SILVER BOW CREEK/BUTTE AREA

If there is no content for a section, leave it empty.

Home Page

This field should contain the most relevant and timely information about the site, including press releases; upcoming community meetings; announcements related to recent or upcoming cleanup milestones; and hyperlinks to important recently published documents. Keep the bullets to 1-2 sentences and provide links for more information. Order the bullets in order of importance, with the most important coming first. The first 60 words entered in this field will also show up on this site's home page. Teams are encouraged to preview the site's profile page prior to publishing.

Announcements and Key Topics

West Side Soils Operable Unit

EPA will be requesting access from property owners in the West Side Soils Operable Unit (WSSOU) study area to take photographs, and to collect soil, sediment, and/or water samples to characterize the contamination and environmental conditions. Work will be focused on open (range) land areas west of Butte. Access will also be requested to sample Blacktail and Basin Creeks to determine possible upstream contaminant contributions to Silver Bow Creek emanating from outside of BPSOU. Access request letters will be sent out over the next two weeks.

Access Letters for sampling will be sent to property owners in March and April 2019. If you receive a letter, please complete and sign the enclosed access form and send it back as soon as possible. Your participation will make the investigation and cleanup stronger and more efficient.

Beginning late spring of 2019 and continuing into 2020, EPA will begin fieldwork in support of a remedial investigation/feasibility study for the WSSOU as part of its cleanup efforts at the Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area Superfund Site. The WSSOU is generally north and west of the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit (BPSOU), but the boundary of the WSSOU is currently undetermined. It includes mining-impacted areas not addressed by actions at other parts of the Superfund site. The WSSOU contains several hundred mine claims with smaller disturbances associated with exploration, as well as several larger abandoned mines.

EPA conducted the Butte Soils Screening Study in 1987 to assist with decisions regarding prioritization for further investigations and cleanup within the Butte Portion of the SBC/BA site. Data from this study helped establish areas of high priority (i.e., the BSPOU and Butte Mine Flooding OU) and lower priority (i.e., the West Side Soils [formerly Non-Priority Soils] and Active Mining OUs). The Butte Flats and non-urbanized areas outside of Butte proper were identified as a lower priority because data indicated there was lower potential for adverse human health exposure from metals and arsenic from historic mining sources. Given the proximity of mine waste materials with elevated levels of metals and arsenic within and around certain populated areas in Butte, EPA purposefully created the BPSOU site boundary and dedicated its resources to focus on the high priority issues and investigating and

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cleaning up the BPSOU through the 1990s and 2000s.

- The remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) is expected to be completed in 2020. EPA will then present a preferred alternative for cleanup to the public for comment in a proposed plan. After comment on the proposed plan is reviewed, EPA will specify a selected alternative for cleanup that is documented in a ROD.
- Remedial design will begin after the ROD is signed, followed by remedial action (clean up). Remedial actions will be coordinated in advance with landowners.
- EPA will post information on future community involvement opportunities, including public meetings, on this website as well as in the Montana Standard and Butte Weekly newspapers. In addition, site information will be posted at Citizens Technical Environmental Committee office and the Montana Tech Library.
- A public meeting on the site is planned for late spring. The meeting will present the plans for sampling and characterization as well as future work on the site.

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~~Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit~~

~~On May 25, 2018, EPA published the narrative descriptions and figures for the proposed future cleanup work at the Butte Priority Soils operable unit. Additionally, EPA has published more detailed documents, known as the draft Remedial Elements Work Plan. This document provides more detailed information about these proposed cleanup projects. The Butte Priority Soils operable unit (BPSOU) Record of Decision (ROD) identifies in-stream performance standards for surface water within the BPSOU. EPA and MDEQ have determined that it is necessary to waive and replace certain state surface water standards that prove to be technically impracticable to achieve at BPSOU. Any state aquatic life standard that is waived would be replaced with a federal surface water criterion promulgated under the Clean Water Act for the protection of aquatic life.~~

~~asat the BPSOU document~~

~~The draft TI Evaluation and the forthcoming Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment will be subject to public input and comment before final decisions are made by the agencies. A 60 day public comment period will be noticed upon the release of the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment in December 2018, where the public will have several opportunities to provide formal public comment. Current plans estimate the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment will be released in December 2018. That~~

~~time frame is subject to revision as EPA and MDEQ go through an internal review process for the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment~~

