

Environmental Fact Sheet



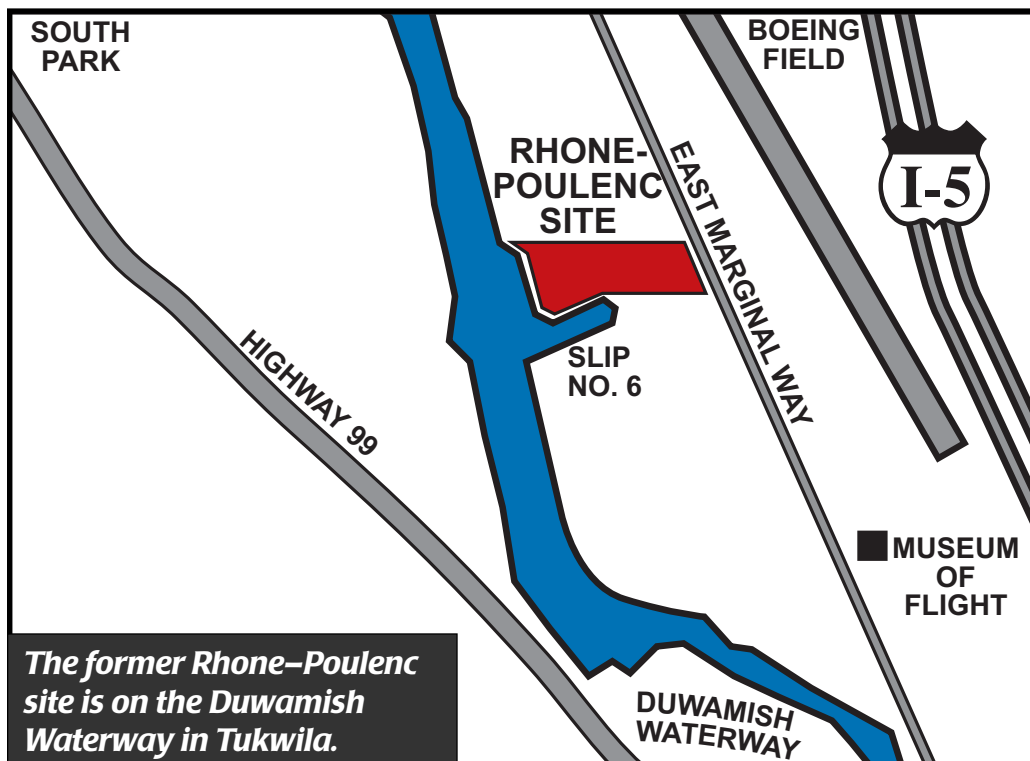
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10

December 2002

Former Rhone–Poulenc Site Tukwila, Washington

Cleanup Work to Begin

In January 2003, preliminary cleanup work will begin at the former Rhone–Poulenc site, which is just north of Slip No. 6 on the east side of the Lower Duwamish Waterway. If you are in the area, you may see a very large crane or hear the drilling. Workers may be dressed in special clothing to protect them from contamination while they work.



Toxic Wastes Could Harm Duwamish Fish

The former Rhone-Poulenc site is being cleaned up because toxic wastes from the site are moving with the groundwater into the Lower Duwamish Waterway. Site

contaminants include toluene and metals, mainly copper.

These chemicals are a threat to chinook salmon and bull trout, which are endangered species

found in the waterway. High copper levels make fish unable to balance chemicals in their bodies and can cause fish to die. High toluene levels disturb breathing and heart rate in fish and can also cause their death.



The cleanup work in the winter and spring of 2003 should stop or minimize contaminated groundwater moving from the property into the Duwamish Waterway.

photo by Aerolistphoto.com, negative #79290-5



How Will the Cleanup Proceed?

Work in the winter and spring of 2003 should stop or minimize contaminated groundwater leaving the property. The work consists of two main steps:

- Building a subsurface grout wall, about 70 feet deep, around the contaminated groundwater.
- Installing a system to pump the contaminated water out of the ground and treat it to remove the contamination.

EPA will continue to work with the current and former property owners to plan a long-term cleanup for the remainder of the site.

What Caused the Pollution?

From the 1930s through 1986, several companies manufactured chemical products at the site, including glues, resins and hardeners.

Beginning in 1952, first Monsanto and then Rhone-Poulenc used the facility to make vanillin, which is used in flavoring foods and creating drugs.

The manufacturing processes resulted in contamination of the soils and groundwater at the site.

How Is This Cleanup Related to the Superfund Site?

About six miles of the Lower Duwamish Waterway is being studied under EPA's Superfund program. The former Rhone-Poulenc site is located on about 750 feet of shoreline within the Superfund study area. Cleanup at the facility is being handled under EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery

Act program, which focuses on managing hazardous waste at operating facilities. Both programs require the cleanup of contaminated sites that are a threat to people or the environment.

How to Get More Information

Information about the Rhone-Poulenc site is available for review at the regional EPA office: 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, Washington. Please call Tina Lillie at 206-553-1604 to make an appointment.

If you have questions about the site, please contact one of the following EPA representatives:

Technical Information:

Christy Brown
Project Manager
206-553-8506 or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372
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General Information:

Cindy Colgate Schuster
Community Involvement Coordinator
206-553-1815 or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372
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For people with disabilities: Please contact Cindy Colgate Schuster at 206-553-1815 (toll-free at 1-800-424-4372) if you have any requests for reasonable accommodations. For TTY users: Please call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and give the operator Cindy Schuster's phone number.