

SUPERFUND

Fact Sheet

COMMENCEMENT BAY NEARSHORE/TIDEFLATS TACOMA, WASHINGTON

 U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10 September 1998

Bay-Wide Update

Since the late 1800's, shipbuilding, oil refining, chemical manufacturing and storage, and other industrial activities have caused hazardous waste contamination of the land and sediments in the Commencement Bay area. Many of these contaminants have impacted marine life. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) are overseeing cleanup efforts in the area with the goals of controlling sources of contamination to the bay, and achieving sediment quality within the waterways that will support a healthy marine environment and reduce the risks to people from eating contaminated seafood from the bay.

Open House/Ground-Breaking Ceremony at Asarco

Mark your calendars for the start of the cleanup on the former Asarco smelter site in Ruston/N. Tacoma.

Demolition Ceremony
Thursday, September 17, 1998
3:00 p.m.
on the Asarco Site in the
Vacant Lot Below Bennett St. at 52nd Street
Open House to Follow
Former Ruston School
5219 North Shirley Street
Ruston, WA.

Come share a program, refreshments, a tour of the newly renovated Ruston School, the new home to the Asarco Information Center, and witness the demolition of Asarco's historical main office. The office demolition will conclude a ten year process and begin the active cleanup of contamination soil and surface water at the site. Cleanup will take five years to complete, which will pave the way for redevelopment of this important community resource. For more information, please call Karen Pickett, at the Asarco Information Center, (253) 756-5436.

How to Review EPA Site Files Without a Hassle

Lately Region 10's Records Center has experienced a heavy demand for CB/NT site file review and, frankly, we're pleased that our files are so popular! However, there are a few steps you must take in order to visit the files:

- 1) Call the Project Manager. Their names and phone numbers are listed throughout the fact sheet in **bold print**. Let the Project Manager know:
 - What it is you want and ask whether it is available
 - That you need to set up an appointment to review the files
 - Whether you have submitted a Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") request. A FOIA is necessary if you want to make copies of the information you are reviewing. A FOIA request can be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail. Call Stephanie Kercheval at (206) 553-8665 for more information.
- 2) Call the Records Center at (206) 553-4494 to make your appointment. They are open Monday through Friday between 8:30 and 4:00. Let the Records Center know which Project Manager you spoke to and when. The Records Center cannot release files for review without a go-ahead from the Project Manager. Also, let the Records Center know whether you have submitted a FOIA.



NOTE: While some files (anything in an "Administrative Record") can be reviewed on a drop-in basis, most files at EPA can only be reviewed by making an appointment. The Tacoma Public Library, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, and the Asarco Information Center also have many CB/NT documents available for review. Addresses and phone numbers are listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Activities Surrounding the Hylebos Waterway

- √ Sediment Sampling Continues to Define Cleanup Areas
- √ Cleanup at the Occidental Plant to Begin in 1999
- √ Wood Debris Pilot Project This Fall

- Sediment Sampling Continues to Define the Cleanup Area

The Hylebos Cleanup Committee (HCC), a group of 5 companies and the Port of Tacoma, continues its work to better define the cleanup area. Sediment samples were taken in the Hylebos Waterway in the spring and summer of 1998 to define the edges of cleanup areas. This information will be used to develop the HCC's proposed cleanup areas and disposal plan, which they will submit to EPA at the end of 1998.

In the meantime, some property owners on the Hylebos Waterway are taking steps to clean up contaminated intertidal sediments on their properties:

- The intertidal areas of the former Tacoma Boat property are now clean, thanks to cleanup efforts by the new property owner, Ace Tank.
- General Metals will clean up intertidal areas in front of their property this fall as part of a project to upgrade their wharf and scrap loading facilities.
- Automobile shredder residue (shredded car interiors) was removed from the upland and intertidal portions of the Mather Auctioneers property this summer.

- Cleanup Progress at the Former Occidental Plant

Last November, EPA and Occidental Chemical Corporation agreed to address the embankment area and the adjacent off-shore area in front of the former Occidental Facility. Sampling of the embankment area is now complete while sampling of the off shore area continues. These areas contain the highest concentrations of contaminants found anywhere in the Hylebos Waterway. Final cleanup of the area is scheduled to begin in the fall of 1999.

