



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10

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# Letter to Residents and Businesses near the Gorst Creek Landfill

## Cleanup to Start on Gorst Creek Landfill

April 4, 2016

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will begin a cleanup of the former Gorst Creek Bremerton Auto Wrecking Landfill (GCL) in your area and will be restoring a portion of Gorst Creek. The GCL Site is near Port Orchard in Kitsap County, Washington. The EPA and the US Navy have completed a multi-million dollar settlement agreement to remove the landfill. The multi-step process will take about a year to complete.

### Background:

The site operated as a landfill from the 1950s until 1989. During this time, the landfill received auto wrecking wastes but also received other wastes, including medical waste and other material from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, and demolition debris and municipal solid waste. The volume of waste in the landfill is estimated at 150,000 cubic yards.



— Creek  
— Boundary of GCL cleanup site

In 1968 a pipe was installed in the ravine to contain the creek, which allowed the operators to fill the ravine with waste and debris. The weight of the landfill crushed the creek culvert in at least two locations. The crushed culvert restricts water flow and when it rains the creek impounds upstream of the landfill, at times reaching depths of 40 to 60 feet. Impounded water seeps through the landfill and occasionally flows over its surface, causing erosion and failure of the landfill slope. Landslides from the landfill have uprooted trees, altered the course of the creek, increased sedimentation, and distributed waste material up to ½ mile downstream.

The landfill also presents a threat to State Highway 3 located approximately 100 yards downstream. Waste from previous landfill slides has blocked the culvert beneath the highway, requiring the Washington Department of Transportation to clear the culvert to prevent highway flooding and erosion of the highway embankment.

Gorst Creek is habitat for threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead, as well as coastal cutthroat trout, a state priority species. Landfill slides degrade downstream water quality and habitat, and the crushed culvert blocks fish passage to upstream habitat. The Suquamish Tribe operates a Chinook hatchery 2.5 miles downstream and is concerned about impacts on fish and habitat.

Soil, sediment, and water sampling in 1999 and 2004 found arsenic, chromium, PCBs, and other polluting chemicals at the landfill. This pollution could move further into the environment and pose a risk to people, animals, and the environment.

The EPA will remove the landfill and restore the creek and habitat, in consultation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Suquamish Tribe, and Washington State Department of Transportation.



## Next steps

The EPA and the US Navy have completed a multi-million dollar settlement agreement to remove the landfill. The multi-step process will take about a year to complete.

In 2016 the EPA is planning to:

- Clear the land by removing the trees and shrubs on the landfill site, much of this material will be stockpiled on site, to be used during the restoration process and as erosion control and habitat restoration;
- Remove the landfill debris – sorting and separating into recyclable items, solid waste (trash), clean fill, and hazardous waste (which will be taken to a permitted disposal facility); and
- Restore the creek and habitat to support fish and other wildlife.

While the work is ongoing there will be additional truck traffic. We will make every effort to minimize disruption to local residents.

## For more information

For more background information about the site please visit the web page.

<http://epaos.org/BremertonAutoWreckingGorstCreek>

Once site work begins the webpage will be updated to reflect the current activities. You may also review the cleanup plan and other key documents in the Administrative Record at the Kitsap Regional Library, 612 5th Street, Bremerton, WA 98337. (Please contact the Library at (360) 377-3955).

## Contact

If you have questions or concerns, please contact:

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