



Portfields: Bellingham

What is Portfields? “Portfields” is a federal interagency effort that focuses on the redevelopment of brownfields in port and harbor areas, with emphasis on development of environmentally sound port facilities. Brownfields are property where redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of contamination. Maritime trade is expected to double by 2020, exerting further pressure on already highly developed coastal areas. Redeveloping brownfields in port areas can improve marine transportation while providing environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Partnerships in Action

A Brownfields Federal Partnership was created in 1996 and includes more than 20 agencies committed to working together to assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. Through the Brownfields Federal Partnership Action Agenda, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) committed to lead the Portfields effort. Six other federal agencies: Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Economic Development Administration, Maritime Administration, Department of Labor, Department of the Interior, Department of Housing and Urban Development, are committed to working with NOAA on Portfields. Each partner brings its own specialized expertise to the table and contributes to the overall goal of revitalizing port communities.

Portfields Pilot Ports

Bellingham, along with the ports of Tampa, Florida and New Bedford, Massachusetts has been selected as Portfields demonstration pilots. The Portfields federal agencies will work with these pilot ports to redevelop brownfields and revitalize waterfront areas, improve marine transportation and port security, and protect and restore coastal habitats. By establishing national, regional, and local partnerships toward common goals, Portfields can leverage resources and build on the ports ongoing efforts to be both engines of commerce and good stewards of the environment. Portfields is also an opportunity to develop innovative practices that complete projects in the pilot ports, and also provide nationwide models.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham is located in northern Puget Sound between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia. Home to Western Washington University, Bellingham has a wealth of beautiful and diverse natural resources. The Port of Bellingham’s major lines of business include recreational boating, commercial real estate, commercial and corporate aviation, commercial fishing, and passenger ferries. The Port and the community have recently been engaged in a coordinated effort of economic revitalization and environmental restoration within Bellingham Bay. The Port hopes that focused attention from the federal agencies through Portfields will help bring new ideas and resources into the Port’s efforts to implement a comprehensive waterfront redevelopment strategy.



Bellingham Portfields Projects

Central Waterfront

The Port of Bellingham recently reached a tentative agreement to acquire 137 acres of waterfront property that was previously operated as a chlorine plant and pulp mill. A paper mill will continue operating on the property. Through the Waterfront Futures Group, the Port and the community are creating a new vision for their central waterfront, with a goal of improving public access to the waterfront, enhancing the natural environment, and revitalizing the economy. The acquisition of this property will give the community the opportunity to shape the future of the waterfront.

Redeveloping the waterfront will include assessment and cleanup of contaminated properties, addressing sediment contamination in the Bay, and preparing the site for reuse.

Squalicum Creek

Squalicum Creek is an important salmon-bearing creek that empties into a federal navigation channel. The Port has an interest in improving the navigational channel, redeveloping the surrounding property, restoring the mouth of Squalicum Creek, and possibly creating a new waterfront park. This will expand a local industry through improved cargo berthing; restore estuarine functions and support recovery of the endangered salmon; and provide waterfront access to the Bellingham citizens.

Coast Guard Base

The Port is working with the Coast Guard on its expansion needs on Bellingham Bay. Bellingham is ideally located within close proximity to the US-Canadian border, and expanding the Coast Guard base would enhance border patrol and port security.

Portfields website:

<http://www.brownfields.noaa>

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