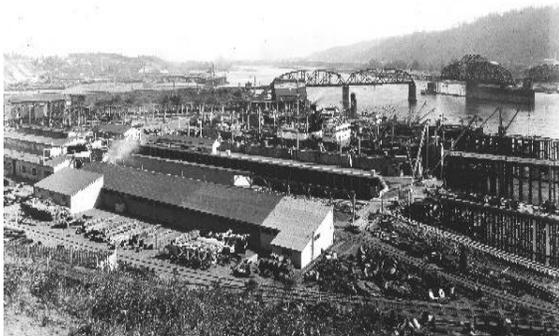


Status of the Willamette Cove Cleanup

DEQ Proposes Upland Site Cleanup – March 2020

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is working with the Port of Portland, Metro and others to complete cleanup of historical contamination at Willamette Cove. The property is a former industrial site in North Portland along the bank of the Willamette River's Portland Harbor Superfund Site. DEQ is providing oversight of the contamination investigation and cleanup upland of the riverbank under an agreement with Metro and the Port.



Willamette Cove looking upriver, circa 1923.

Background

The Willamette Cove property comprises nearly 27 acres and 3,000 feet of shoreline. The low-lying riverfront property is on the Willamette River north of downtown Portland and south of the St. Johns Bridge. Cathedral Park neighborhood is terraced above Willamette Cove, and St. Johns and University Park neighborhoods are north and south, respectively.

Willamette Cove's industrial use dates back to the early 1900s, including a lumber mill, plywood mill, barrel manufacturer and dry dock and ship repair facility. Industrial activities ended by the early 1980s. Metro purchased the property in 1996 and plans to preserve the land primarily as a natural area.

Previous industrial activities resulted in soil contamination. The contamination includes heavy metals, diesel fuel, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins. These chemicals pose a risk to human health and the environment. Information on the potential health effects from exposure to these contaminants is available in the 2013 Oregon Health Authority Health Consultation: <http://bit.ly/OHA-WillametteCove>

Cleanup Status

DEQ has been working with project partners to address this site since 2000. The highest levels of

contaminated soil were removed from upland areas of the property in 2015 and 2016. However, chemicals remain in both upland and riverbank soil that pose a risk to human health and environment. Groundwater contamination is also present in the upland and the evaluation of potential impacts to the river is underway. When this evaluation is complete, DEQ will prepare a groundwater source control decision identifying appropriate source control measures.

In 2019, Metro and the Port submitted several reports to DEQ, including a revised feasibility study that present options for cleaning up the remaining contamination. DEQ has reviewed these reports and will recommend a cleanup option in early 2020. DEQ, Metro and the Port will conduct a series of public outreach efforts to obtain feedback on a cleanup plan.

DEQ will select a cleanup action that will protect people, plants and animals from exposure to contamination.

Contamination is also present in the riverbank and the sediment of the Willamette River. Cleanup of these areas will occur as part of the larger Portland Harbor Superfund Site cleanup managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Willamette Cove Access Concerns

The public may not access Willamette Cove prior to completion of the cleanup due to the following concerns for public safety:

- Direct contact with contaminated soils and beach sand.
- Direct contact with physical hazards, including foundation remnants, rebar and other debris on the site and offshore underwater.
- "Resident fish," that live their entire lives in the harbor and do not migrate out to the ocean or other waters are likely to contain contaminants. People who eat these fish could be exposed to contamination. Resident fish include bass, carp and catfish. Migratory fish like salmon, steelhead and lamprey don't pose this threat. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/OHA-Fish>

Signs posted at Willamette Cove warn that contaminants remain at the site. Metro discourages access and the site is closed to the public. Oregon



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Northwest Region Cleanup Program

700 NE Multnomah St.
Suite 600
Portland, OR 97232

Phone: 503-229-6900
800-452-4011
Fax: 503-229-6762

Contact: Erin McDonnell
mcdonnell.erin@deq.state.
or.us

*DEQ is a leader in
restoring, maintaining
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quality of Oregon's air,
land and water.*

Department of State Lands prohibits anchoring in the river for more than 30 consecutive nights.

For more information

Visit <https://go.usa.gov/xEFdS> or contact Erin McDonnell, Project Manager/ Engineer at 503-229-6900, mcdonnell.erin@deq.state.or.us

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request.

Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email

deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.