

# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



*Former Rhone-Poulenc Site, Tukwila, Washington*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

February 2006

## Cleanup Work Progressing

Activity is picking up at the former Rhone-Poulenc site on the Lower Duwamish Waterway in Tukwila as the western portion of the property is being prepared for a new tenant. The site is just north of Slip 6 on the east side of the waterway.

### Why Is the Cleanup Needed?

For more than sixty years, several companies manufactured chemical products on the property, including glues, resins and vanillin, which is used in drug manufacturing and as a flavoring. That activity led to contamination of the soil and groundwater. Toxic wastes from the site, including toluene and metals, flowed with the groundwater into the Lower Duwamish Waterway. The contaminants, especially copper, are a threat to Chinook salmon and bull trout, two endangered species found in the waterway. The property owner is doing the cleanup with oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### How is the Property Being Cleaned Up?

The first steps have already been taken:

- An underground grout wall, six inches thick and extending between 65 and 85 feet below the ground surface, was built to contain the worst of the contamination. Tests show the barrier wall is greatly reducing the flow of contamination into the waterway. EPA is continuing to test the groundwater in the area to make sure the wall remains effective.
- Three extraction wells were installed to continuously pump out the recovered groundwater and send it through a treatment plant.



*Preparations are under way to demolish this building as part of the next round of cleanup work.*

### What Happens Next?

The western portion of the property has been leased. Buildings, underground pipes and vaults have been tested for contamination. Any contamination found is being removed and disposed of properly. Bulldozers and dump trucks will demolish the remaining buildings and haul away the debris. Crushed concrete is being brought in to build up the grade, the area is being paved, and new fencing is being erected.

### What is Left to be Done?

EPA continues to sample soil and groundwater in the area. The EPA dive team recently took samples of the sediment in Slip 6 and found contamination, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The sampling results can be found on the Rhone-Poulenc website:

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**What is Left to be Done?** *continued*

[www.epa.gov/r10earth/](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/). Click on *Index* in the left column, then on *R* for Rhone-Poulenc.

EPA will notify the public before a final cleanup decision is made. Meanwhile, under an approved

cleanup plan, crews will dig up and replace contaminated soil in the eastern portion of the property and prepare the property for sale and development.

**For More Information**

Information about the Rhone-Poulenc site is available for review at the EPA regional 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:

Technical Information:

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