



Landsburg Mine Site Cleanup

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, July 10, 2017, (one week later than usual due to Fourth of July Holiday) the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Issues and cleanup activities for two sites in the Ravensdale area were discussed with Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) and King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) officials—Landsburg Mine and Reserve Silica (a continuation from last month’s meeting). Also, Maple Valley Fire Chief Tyerman discussed the August 1 vote on a Fire Benefit Charge (FBC)

Landsburg Mine Site

The Landsburg site is a former underground coal mine located ~1.5 mi northwest of Ravensdale (south of Summit-Landsburg Rd, north of Kent-Kangley Rd). The Cedar River is ~500 ft north of the site. The former mine site occupies property currently owned by Palmer Coking Coal and formerly by Plum Creek. During the late 1960s to late 1970s industrial wastes (in ~4,500 drums) were disposed in the trench that formed above the former coal seam.

Jerome Cruz, State DOE Site Manager, provided a status report on the clean-up of the site. The trench is about 20-60 ft deep and ~100 ft wide. DOE has found no groundwater contamination in a variety of test wells dug over several years (DOE tests for ~120 chemicals). The Final Cleanup Plan calls for putting in clean fill and capping the trench with a clay-like material. Alongside the cap will be diversion ditches to capture excess surface water draining off the cap. Contingency plans for any contaminated water include pumping out, containing, treating, and discharging it.

In March of this year DOE released a “Responsiveness Summary” which contained answers and changes to the proposed Cleanup plan in response to formal input from the public, organizations, the City of Kent, and the State Department of Health.

In response to comments received, DOE revised the final cleanup plan as follows: (1) Increase how often the monitoring wells are tested to ensure that groundwater is protected over the long-term; (2) Test groundwater for 1,4-dioxane in addition to existing list of chemicals that will be routinely monitored; (3) Revise triggers for the contingency plan, so the “Personally Liable Persons” (PLPs) will take the actions in the contingency plan sooner; (4) Install additional performance monitoring wells to verify contaminated groundwater is not leaving the Site; and (5) Incorporate actions suggested by the Department of Health regarding impacts and testing of private wells, groundwater, and soils.

DOE is finalizing the Consent Decree (i.e., legal agreement with the PLPs). DOE will start Cleanup Action in the Spring/Summer of 2018. All documents related to the Landsburg Mine Cleanup can be found at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=60>

Reserve Silica Mine Site

At the Area Council's June 5 meeting officials from DOE and Seattle-King County Public Health, as well as expert Consultants (Geologists) for the owners of the Reserve Silica site discussed current activities related to contamination migration and cleanup. Reserve Silica requested they come back to discuss two additional items at this meeting.

Carl Einberger from Aspect Engineering under contract to Reserve Silica discussed establishing a Water Bank and how it could be used to provide water rights to others. The proposed Water Bank would use Reserve Silica's 1967 Industrial Water Right to withdraw water from Ravensdale Lake.

Reserve Silica representatives discussed its June 30 Docket Item filing to King County to execute a Large-Lot Subdivision. It proposes to subdivide its 382 ac (300 ac currently zoned Mining and 82 ac currently zoned Forestry) into seven large lots. Zoning on three of those lots (comprising 122 ac) is requested to be changed to RA-10 zoning (i.e., one house per 10 ac). DPER's Randy Sandin explained that all requested Docket Items registered in the previous twelve months will be compiled into the Docket Report by County Staff for release this December 1 to the King County Council. No actions on any requested Docket Items will be taken by the County Council until the 2018 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) annual update. The Area Council will review details of Reserve Silica's Docket Item request and provide comments to the King County Council during the 2018 KCCP update.

Fire Benefit Rating System

Maple Valley Fire District Chief Tyerman discussed the upcoming vote on August 1 on the Fire Benefit Charge (FBC). Last year the FBC failed with an approval of 58%, less than the supermajority of 60% needed to pass. However, Chief Tyerman explained that the Fire District still needs the money to cover operation, staff, and capital costs, which keep increasing.

The FBC is not based on property value, it is based risk and, thus, on house and attached garage size (i.e., square footage). In this way it is considered fair, since it is based on how much it costs to defend a home in a fire. Vacant land and out buildings (e.g., barns) are not assessed any charge. There are discounts available to senior citizens and those having a sprinkler system.

Next Area Council Meeting

Monday, August 7, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM, at the Fire Station located at the SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection. All members of the Public are welcome to attend.

Meetings are held the first non-holiday Monday of each month. A Public Comment period at the beginning of each meeting provides an opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and government officials in attendance.

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. Please visit: www.greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.org.

***** NOTE: Five positions are open on the 16-member Area Council. If you live in the Tahoma School District outside the City of Maple Valley (see Service Area Map on our web site), you are invited to apply to become a member by sending a letter of interest to GMVUAC, P. O. Box 111, Maple Valley, WA 98038 or attend our next monthly meeting. *****