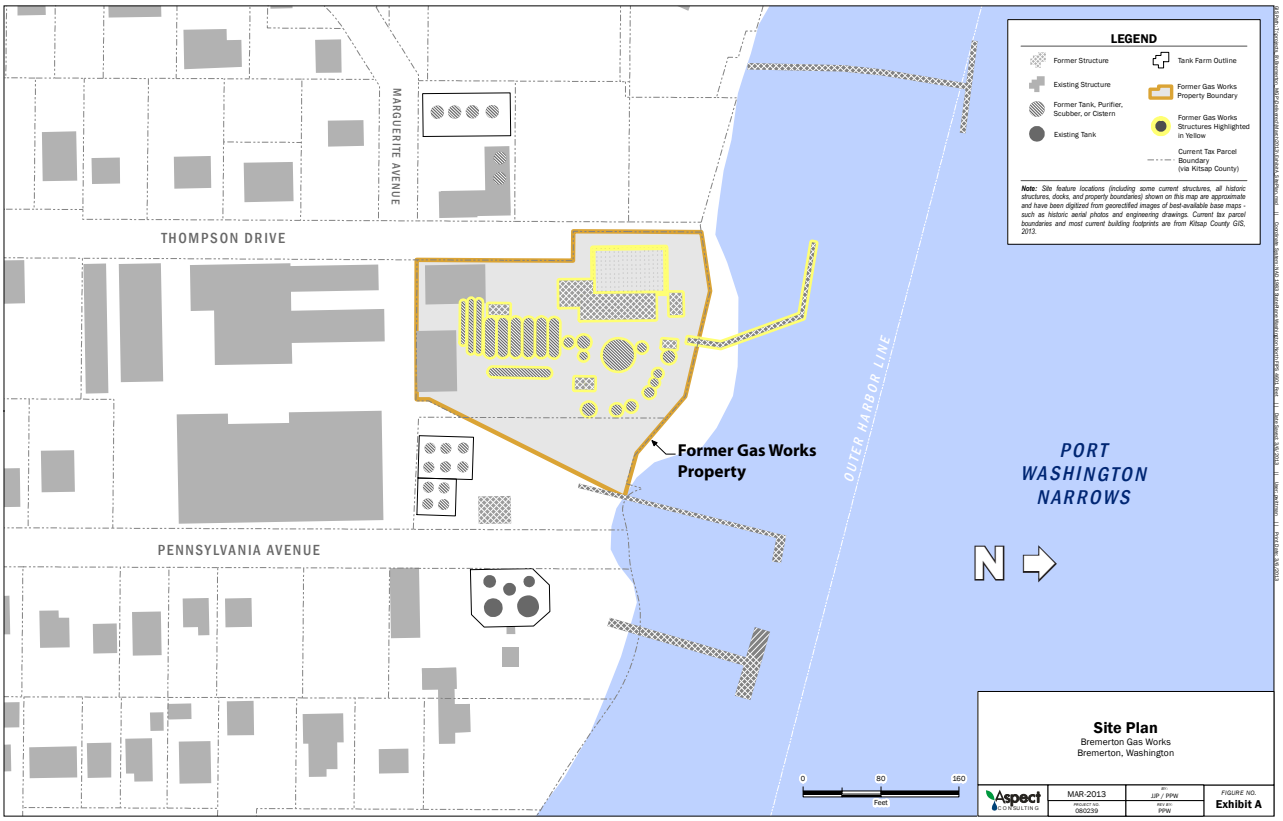
Its purpose is to provide a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process. A CAG can assist EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site. For more information about whether a CAG makes sense for the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund Site and how to create and operate a CAG, visit **www.epa.gov/superfund/community/cag** or contact Debra Sherbina.

Apply for a Technical Assistance Grant

A Technical Assistance Grant, or TAG, is a federal grant of up to $50,000 to help affected communities understand and comment on site-related information. A TAG depends on funding availability. If funding is available, it can go to eligible community groups so they can contract with independent technical advisors to interpret and help the community understand technical information about their site. To be eligible, a group must be nonprofit, incorporated, able to meet administrative and management requirements, and broadly represent groups and individuals affected by the site. Not all Superfund sites have TAGs. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a TAG, visit **www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tag** or contact Debra Sherbina.

