

Lora Vess

I am writing to express my extreme concern regarding the Port Angeles Rayonier Mill proposed cleanup. Use of a protective cap on the property for contaminated soil fails to adequately guarantee safety to humans and wildlife now or in the future. One only has to consider the recent tsunami advisory to realize the limitation of this approach. Moreover, as the Department acknowledges, "The Harbor is located within the traditional territory of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (LEKT), a federally recognized Tribe with treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering rights in the Harbor, whose people have lived throughout the northern Olympic Peninsula, including the Harbor, for thousands of years" and furthermore with "a moderate to high probability of prehistoric to historic period Native American cultural resources in some portions of the mill property (Interim Action Plan)

The proposed approach is short-sighted, culturally insensitive, relies on limiting access and good faith efforts by Rayonier to "regularly" check on the cap, and a presumption that the land will remain zoned industrial. However, since the Department of Ecology recognizes that the land may be used for non-industrial purposes in the future, all efforts should be taken now for full remediation and clean-up of all heavy metals and carcinogens. SL5 should be the preferred and permanent solution to this long-delayed toxic cleanup.

Sincerely,
Lora Vess, PhD