EPA

Superfund Redevelopment Initiative

# SITE REDEVELOPMENT PROFILE

## Oeser Co. Superfund Site

## Bellingham, Washington

Walking paths in Little Squalicum Park, leading to Bellingham Way. (*Source:* EPA)

**Site Location:** 730 Marine Drive, Bellingham, Washington 98225

**Size:** 47 acres, including the 26-acre Oeser Company property and the 21-acre Little Squalicum Creek area

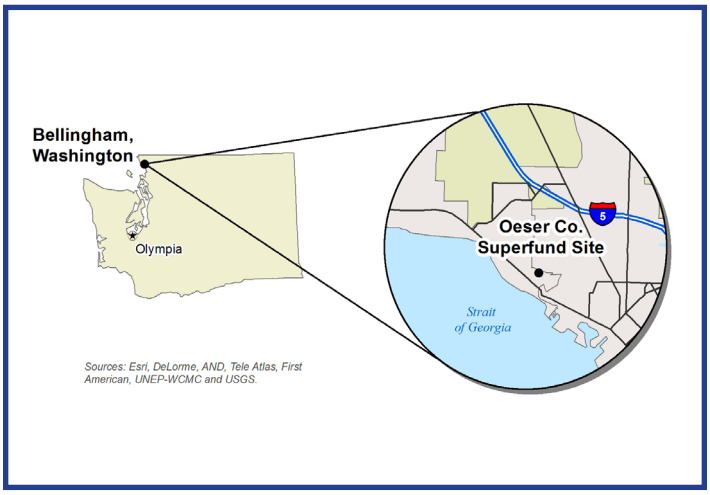
**Existing Site Infrastructure:** All major types of infrastructure are located on site.

**Current Site Uses:** A wood-treating facility, recreational and ecological uses of Little Squalicum Park and Little Squalicum Creek are located on site.

**Use Restrictions:** Planned restrictive covenants will prevent residential and recreational use of Oeser Company property, and prohibit groundwater use and disturbance of areas with remedial caps in place.

**Surrounding Population:** within 0.5 mile, 2,148 people; within 2.5 miles, 32,406 people; within 4 miles, 76,911 people.

The 47-acre Oeser Company Superfund site is located in a residential and industrial area in Bellingham, Washington. The site includes an active wood-treating facility on the 26-acre Oeser Company property and the Little Squalicum Park area, which spans about 21 acres south of the company property. Effective collaboration on the site's cleanup work enabled continued industrial use, the restoration of creeks and wetland habitats, and the restoration and reopening of Little Squalicum Park.




Location of the site in Bellingham, Washington.

Since 1943, the Oeser Company has operated a wood-treating facility on site; it prepares wood poles for utility companies. Wood-treating operations and spills resulted in soil and groundwater contamination at the Oeser Company facility and the Little Squalicum Park area nearby. EPA added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1997. EPA and the Oeser Company did initial cleanup work at the facility. They dug up contaminated soil, installed a protective cap, and created a stormwater collection and treatment

## SITE HISTORY AND REDEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

**1942** The Oeser Company began operating a wood-treating facility at the site.

**1984** The Oeser Company discontinued use of creosote and began treating wooden poles with pentachlorophenol instead.

**1997** EPA placed the site on the NPL.

**2003** EPA selected the cleanup plan for the site.

**2006 - 2007** The Oeser Company cleaned up soil contamination at the facility property.

**2008 - 2010** EPA and the city of Bellingham partnered to clean up Little Squalicum Creek.

**2011** Little Squalicum Park reopened to the public.

**2014** EPA Region 10 recognized site outcomes with its Howard Orlean Excellence in Site Reuse Award.

**2018** The Oeser Company continues to operate on site. Little Squalicum Park open to the public.

system to minimize further contamination in the creek and wetland habitats downgradient of the site. The Oeser Company continues to treat wood utility poles at its facility on site. The company switched from using creosote to pentachlorophenol in its operations in 1984.

The city of Bellingham used $75,000 in Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding for the master planning of Little Squalicum Park. Before implementing the plan, the city did additional sampling and found pockets of soil contamination in the historical meanders of the creek. Based on the risks posed to people and the environment, EPA and the Oeser Company moved over 28,000 tons of contaminated soils into an engineered repository at the Oeser Company facility, re-established the natural stream meander channel, rerouted storm drains and restored wetlands.

The city of Bellingham closed Little Squalicum Park during the cleanup. In October 2011, the city reopened the park to the public. The restored park includes beach trails, interpretive displays and parking. The trails connect the site to the larger Bay-to-Baker Trail network, which connects the city of Bellingham to Mount Baker. EPA and the city of Bellingham enhanced bicycling and walking paths in the park with a new layer of crushed limestone. Little Squalicum Creek also meanders through the site; the city contributed to park restoration by revegetating stream banks with native plants and wetland shrubs, including native red alder, cottonwood, cedar, and maple tree seedlings. The mature trees will help stabilize stream banks in the future. Restoration work also

Gravel cover and railroad access at the Oeser Company's wood-treating facility. (*Source:* EPA)

Little Squalicum Park. (*Source:* EPA)

provided an opportunity to remove invasive plant species and weeds from the park. Migratory birds, including peregrine falcons and bald eagles, and other wildlife species now make their home in Little Squalicum Park.

In 2014, EPA Region 10 recognized the beneficial reuse of Little Squalicum Park and the continued use of the Oeser wood-treating facility with its Howard Orlean Excellence in Site Reuse Award. Howard Orlean was an EPA project manager who pursued innovative approaches to site cleanup and reuse support and who oversaw the cleanup and restoration of the Oeser Company Superfund site. Today, Little Squalicum Park is a popular recreation amenity in the community, while continued industrial uses on the site provide jobs and generate tax revenues.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Frank Avvisato
(703) 603-8949
avvisato.frank@epa.gov

Kira Lynch
(206) 553-2144
lynch.kira@epa.gov

In May 2017, EPA established a task force to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the Agency's core mission to protect health and the environment.

epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force