- Wood Debris

EPA, Ecology and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are reviewing the studies submitted by the Hylebos Wood Debris Group (WDG). The studies determine where wood waste accumulates and where cleanup is needed in the head of the Hylebos Waterway.

There is a pilot project planned for this fall to pick up whole logs from the waterway and determine whether they can be reused or recycled. Further sampling and analysis will also be conducted to determine the best disposal option for the materials removed from the waterway. In addition to preparing for cleanup of wood debris, the WDG is developing an Operation, Maintenance and Monitoring Plan which will address prevention of future accumulations of wood debris within the waterway.

For more information, please call **Allison Hiltner**, EPA Project Manager, at **(206) 553-2140**.

Update on Finding Disposal Sites for Thea Foss Contaminated Sediments

EPA has been working with parties potentially responsible for the cleanup of contaminated sediments in the Bay, as well as interested citizens, and state and federal agencies to come up with a plan for disposing of

contaminated sediments from the waterways in Commencement Bay. For Thea Foss, EPA's goal is to keep the City of Tacoma's cleanup schedule moving and on track for construction to begin in the year 2000.

EPA is currently reviewing the City's report recommending a cleanup plan and a disposal site for contaminated sediments in the Thea Foss and Wheeler Osgood Waterways. The report evaluates options, including upland disposal and confined aquatic disposal.

In addition, discussions have taken place concerning a proposal by Simpson Tacoma Kraft to use the St. Paul Waterway as a disposal site for contaminated sediment dredged from the Thea Foss and Middle Waterways. Several issues face this proposal, including whether the area is big enough to hold the contaminated sediments needing disposal. Issues are also arising out of the recent proposed listing of Puget Sound chinook salmon as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act and need resolution. We will continue to keep you informed of progress at Thea Foss.

For more information, please contact **Christine Psyk**, at (206) 553-1748.

Investigation of Dioxin at the Olympic View Restoration Site

In June, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was notified by the City of Tacoma that high concentrations of dioxin were found at the head of the peninsula between Thea Foss and Middle Waterways. This area, known as the Olympic View Restoration Site, is slated for a habitat restoration project under an agreement between the City and the National Resources Trustees.

The City of Tacoma is developing a sampling and analysis plan to investigate this contamination further and the Department of Ecology is coordinating the review of the City's plan with EPA and the Trustees.

For more information, please call **Joyce Mercuri**, Ecology Project Manager at (360) 407-6260.

Ecology's Urban Bay Action Team Source Control Activities

Since the last update, source control work has been completed at the following sites:

- √ In the Head of Hylebos Waterway - Tacoma Boatbuilding banks and intertidal area (shipyard)
- √ In the Head of Thea Foss Waterway - J. M. Martinac stormwater (shipyard)

For more information about source control activities, please contact **Dave Smith**, Department of Ecology, at (360) 407-6250 or **Kris Flint**, EPA Project Manager, at (206) 553-8155.

Internet Information

You are invited to check out information at EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth>. Click on the A to Z and browse through many different areas. Some of this information includes:

- √ Environmental Cleanup Office
- √ Commencement Bay
- √ Records Center
- √ FOIA
- √ Community Involvement
- √ Superfund sites

For more information about EPA Region 10's web site, please call **Matt Gubitosa** at (206) 553-4059.

Information Repositories

Written information and technical documents are available for review at the following locations:

In Tacoma:

Tacoma Main Public Library
1102 Tacoma Avenue South
Northwest Room

* Citizens for a Healthy Bay
771 Broadway
(253) 383 2429

*Asarco Information Center (**Asarco Only**)
5311 North Commercial
(253) 756-5436

*Please call for an appointment if information is needed after business hours.

In Seattle:

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue
Records Center - 7th Floor

Please check the instructions for reviewing site files at the Regional Office.

In Olympia:

Washington Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Dr SE
(Asarco Only)

For More Information

Please contact one of the representatives listed in this fact sheet or call **Jeanne O'Dell**, Community Involvement Coordinator, at **(206) 553-6919** or call toll free **1-800-424-4372**.

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with speech or hearing disabilities by contacting one of the EPA representatives listed in this fact sheet.



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA Region 10
Community Relations and Outreach
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