

McAllister Springs - Background

- The City's main drinking water source, McAllister Springs, is located in Nisqually Valley about 8 miles east of Olympia in unincorporated Thurston County.
- McAllister Springs is the headwaters of McAllister Creek – a creek that flows through the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and directly into Puget Sound.
- McAllister Springs is less than ¼ mile or 1320 feet, downstream, as ground water flows, from the main Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line that runs north-south through the Puget Sound region.
- The City of Olympia has long been concerned about the potential of a hazardous material spill along the BNSF rail line. Given the close proximity and vulnerability of McAllister Springs, a large rail spill near the Springs could significantly impact the City's drinking water supply.

Transition to McAllister Well Field - Background

- Due to the risk of a potential rail spill and other vulnerabilities, over the next two years the City of Olympia will be transitioning from its water source at McAllister Springs to a new, more protected water source. This new water source, a series of wells known as the McAllister Wellfield, is located approximately 0.8 of a mile to the southeast of McAllister Springs (on the other side of the BNSF rail line).
- Moving this new water source “upstream” (as groundwater flows) of the BNSF rail line reduces the risk of hazardous railway spills to the City's drinking water, however, the vulnerability and close proximity of estuaries that lead directly to southern Puget Sound remains.

Increased Train Traffic and Coal Dust

- Coal is a toxic material that contains heavy metals, mercury, arsenic and lead. Given the extraordinarily high volume of shipments that may be seen as a result of the proposed Longview coal export dock, even residual dust left in empty rail cars could have an extreme impact on the water quality and environmental conditions in Puget Sound.
- The potential for airborne and water borne coal dust and residuals settling in the McAllister Springs and surrounding area, is an as yet unknown potential environmental and public health risk that deserves study.
- This basin is a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area that our community relies upon for its drinking water supply.
- We respectfully request that risks of increased train traffic and coal dust and associated toxic residuals in the environmentally sensitive Nisqually Valley be evaluated as part of the environmental review of the Longview Coal Export facility project.