

# Results of Site Visit to the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund Site on Bainbridge Island, Washington

June 9, 2026 | Report No. 26-N-0035



## Abbreviations

EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
OIG	Office of Inspector General

## Cover Image

A chain-link fence and concrete bolsters delineate the closed section of the public beach next to the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site, which is pictured in the background. There are few to no footprints in the sand past the barriers and signage. (EPA OIG image)

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**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

June 9, 2026

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Results of Site Visit to the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund Site on Bainbridge Island, Washington  
Report No. 26-N-0035

**FROM:** Nicole N. Murley, Deputy Inspector General performing the duties of the Inspector General *Nicole N. Murley*

**TO:** Thomas Croci, Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Land and Emergency Management

Emma Pokon, Regional Administrator  
Region 10

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General visited the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site on Bainbridge Island, Washington, to observe the EPA's management of public access to the site, including contaminated beaches. Through our visit, we aimed to determine whether we should conduct additional oversight. Prior to our visit we identified concerns about public access to the site, but during our visit we observed physical access controls and informational devices that should effectively limit public exposure to contaminants. Therefore, we do not anticipate conducting additional oversight at this time. This memorandum serves to notify you of our observations and inform the agency's overall approach for risk communication and site access controls for other Superfund remedial activities.

**This project supports these EPA mission-related efforts:**

- Cleaning up and revitalizing land.
- Compliance with the law.

A response to this memorandum is not required because the memorandum contains no recommendations. If your office submits a response, however, it will be posted on the OIG's website, along with our memorandum commenting on the response. The response should be provided as an Adobe PDF file that complies with the requirements of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The final response should not contain data that your office does not want released to the public; if the response contains such data, your office should identify the data for redaction or removal along with corresponding justification.

We will post this memorandum to our website at [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig).

## Background

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund, authorizes the EPA to clean up certain contaminated sites, known as Superfund sites. The act requires that the EPA maintain the National Priorities List, a list of sites prioritized for cleanup and remediation based on the relative heightened threat that they pose to human health and the environment.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA, provided approximately \$3.5 billion to the EPA's Superfund program to complete or make progress on remedial activities for sites on the National Priorities List. The EPA allocated approximately \$80 million of these IIJA funds to the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site. Covering 78.5 acres on Bainbridge Island, this site is the location of a former wood treating facility that operated from 1903 through 1988. The EPA added the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor site to the National Priorities List in 1987. The site's soil, groundwater, and sediment are contaminated with creosote-derived polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, pentachlorophenol, dioxins, and mercury. Despite the facility being defunct since 1988, contaminant seepage from the soil onto the adjacent beaches is ongoing, creating hazardous environmental conditions for the public.

The current phase of remedial activities for the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site began in March 2025 and is scheduled to be completed in 2027. This IIJA-funded construction includes replacing a corroding retaining wall that is more than 1,800 feet in length. When operational, this wall prevents contaminated soil from eroding onto public beaches and into Eagle Harbor and the Puget Sound. The EPA is also using IIJA funds to improve the site access road to support construction activities. The site will be converted into a public park.

Controlling access to the contaminated beaches is crucial to protect public health during the IIJA-funded remediation. However, our background research and review of site documents indicated persistent issues with the EPA's management of public access to these beaches. Specifically, interviews and public feedback during a five-year review in 2022 described signs on the site as illegible and revealed that some people continued to access "closed" portions of the beach because they either disregarded or could not read the warnings on the signs. The EPA determined that it would evaluate the site's informational mechanisms after this feedback.

### Five-year reviews

If contamination at a site remains above the levels that would allow unlimited use of and unrestricted exposure to the site, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act requires the EPA to review the site every five years to ensure that the remedies are still effective. This is called a five-year review.

## Scope and Methodology

This memorandum describes observations made during planning activities, and it does not constitute work performed under the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards*

for Inspection and Evaluation. However, we did follow the OIG’s quality control procedures for ensuring that the information in this memorandum is accurate and supported.

Our prior oversight work at other IJJA-funded Superfund sites has indicated that communicating risk and controlling public access can be a challenge for the EPA.<sup>1</sup> To assist in our planning to determine whether we should initiate a full evaluation, we chose to observe the site conditions and assess the effectiveness of the site’s public access controls.

We conducted an unescorted site visit to inspect the publicly accessible areas and the perimeter of the site on Thursday, November 20, 2025. We observed the condition of both engineering controls, specifically physical access controls, and institutional controls, specifically informational devices, meant to reduce public risk of exposure to site contaminants during the IJJA-funded construction. We documented our observations and compared them against official site records.

Additionally, we reviewed background documents and community engagement materials for the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site, best practices related to risk communication, and guidance and policies that the EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management issued regarding risk communication and community involvement.

#### Physical access controls and informational devices

**Physical access controls:** A type of engineering control that physically prevents access to contaminated areas. Examples include fencing.

**Informational devices:** A type of institutional control that informs local communities, site users, or other interested people that residual contamination remains on site. Examples include state registries of contaminated sites, deed notices, tracking systems, fish- and shellfish-consumption advisories, and signage.

## Results

The physical access controls and informational devices we observed should effectively limit public exposure to contaminants at the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site. We encountered physical access controls, such as chain-link fencing, locked gates, and concrete bolsters at the site’s public access points. We also observed a security guard at the site’s main entrance. In contrast to the concerns cited during the 2022 five-year review, we observed signs that were in new and good condition, communicating human health risk information and public access restrictions related to the site. In addition to these controls, the agency is communicating information about risks, closures, site contaminants, and remedial construction activities on the site profile page. Based on the lack of footprints in the sand on the closed sections of adjacent beaches, we concluded that no one had recently accessed that portion of the site,

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<sup>1</sup> Our prior oversight work includes evaluations related to the [Cornell Dubilier Electronics](#), [Eighteenmile Creek](#), [American Creosote Works \(Pensacola\)](#), and [Escambia Wood](#) Superfund sites.

indicating that the EPA's physical barriers and risk communication are likely effectively deterring public access to the closed sections of the beach.

Because the EPA's controls and risk communication should effectively dissuade the public from interacting with known hazards at the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site, we are not initiating a full evaluation at this time. However, because the remedial construction activities are ongoing and will continue for several years, we will continue to monitor developments and reassess, as necessary.

cc: Lee Zeldin, Administrator

David Fotouhi, Deputy Administrator

Travis Voyles, Associate Deputy Administrator

Eric Amidon, Chief of Staff, Office of the Administrator

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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