

Fact Sheet for Skagit Plastics Debris Pile Cleanup (McGlinn Island causeway)

Background:

This site is located south of the town of La Conner, in the northern portion of the causeway connecting McGlinn Island to the mainland. The site was previously discovered and investigated in a Brownfields Phase II environmental site assessment of McGlinn Island and causeway. This location, along with most of McGlinn Island and its causeway, became Swinomish tribal trust land in 1993, as a result of a quiet title action by the U.S. government, and after many years of contested ownership between the Tribe and non-Indian owners. It appeared that a substantial amount of burned and unburned fiberglass material and other debris, likely resulting from a mid-1980s fire that destroyed the Skagit Plastics composite boat factory at the north end of the causeway, was deposited at this location, and then partially buried under dredge spoils from the Swinomish Channel (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Skagit Plastics Debris Pile on McGlinn Island causeway.

During the years since the dumping ended, mineral soils and organic detritus combined with debris, resulting in a problematic mix of uncontaminated and contaminated debris and a contaminated soil/debris matrix. During the Phase II assessment, the larger area of the pile could not be tested because it was overgrown with blackberries and other vegetation. However, samples taken from the edges of the pile were of a soil/debris matrix containing large amounts of visible charred material and burned fiberglass strands. Several contaminants (cadmium and lead) exceeded the soil contamination levels accepted by the Tribe as “Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements” (ARARs) for unrestricted land use. Several samples contained carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs) and dioxin/furans above the risk-based carcinogen criteria accepted by the Tribe. No petroleum was present and no samples contained asbestos.

When the weeds and brush covering the pile were removed, it became evident that the pile contained a well mixed combination of debris and soil of the same nature as the tested samples (Fig. 2). It is not yet determined

whether dredge spoils beneath the pile may have been contaminated by leachate from the debris over the last 30 years. The Phase II report discussed several cleanup alternatives for this location, but given the future planned use of the area (part of a salmonid habitat restoration project), the only reasonable alternative, from the Tribe's perspective, involved the excavation and disposal of the contaminated material in the pile, as well as any contaminated soils beneath it.



Figure 2. Partially excavated debris from the Skagit Plastics debris site.

The large amount of debris overlaying the area made it difficult to determine the extent of soil contamination beneath the pile and therefore the ultimate cleanup requirements. Funds from the 2010 Swinomish Brownfields Tribal Response Program were used in September and October 2010 to conduct a partial cleanup of the site. Although the material contained contaminants above ARARs unrestricted use cleanup levels, leaching tests revealed the debris was not required to be regulated as hazardous waste, and therefore could be disposed of in the sub-title D landfill used by Skagit County for municipal waste. A local contractor removed and disposed of over 400 cubic yards of the debris/soil mixture, with a total weight of over 230 tons. The remaining material at the site, several hundred tons of sand mixed with smaller pieces of fiberglass and other waste, was screened to remove as much debris as possible (Fig. 3). The screened sand currently remains on site.

Future actions for this site:

Using 2011 Brownfields Tribal Response Program funds, the Tribe plans to characterize the contamination present in the dredge spoils beneath the removed debris, to determine if further cleanup actions are required. A December 2010 lab analysis of soil samples from the screened sand piles indicated remaining contamination (from the previously detected analytes of concern) was below the cleanup levels being used for the site; therefore the screened material may not require removal. If further excavation and disposal of soils at the site proves to be necessary, additional funds will have to be procured to complete the cleanup.



Figure 3. Screening debris from the soil.

For information about this project, interested parties may contact the Swinomish Environmental Management program at 360-466-2631, 7299.