Anaconda Aluminum Columbia Falls Reduction Plant Site (Montana)

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

ANSWER:

- An Administrative Order of Consent for the RI/FS was signed November 30, 2015. The PRP, Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, has submitted all required documents to date and is on site performing a site reconnaissance to prepare for field activities including groundwater well installation and sampling activities which will start May 16, 2016. 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 work, but is not a signatory to the agreement.
- EPA has been working with the 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 April 5, 2016 EPA held a public meeting for the Anaconda Aluminum Columbia Falls Reduction Plant site at the Columbia Falls city council chambers. It was well attended 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 provided an update on the status of the site, introduced EPA personnel and ATSDR representatives, and discussed the schedule for starting field activities to begin the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) process. EPA also distinguished between the impending start of RI/FS activities and current demolition project (including asbestos materials management and removal of spent potliners) being performed by CALBAG under a consent order from Montana DEQ. The community had additional questions about the status of the proposed listing of the site on the National Priorities List. In response those questions, EPA discussed the pros and cons of the Superfund Alternative Approach.

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. EPA proposed the site for listing on the National Priorities List in March 2015. Reaction of the community to the 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.
- 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.

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

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