

Anonymous Anonymous

Until very recently, this industrial development also resulted in the central waterfront area being largely off-limits to the public ever since, despite the fact that the City and Port of Bellingham currently own the land. While it's easy to feel separated from this legacy, it affects places Whatcom residents know and love. Even local favorite Boulevard Park was home to a coal-fired gas plant that left heavy metals and fossil fuel byproducts.

The toxic contamination and heavily modified shoreline make the waterfront hazardous to young salmon, which need clean, protected, and connected nearshore habitat to grow and make it to the open ocean. The decline of eelgrass beds and gravel beaches which act as nurseries for forage fish (which salmon need to eat) have put an additional stress on our dwindling salmon populations.

Bellingham's waterfront gives our community a unique opportunity to make something positive from former industrial areas. As we've seen from the completed cleanup at Waypoint Park in 2018 — complete with some young salmon habitat, new businesses, and a playground — it can and should be done.