Anaconda Aluminum Columbia Falls Reduction Plant Site (Montana)

QUESTION: What is the future of the Columbia Falls Site?

ANSWER:

- Under an Administrative Order of Consent, the responsible party, Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, will start the field activities next month for the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS).
- Senator Tester visited the site on March 24, 2016, who said he still hopes to see the site designated under the federal Superfund program and expressed skepticism about parent company Glencore's resolve to fully remediate the property. Senator was quoted in a local newspaper as stating that "the only way they got here was the EPA," referring to the federal agency's proposal to list the site last year.
- EPA continues to work with Community Liaison Panel which consists of a number of site stakeholders, including the State, County, city and many local interests. EPA held its latest public meeting on April 5, 2016 at the Columbia Falls city council chambers with about 40 local residents, congressional representation from Senator Tester's office and Congressman Zinke's office, one county commissioner, two city council members, the mayor, and a reporter from the Flathead Beacon.
- EPA is considering whether the Superfund Alternative Approach or finalizing the proposed site to the final National Priorities List (NPL) will more likely expedite the cleanup. Reaction of the community to the March 2015 proposed listing is still mixed. Senator Tester and Governor Bullock still support listing, Congressman Zinke opposes listing and Senator Daines has preferred to wait and see.

BACKGROUND:

- The CFAC Site is 3,196 acres, however the footprint of operations consisted of approximately 1,340 acres. Buildings and industrial facilities located at the Site currently include offices, warehouses, laboratories, mechanical shops, paste plant, coal tar pitch tanks, pump houses, casting garage, and the potline facility. It is located 2 miles from the City of Columbia Falls, MT and it is 0.8 miles from the nearest resident.
- In 2014, EPA completed a Site Reassessment and identified cyanide and fluoride in ground water and surface water. The Site also includes seven closed landfills, one active landfill, material loading and unloading areas, two closed leachate ponds, and several wastewater percolation ponds. A rectifier yard and switchyard owned by Bonneville Power Administration and a right-of-way for Burlington Northern Railroad are also within the site boundaries.
- Glencore, a Swiss-based multi-national commodity trading company and parent company to the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, provided a $4 million letter of credit as financial assurance for the RI/FS.

Congressional Interest: Senator Jon Tester; Senator Steve Daines; Representative Ryan Zinke.

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