

# Camas Mill Cleanup Community Advisory Group Frequently Asked Questions

## About the GP Mill Cleanup

More than a century of industrial activity at the Georgia-Pacific (GP) pulp and paper mill in Camas has led to potential contamination in soil, sediment, and groundwater in and around the mill site. Contamination may have occurred due to regular operations, spills, or leaks.

GP and Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) entered into an Agreed Order in August 2021 to assess areas around the mill site that are no longer in use, while the mill continues to operate and employ people in our communities. Based on findings of this investigation, GP and Ecology may determine that interim actions are needed to clean up portions of the mill site.

The Columbia River Paper Company was started in 1884, and in 1885 began producing newsprint from local timber, straw, and rags, at the site that is now operated by GP. The mill started making paper from wood pulp in 1892 and was the first western mill to do this. It produced newsprint until 1930 when it stopped due to cheaper Canadian production. After removing newspaper manufacturing, Camas evolved to become the largest specialty mill in the world in its day. The mill is currently operated by GP, which continues to make paper from purchased pulp. The mill has been an active part of our community for over a century, and the site continues to be key for Camas and the region.

Learn more about the mill and Camas's history here [www.downtowncamas.com/dca/history](http://www.downtowncamas.com/dca/history)

## Community Involvement

### 1. How can I get involved and/or ask questions?

DCA's goal is to provide the public with regular opportunities to learn about investigation and cleanup and have input on this process to better inform Ecology of the community's interests regarding the site. There are many different opportunities to engage with and participate in the cleanup process. Members of the public will be able to attend public meetings and events, receive email notifications, and visit the regularly updated project website.

The DCA's website, [www.downtowncamas.com/CamasWaMillInfo](http://www.downtowncamas.com/CamasWaMillInfo), is your go-to place for information related to this process and where you can sign up for regular email updates. Visit the site and watch DCA's Facebook account for updates and event announcements.

We welcome your feedback on the GP cleanup process. Send your comments and questions to:

- Email: [camaswamillinfo@downtowncamas.com](mailto:camaswamillinfo@downtowncamas.com)
- Phone: 360-771-2897

### 2. What is the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and what is its role in the cleanup process?

Ecology implements public outreach activities that are specified in MTCA. The Downtown Camas Association's CAG works to enhance these activities and spread the word about opportunities for community involvement.

As a part of the public participation process, the DCA has convened a CAG to get the community involved throughout the cleanup process that GP will implement over the coming years. The CAG was established in December 2021 and consists of 14 members. CAG

meetings will occur regularly and are open to the public. Meeting dates and links can be found on the DCA website.

The CAG's role is to:

- Supervise the CAG's public involvement
- Provide recommendations on community outreach strategies
- Encourage opportunities for public involvement in the cleanup process
- Review technical materials and respond to Ecology and GP regarding the sampling and cleanup planning process, findings, and resulting plans. CAG may engage an environmental consultant when funding allows. CAG is, however, committed to operate regardless of outside grant funding.

## About the Cleanup/Property

### 3. What's going on with the Georgia-Pacific Mill and why is it being cleaned up?

Operations at the mill continue on its main site. GP has not shared plans to stop current work at the mill. In August 2021, Ecology and GP negotiated and consented to an Agreed Order for GP to investigate potential contamination and evaluate how to clean up areas around the mill site that are no longer in use. GP has accepted the designation of Responsible Party and will pay for and conduct the investigation and/or cleanup activities in accordance with Washington State's Cleanup Law, [Model Toxics Control Act - Washington State Department of Ecology](#) .

GP has already made significant progress prior to the Agreed Order in many of the buildings that are not in use. This includes extensive asbestos and PCB removal, and electrical and natural gas disconnections.

### 4. Who bears the cost of the cleanup?

MTCA states that cleanups are paid for by those responsible for the contamination. GP has accepted the designation of "responsible party" as the current owner/operator and is actively participating in the cleanup process.

### 5. Will operations at the mill be shutting down as a part of this process?

Cleanup of non-operational areas will proceed as GP continues to run manufacturing assets on the main site. GP has not shared plans to stop current operations. The mill is significant to the life and culture of our communities, and the Downtown Camas Association and the CAG respect its rich history and role as an economic driver for thousands of families.

### 6. How long will the cleanup process take?

The cleanup process may take many years to complete and may occur in phases given the large amount of property. GP is investigating portions of the site that are not being used for current operations. Based on the findings of this investigation, GP and Ecology may agree that interim actions are needed to clean up portions of the property. It's important to note that the investigation process can be iterative: multiple rounds of investigation may be required to define the nature and extent of contamination and to provide sufficient information to complete

cleanup. Dates are approximate and subject to change based on Ecology’s cleanup process, which is implemented according to the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA).

