

Our Waterfront. Our Front Yard.



How do I find out more or provide input?

Contact:

KayLeigh Miller
Ponderay City Planning
klmiller@ponderay.org

Visit:

cityofponderay.org/the-front-yard-project/



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The Front Yard Project is Underway!

For years, the City of Ponderay, along with support from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), the Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail and nearby cities of Sandpoint and Kootenai, has been committed to creating a natural waterfront that connects communities and provides safe public access to the Lake Pend Oreille.

One key step in the development of the Pend d'Oreille Trail and a publicly accessible waterfront is the cleanup of the former Panhandle Smelting and Refining Company (PSRC) property.

Thanks to funding from the USEPA and IDEQ, the City of Ponderay is moving forward with the PSRC cleanup.



Because of past smelting activity, the soil at the PSRC contains high levels of lead and other metals. There are caution signs throughout the PSRC addressing risks associated with metals in soils in the area.

Lead can cause many health problems, especially in children. Children with lead poisoning can suffer from slowed physical and mental growth, delays in attention span, and have difficult learning. We recommend staying away from the PSRC until the City's cleanup work is complete.

Fast Facts:

The PSRC was conceived in 1902 as a lead and silver smelter for local mines. The first lead bards were poured in June 1907 and the smelter ran sporadically through March 1909. Salvage crews dismantled the plant in December 1922. Not much remains today, except concrete ruins, brick piles, and a large outcrop of smelter slag known as "Black Rock".

In 2019, the City received a Brownfields Multipurpose grant for \$800,000 in hazardous substances funding to address much-needed brownfield planning, assessment, and cleanup activities at the PSRC.

In 2020, the City conducted a survey of community members to gather feedback on the future of Ponderay and its waterfront. The majority of respondents indicated that if the PSRC were cleaned up, they would like it to be used as a beach with public access that provided a variety of lakefront recreational opportunities.

In 2021 and 2022, the City purchased two privately held properties (including the PSRC) through a combination of grant funds and the "penny tax", a sales tax authorized by Ponderay voters and dedicated to two local projects, Lake Access and the Field of Dreams.

At the end of 2022, the City hired Alta Science & Engineering, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in Brownfields and cleaning up former smelter sites, to complete site assessment and cleanup planning and design for the PSRC.

In February 2023, Alta held a design concepts meeting to explore land reuse options with representatives from the City of Ponderay, the City's engineering consultant HMM, and IDEQ.

In March and May 2023, Alta collected soil, surface water and slag samples for use in cleanup planning and design efforts.

In fall 2023/winter 2024, Alta began working with the City of Ponderay, EPA, and IDEQ to develop an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Voluntary Remediation Workplan (VRWP) and cleanup design for the PSRC.

The ABCA/VRWP was available for public comment in September 2023 and the cleanup design was finalized in March 2024.

Construction and cleanup activities are expected to occur from late summer/fall 2024 to spring 2025.