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[HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100004851"] ~~(54 pp, 16.2 MB,~~ [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/pdf-files"] ~~)~~

~~Your comments and input can be submitted via the~~ [HYPERLINK "https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Stayup&id=0800416" \l "Oppor"] ~~section.~~

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~~Future cleanup actions include:~~

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- ~~The Blacktail Berm, Northside Tailings, and Diggings East tailings, waste, and contaminated soils removals will be performed.~~

- ~~Butte Reduction Works (BRW) tailings, waste, sediments and contaminated soils removals to be performed under remedy to provide for a clean floodplain, and the Silver Bow Creek relocation to be reconstructed through BRW corridor.~~

- ~~Removal of sediments and floodplain waste along Blacktail Creek from Grove Gulch through the confluence with upper Silver Bow Creek will occur.~~

- ~~Parrot Tailings to be removed under State Restoration.~~

- ~~Construction of additional stormwater basins and sedimentation bays.~~

- ~~Groundwater capture near the visitor's center and slag canyon to further protect surface water quality.~~

- ~~Community visioning and participation to develop end land use options through the corridor.~~

- ~~Additional reclamation of mining impacted sites in BPSOU.~~

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~~EPA will hold additional availability sessions and meet with other interested stakeholders to provide more detailed information and solicit public input on the information released.~~

Use this section to provide a big-picture introduction. Focus on what is contaminated at the site (i.e., soil, groundwater, sediments); the major contaminants of concern; and how and when the site became contaminated. The first 30 words will appear on the home page, so structure the narrative

in order of importance, beginning with the most important information. Teams are encouraged in most instances to keep the copy in this field below 400 words and to preview the site's profile page prior to publishing.

*Background

The Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area site is in Butte, Montana and includes 26 miles of stream and streamside habitat. Since the late 1800s, mining wastes have been dumped into streams and wetlands near mining operations. These activities contaminated soil, groundwater and surface water with heavy metals.

In 1982, EPA proposed the Silver Bow Creek be added to the National Priority List (NPL) and it was listed as a Superfund site in 1983. The Butte Area was added to Silver Bow Creek site in 1987. From 1988 to 2005, EPA completed several removal actions to clean up areas around former smelter sites, mine waste dumps, railroad beds, stream banks and channels, and residential yards to address immediate human health and environmental risks.

Removal and cleanup actions have been completed to address immediate threats to human health and the environment in Butte. Cleanup, operation and maintenance, sampling, and monitoring actions are ongoing.

Enter link to the site's Twitter account here. Only use this field to link to site-specific social media accounts.

Follow this Site On: Twitter

Click here to enter text.

Enter link to the site's Facebook account here. Only use this field to link to site-specific social media accounts.

Follow this Site On: Facebook

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If your site has a mailing list, turn on this field in the CEF by entering the email address where the public should send sign-up requests. When activated, this field will show up throughout the site's profile on the right side of the page.

Mailing List Signup

Click here to enter text.

Site Contacts

The site's Community Involvement Coordinator and Remedial Project Manager will pull automatically from SEMS. Use this field to enter any additional site contacts. Follow the same format as the CIC and RPM entries.

Additional Contacts

Montana DEQ Project Officer for Butte Priority Soils, Warm Springs Ponds, Rocker ~~and~~ , Mine Flooding, and West Side Soils

Commented [SCS6]: See revision.

[HYPERLINK "mailto:dreed@mt.gov"]
(406) 444-6433

Montana DEQ Project Officer for Streamside Tailings
[HYPERLINK "mailto:jchavez@mt.gov"]
(406) 444-6407

Dave Williams, President – Citizens Technical Environmental Committee
Janice Hogan, Administrator – Technical Assistance Grant
27 West Park Street
P.O. Box 0593
Butte, MT 59703-0593
(406) 723-6247
[HYPERLINK "mailto:ButteCTEC@hotmail.com"]

Cleanup Activities

Use this field to describe what EPA has done in the past. Provide a summary of significant milestones achieved to date in cleaning up the site. Explain how past site efforts have addressed public health and environmental concerns. Include changes in site responsibilities, agreements or ownership as needed.

What Has Been Done to Clean Up the Site?

On May 17, 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Atlantic Richfield Company filed a motion to formally request a modification of the confidentiality order. On May 22, 2018, Judge Haddon of the United States District Court for the District of Montana *U.S. v. Atlantic Richfield Company et al.*, the Superfund lawsuit related to the Clark Fork Basin Superfund sites, ordered the modification of the confidentiality order for the Butte Priority Soils operable unit of the Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area Superfund site.