**Anticipated major project milestones include:**

January 2022	GP provided a draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan (a plan that outlines a scope of work to investigate the property for potential environmental impacts and includes a plan for the collection of data in a variety of media to characterize site conditions, the types of waste, and containments, and evaluates risks to human health and the environment) to Ecology for review. Ecology also provided the draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan to the CAG for public review and comment.
March 2022	DCA submitted CAG comments and public comments on the draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan to Ecology.
Early 2025	Remedial Investigation (RI) Work Plan (sampling & analysis) finalized by Ecology
2025	GP performs ongoing sampling and analysis
2026	GP submits RI report to summarize sampling results for Ecology’s review
2027 or later (depending on RI findings)	Ecology and GP develop Cleanup Action Plan
2027 or later (depending on RI findings)	Site cleanup begins. The Agreed Order does not define the timelines for these documents or the start of any warranted interim actions.

**7. What is Ecology’s role in the cleanup process?**

Ecology will oversee and approve the work GP completes through the formal cleanup process to make sure that the activities are consistent with the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). Ecology also implements public outreach activities that are specified in MTCA, in addition to supporting engagement efforts made by the Downtown Camas Association. Ecology has no role in establishing what the future use of the site will be. Decisions regarding zoning and future land use are established by the mill, as the current owner/operator, and the City of Camas as the local planning authority. How the land will be used in the future is one factor in Ecology’s determination of the required clean up levels. If future use other than industrial is established by the owner and the city, then Ecology will manage cleanup to levels based on that purpose.

**8. What is GP’s role in the cleanup process?**

GP entered an Agreed Order with Ecology to assess areas around the mill site that are no longer in use, while the mill continues to operate and employ people in our communities. The Agreed Order requires GP to conduct a remedial investigation where there has been a release or threatened release of hazardous substances and perform interim actions, as needed. The Agreed Order also requires that GP be present at meetings and available to answer the public’s questions when requested by Ecology. GP will be expected to perform remedial investigation

field work, prepare the Remedial Investigation Report, and prepare a draft and final Interim Action Work Plan for any interim action performed. All these activities are subject to approval by Ecology.

## **9. What are the contaminants that should be cleaned up?**

The mill will be required to address areas where chemicals pose an unacceptable risk to humans and/or ecological organisms through cleanup or other controls. Based on historical land use and industrial practices at the site, soil, groundwater, and/or sediment could be contaminated with total petroleum hydrocarbons from diesel, gasoline, and oil. Other contaminants may include:

- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and carcinogenic PAHs
- Benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Metals (lead and chromium)
- Dioxins and furans
- TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE)

Many of these compounds were used as solvents, present in petroleum products used on site, or by-products of the manufacturing process. For more details on chemicals of potential concern, see Table 1 of the RI Work Plan.

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/108747>

## **10. Are there any existing health risks that I should be aware of?**

The planned remedial investigations will help understand what chemicals are present and how they could affect human health and the environment. There are state and national tools you can use to learn more about environmental health in your community.

Washington Health Tracker: [Washington Tracking Network \(WTN\) | Washington State Department of Health](#)

## **About the mill**

### **11. How big is the mill?**

The site occupies approximately 661 acres, consisting of 476 acres on Lady Island and 159 acres on the upland side, north of the Camas Slough. The site contains numerous structures that support mill operations. The image above denotes the GP Camas Paper Mill property and clean up area. The mill property covered under the current Agreed Order is outlined in yellow; current mill operational areas are shaded in blue.

### **12. What is happening with the Camas Business Center?**

Also owned by GP and included in the Site definition in the Agreed Order is a parcel north of the main mill site. This property is called the Camas Business Center (CBC). GP historically used

this site for research activities and manufacturing of specialty chemicals. The buildings were demolished in 2021. Asbestos abatement, removal of steam heating, PCB containing transformers and other power sources had already been conducted. The DCA and CAG are not aware of GP's plans for this property. Additional assessment activities are included in the remedial investigation, as this property has been used for limited manufacturing in the past.

### **13. What will happen with the mill property in the future? Are there redevelopment plans that are being considered?**

There are no known redevelopment plans for the mill property. GP continues to operate a paper mill on the main site and has not shared plans to stop current operations. The City of Camas is engaged in a downtown subarea plan as part of the larger Comprehensive Plan which will speak to an overall vision for Camas's future.

Updates and information are available here: [Camas Comprehensive Plan](#). This process may provide insight into possible future land uses and will inform cleanup approaches.

### **14. Is the GP Camas Mill considered a Superfund site?**

No, the GP Camas Mill is not a Superfund site. Superfund sites are polluted locations in the United States requiring a long-term response to clean up hazardous material. These cleanups are overseen by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded by taxes on petroleum and chemical industries, referred to as the "Superfund". These mechanisms to protect the public health were designated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980.

The GP mill cleanup is being managed at the state level, not federally by the EPA. The Agreed Order for cleanup is between the Washington State Department of Ecology and GP. "The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is Washington's environmental cleanup law. MTCA funds and directs the investigation, cleanup, and prevention of sites that are contaminated by hazardous substances. It works to protect people's health and the environment, and to preserve natural resources for the future. "

Read more here: [Model Toxics Control Act - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)