Seek Technical Assistance through TASC

Technical Assistance Services for Communities, or TASC, is a program that contracts with technical experts to provide independent educational and technical assistance to communities. Its goal is to help communities better understand and become involved in the cleanup process for hazardous waste sites. TASC primarily supports the Superfund program. To find out more about TASC, visit **www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tasc** or contact Debra Sherbina.



EPA Contacts

To learn more about the site, visit: **http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bremerton-gasworks**

If you have suggestions for EPA community involvement, or would like more information about the cleanup, contact:

Debra Sherbina
Community Involvement Coordinator
sherbina.debra@epa.gov
800-424-4372, extension 0247

Bill Ryan
Project Manager
ryan.william@epa.gov
800-424-4372, extension 8561

Partnership With Other Agencies

EPA will be working in collaboration with a number of agencies and entities during the Remedial Investigation and throughout the Superfund cleanup process. These will include:

- Cascade Natural Gas
- City of Bremerton
- Kitsap Public Health District
- Property owners of the former Gasworks site
- Suquamish Tribe
- US Department of Commerce - **N**ational **O**ceanic and **A**tmospheric **A**dministration
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Health
  DOH is currently preparing a Public Health Assessment for the Bremerton Gasworks site
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Site History

The Bremerton Gasworks is a former manufactured gas plant about a mile and a half from downtown Bremerton, Washington. It occupies land along the Port Washington Narrows in Puget Sound. The Puget Sound is designated an estuary of national significance under the Clean Water Act. Two species of federally listed endangered or threatened fish live near the site. The portion of the Puget Sound near the site is used as a sport and commercial fishery and as a subsistence fishery by the Suquamish Tribe.

The Bremerton Gasworks produced gas using the carbureted water gas method from about 1930 to the mid-1950s. Between the mid-1950s and 1963, the facility produced gas by blending propane and air. By 1968, the above-ground gasoline and oil tanks had been removed. By the 1980s, the remaining above-ground gas plant features had been removed. Most of the former facility area is now vacant, although surrounding properties are used for commercial and industrial purposes.

The Washington State Department of Ecology, EPA, Cascade Natural Gas, and the U.S. Coast Guard have been involved in assessments at the site. In fall 2010, the U.S. Coast Guard issued an order to Cascade Natural Gas to remove a pipe that was releasing tars into the Port Washington Narrows. Forty feet of pipe was removed and the pipe was plugged. Contaminated sediments near the pipe were also removed. Visibly contaminated sediments were covered with organo-clay mats and clean beach materials to act as a temporary cap. The removal action addressed a limited area of contaminated sediments, but did not address upland soils or contaminated ground water.

On May 8, 2012 the Bremerton Gasworks Site was added to the Superfund National Priorities List. EPA's next step will be to do a comprehensive site investigation. For information about how a Superfund site is listed, visit:
www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/npl_hrs.htm

Site Contaminants

To date, various contaminants have been detected within upland soils, ground water beneath the former plant site, and within the Washington Narrows sediments.

Contaminants include tars which are associated with the gasification processes used at the former facility. These tars contain volatile aromatics and carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons. Heavy metals and benzene, among other contaminants, were also found at the site.

Upland soils contain contaminants with concentrations above the EPA Regional Screening Levels to about 30 feet below the ground. Ground water beneath the former plant site is also contaminated.

Sediments in the Port Washington Narrows near the former plant site contain concentrations of contaminants above the Adverse Effects Levels established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

General Overview of the Superfund Cleanup Process

Here is a general listing of the many steps in EPA's cleanup process. At this time, the Bremerton Gasworks Superfund site is at the beginning of the Remedial Investigation phase, so Step 4 will be next.

1. Site Discovery

The first step in the Superfund process is called Site Discovery. This term applies to all of the different ways that EPA becomes aware of the need to consider a site for cleanup. Sometimes the notification comes from the general public, and sometimes from a State that has been working on the site. Sometimes reports from the media bring the site to EPA's attention.

2. Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation

Following Site Discovery, EPA reviews any existing information, including prior sampling results, in a step called the Preliminary Assessment. This is followed by various activities such as a site visit or additional sampling, called the Site Investigation. Together these are called the Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation or PA/SI.

3. National Priorities List (NPL) Process

If the information warrants it, EPA then goes through the National Priorities Listing (NPL) process. This requires an analysis of the types of known or suspected contaminants and their location next to people or the environment, to determine the potential for harm. The analysis document, called the NPL Scoring Package, becomes the basis for approaching a State's Governor to request the State's agreement for proposing that the site be added to the National Superfund List.

If EPA receives State concurrence, EPA publishes the name of the site in the Federal Register and begins a 30-day public comment period. EPA considers public comments for and against adding the site to the NPL and makes a decision. If the site is added to the NPL, EPA will notify the public and formally begin its community involvement process.

4. Remedial Investigation

Following NPL listing, EPA designs a thorough investigation of the site, characterizing both the lateral extent of contamination, and the types and concentrations of contaminants.

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Remedial Investigation

This usually involves significant air, soil, surface water and/or groundwater sampling, and often multiple sampling events that can take many years. During this time, the site's Community Involvement Coordinator conducts interviews to uncover unique issues and concerns. This information is used to develop a Community Involvement Plan. After the RI is completed, EPA issues a fact sheet summarizing the findings. The RI is placed in the Information Repository (usually a library) and some parts of the RI are posted on the site web page.

5. Feasibility Study

Once the contamination has been identified, EPA develops a list of possible ways to address it. The tools, techniques and process are organized into alternatives, often with multiple elements. The alternatives are evaluated using a number of criteria. Criteria include protectiveness of people's health and the environment, how easy the alternative is to carry out, cost, and time to reach cleanup goals. Sometimes, certain elements are tested at a reduced scale in the laboratory or in the field. These are called treatability studies. Results help EPA decide which alternatives should be considered and offered to the public for comment. The Feasibility Study is available in the Information Repository and on the site web page. The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study are often spoken of as the "RI/FS process" because they are often part of the same scope of work.

6. Proposed Plan

A Proposed Plan is a technical document that summarizes the findings of the RI/FS, compares various ways to address site contaminants, and identifies EPA's preferred cleanup alternative. The Proposed Plan announces a formal 30-day public comment period at a minimum, and explains how to give comments. EPA typically writes a fact sheet summarizing the Proposed Plan. We mail this to the site mailing list and post on the site web page. EPA also publishes a notice in the local newspaper to announce the Proposed Plan public comment period.

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General Overview of the Superfund Cleanup Process

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7. Record of Decision

The Record of Decision is EPA's final cleanup plan for the site. EPA weighs many factors in developing the Record of Decision, including overall protection of people's health and the environment, short and long-term effectiveness, cost, State/Tribal acceptance, and community acceptance.

A document called the Responsiveness Summary, which includes EPA's responses to all comments received during the Proposed Plan public comment period, is part of the Record of Decision. It is made available at the information repository and on the site web page.

8. Remedial Design

Remedial Design means developing engineering drawings and specifications for a site cleanup. Typically, Remedial Design follows the Record of Decision. A fact sheet is usually distributed when the design work is 60% complete, although a fact sheet may be sent earlier in the process.

9. Remedial Action

Remedial Action is the actual building of treatment facilities, removal of waste piles, entombment (burial) of contamination, carrying out institutional controls, or any other aspect that completes the cleanup decision. This phase includes the testing and certifying of any facilities that are put into operation.

10. Five Year Review

This is an analysis EPA prepares every five years to determine if site remedies continue to protect human health and the environment. Before the Five Year Review process begins, the community is notified and asked to provide any information it has about the operations of the as-built remedy, or any issues and concerns that have arisen regarding the remedy.

When the Five Year Review report is complete, the community is notified of the results through a newspaper public notice, web page posting, and postcard if needed.

11. Deletion from the National Priorities List

When a site has met its cleanup goals, it can be removed from the National Priorities List. The public is notified and EPA holds a comment period.

Two other steps in the site's cleanup process could take place:

1. Interim Actions

An interim action is any short-term, temporary or preliminary construction or activity that addresses contamination before a final cleanup decision is made. An interim action can take place at any time during the Superfund process before implementing the Record of Decision. Some interim actions may have public participation processes similar to the Proposed Plan process that leads to a Record of Decision.

2. ROD Amendment/Explanation of Significant Differences

If a final remedy needs to be changed after a Record of Decision has been made, EPA notifies the public. A process similar to the Proposed Plan process leading up to a Record of Decision might begin. This depends on the nature and extent of the proposed change.

This document can be made available in other languages by request. If you need this document in an alternative format, contact Debra Sherbina at 800-424-4372, extension 0247.

TDD users please call the Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339 and give the operator Debra Sherbina's phone number.

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