As part of the conceptual agreement reached for the final clean up the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit (BPSOU) the parties also agreed to file a motion with the Court to modify the confidentially order to allow for public disclosure of information related to the discussion of proposed cleanup activities at the site. The parties agreed that this action was warranted so that the community could be more engaged earlier in this process.

The order resulting from the motion and issued by the Court will allow for the release of major terms of the conceptual agreement that was reached to cleanup BPSOU. It will also provide opportunities for public review and comment of this information and proposed remedy changes before a formal decision is made to modify existing remedies and implement the future work. Future cleanup actions include:

- The Blacktail Berm, Northside Tailings, and Diggings East tailings, waste, and contaminated soils removals will be performed.

- Butte Reduction Works (BRW) tailings, waste, sediments and contaminated soils removals to be performed under remedy to provide for a clean floodplain, and the Silver Bow Creek relocation to be reconstructed through BRW corridor.
- Removal of sediments and floodplain waste along Blacktail Creek from Grove Gulch through the confluence with upper Silver Bow Creek will occur.
- Parrot Tailings to be removed under State Restoration.
- Construction of additional stormwater basins and sedimentation bays.
- Groundwater capture near the visitor's center and slag canyon to further protect surface water quality.
- Community visioning and participation to develop end land use options through the corridor.
- Additional reclamation of mining impacted sites in BPSOU.

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Implementation of these provisions of the remedy and the State's restoration plan will provide a comprehensive cleanup and will conclude over 3 decades of major removal and remedy cleanup actions projects in the BPSOU.

Over the past 20 years, several cleanup actions have been completed, including removal actions, to address immediate threats to human health and the environment.

Contaminated soil has been removed from waste dumps, residential areas, railroad beds and rail yards. In addition, rail yards and residential properties have been reclaimed, a waste dump has been capped and protected, and cement channels and sedimentation ponds have been put in throughout Butte to address storm water contamination. Contamination has been removed from stream sides and channels and local area groundwater has been treated.

The cleanup plan includes further removal of lead and arsenic-contaminated soil and attic dust in homes and yards; removal of contaminated soil, sediment and tailings from around Butte; placement of contaminated materials in repositories; management of remaining wastes left in place; institutional controls; long-term operation and maintenance; treatment of contaminated surface and groundwater; and long-term environmental monitoring.

Use this field to discuss what EPA is doing currently at the site and what we plan to do in the future. Discuss site conditions — current cleanup activities, upcoming work and future plans.

*What Is the Current Site Status?

You may need Adobe Reader to view files on this page. See EPA's [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/pdf-files"] to learn more.

The Butte Priority Soils operable unit (BPSOU) Record of Decision (ROD) identifies in-stream performance standards for surface water within the BPSOU. EPA and MDEQ have determined that it is necessary to waive and replace certain state surface water standards that prove to be technically impracticable to achieve at BPSOU. Any state aquatic life standard that is waived would be replaced with a federal surface water criterion promulgated under the Clean Water Act for the protection of aquatic life.

A draft Technical Impracticability (TI) Evaluation document has been prepared which address the issues in more detail.

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The draft TI Evaluation and the forthcoming Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment will be subject to public input and comment before final decisions are made by the agencies. A 60 day public comment period will be noticed upon the release of the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment, where the public will have several opportunities to provide formal public comment. Current plans estimate the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment will be released in December 2018. That time frame is subject to revision as EPA and MDEQ go through an internal review process for the Proposed Plan for a ROD Amendment

[HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1895088" \t "_blank"](LINK)

To better address cleanup, the site is currently divided into seven active operable units (OU).

Streamside Tailings OU1 consists of about 26 linear miles of Silver Bow Creek and deposited tailings along the Creek. The boundary begins at the upstream end just outside of the Butte city limits and continues until Silver Bow Creek enters the Warm Springs Ponds. Remedial activities have addressed exposure pathways that could result in unacceptable risks.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1164441"] (32 pp, 12 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1098576"]) (679 pp, 70 MB)

Butte Mine Flooding OU3 is the Berkeley Pit and contaminated groundwater in the flooded underground mine workings below the city of Butte and Walkerville. The boundaries are the Continental Divide to the east, