



Queen City Farms Superfund Site

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, May 4, the Area Council held its second “*virtual*” monthly meeting during the Coronavirus emergency. Topics addressed were: Reserve Silica Mine Site Cleanup, Queen City Farms, King County Comprehensive Plan, and King County Advisory Committee.

Tahoma School District (TSD)

Val Paganelli gave a brief update. Primary emphasis of the TSD is on delivering on guidance from Office of State Public Education (OSPI), including distance/remote learning. OSPI recently issued grading guidelines for high school transcripts, emphasizing a “*no harm*” outcome. TSD is still evaluating available options which include a range of possible *grades* or an *incomplete*, with opportunities to resolve incomplete based on critical learning thresholds.

No decisions yet have been made on Graduation or traditional celebrations and transitions. Finances of the district remain strong at this time; there are budget uncertainties going forward. Please offer your “*thank you’s*” and support to students and staff when and where able.

Reserve Silica Mine Site Cleanup

State Department of Ecology’s (DOE’s) Alan Noell and Tim O’Connor provided an update on the site’s Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) cleanup of the Reserve Silica site (28130 Black Diamond–Ravensdale Rd). Previous owners and operators used the site to mine for coal (through 1956) and sandstone (until 2007). As part of site reclamation, the mine pits are being backfilled with materials from construction sites around the Puget Sound region.

Through the 1980’s a corrosive material called Cement Kiln Dust (CKD)—a fine-grained, solid, highly alkaline waste removed from kiln exhaust gas by air pollution control devices during the production of cement—was disposed of in two of the open mine pits since closed after filling. Unfortunately, when CKD comes in contact with water, it releases toxic metals. With groundwater moving through the CKD has seeped to the surface spreading contaminants which include high pH (corrosive) water and toxic metals—including arsenic and lead. A leachate treatment system, which lowers the pH and attempts to filter out metals, was put in place with treated water then sent to infiltration ponds.

There are two MTCA areas: *Reclamation Site* and *Plant Site* (NW corner), which is part of an Independent Cleanup Process and abides by the MTCA requirements (see: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=15125>). DOE negotiated an *Agreed Order* with Potentially Liable Parties (PLPs) for the *Reclamation Site* on December 16, 2019, requiring preparation and submittal of: a *Remedial Investigation Report*, *Feasibility Study Report*, and *Draft Cleanup Action Plan*—all will be open to Public Comments. A *Remedial Investigation Work Plan* expected by early September with the other documents mentioned above due over the next 3 years. The DOE webpage for Reserve Silica Reclamation is: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/gsp/CleanupSiteDocuments.aspx?csid=4728>.

More information can be found on the Area Council’s web site: www.gmvuac.org, simply click on “*Reserve Silica*” in the “*Current Issues*” box on the Home page.

Queen City Farms EPA Superfund Site

Queen City Farms (QCF) is a Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site and, as such, carries special considerations for any work done on or below the surface. The 324-ac site is located on Cedar Grove Road, ~2.5 mi north of the City of Maple Valley due south of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

Disposal activities on site processed and dumped industrial/hazardous wastes in buried drums, as well as in three ponds, from 1955 to 1964. In 1980, the ponds were sampled by EPA; heavy metals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were found in the water, sludge, and sediment. Processing and waste handling activities resulted in contamination of soil and groundwater with organic compounds and metals. Following cleanup, operation and maintenance activities and monitoring are ongoing (see EPA QCF page: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=1000835>).

On March 16 the King County (KC) Department of Local Services (DLS) Permitting Division issued a *Notice of Application for Queen City Farm Reclamation Phase III*. The permit application (GRDE18-0048) is for Grading and Tributary Relocation (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/permits/public-notice/special-interest-projects/GRDE18-0048-Queen-City.aspx>) and includes: Refill Operations, Erosion Control, Stream Channel Restoration, Plantings, etc.

The Area Council's Environment Committee conducted in-depth research of the QCF site and drafted a set of comprehensive comments that were approved by the Area Council and submitted to the DLS Permitting Division on May 1 (for the full set of comments please see the *Queen City Farms* item under the *Current Issues* box on the Area Council's Home page: www.gmvuac.org).

Area Council conclusions and recommendations included in the comments to King County were:

1. The pre-mining *hydrology*, especially the *hydrogeology*—underground or surface water flows, cannot be restored.
2. The *trichloroethylene (TCE)* groundwater plumes will probably be impacted to some extent, and additional groundwater monitoring wells will likely be needed.
3. The stormwater control measures may not be adequate to manage future peak flows, consequently any permit should require a contingency plan to enable QCF to upgrade the stormwater detention capacity quickly, if needed.
4. The permit should be conditioned to re-establish year-round flows in the stream that originates from the spring at the south property boundary to enable restoration of salmon spawning habitat in the Cedar Grove Channel that was disrupted when Aquifer 1 was largely mined out.

King County Comprehensive Plan

The 2020 Mid-Point Update (4-yr mid-point between 8-yr Major Updates), which all King County Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs) and Unincorporated Area Associations (UAAs) reviewed and submitted detailed comments on last year, is in the final stages of approval by the King County Council.

The King County Council's Mobility and Environment Committee has proposed a "*Striker*" Amendment that includes the changes including the following items of interest to the Rural Area: 4:1 Program; Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs); and Agricultural Production Districts (APDs). The Area Council again is leading and effort with all King County Rural Area UACs and UAAs to review, prepare, and submit comments on any of the above items deemed necessary.

A Public Hearing will be held on June 9. Current deadline for King County Council approval is the end of June, but that date may slide due to the current emergency.

King County Department of Local Services Advisory Committee

Earlier this year the King County Department of Local Services (DLS) established an Advisory Committee and requested several Area Council members participate. The first meeting was held on February 11 and are held on a quarterly basis.

The second meeting was held on May 1. DLS Director, John Taylor, and his Staff discussed the effects of the emergency on King County operations. Early in March during the emergency King County moved several people around to work various aspects of its response, but now most are back in their regular positions. The Permitting Division has its permits now all online. The Roads Division will have to deal with reduced revenues from gas taxes and delayed property tax payments.

The 3rd Advisory Committee meeting currently is planned for August.

Upcoming Area Council Meetings

The next Area Council regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, June 1, which is expected to be another “*virtual*” meeting.

All regular monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, from 7 - 9:30 PM. When State restrictions are lifted, the Area Council will again meet face-to-face with members of the Public invited to attend and continue to invite Guest Speakers on topics of key local and regional interest. Meetings will be held at the Maple Valley Fire Station (SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection directly across from the Police Precinct). All are welcome with each meeting beginning with an open Public Comment period.

Area Council Membership

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally recognized advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. The Area Council's *Vision Statement* is:

“Our community’s Rural Character will be supported by facilitating strong local ties and communication between the public, organizations, and government; promoting locally owned businesses and supporting quality education; protecting the environment, and maintaining landowners’ rights and responsibilities; promoting controlled and well-planned growth with appropriate infrastructure; ensuring proper representation for rural interests and needs; and supporting the health and safety and the privacy of our vibrant community.”

The twelve-seat Area Council currently has open seats. If you have an interest in joining please send an e-mail to: info@gmvuac.org or attend a monthly meeting and express your interest.

Citizens who are not members of the Area Council or do not live within the Tahoma School District still are eligible to join and serve on any of the Area Council’s three major subject-matter Committees: Environment, Growth Management, or Transportation, as well as the Ad Hoc Economic Committee. The Area Council welcomes your participation. For information on each of these committees please see the Area Council’s web site: www.gmvuac.org and use the drop-down menu under *Committees*. Thank you.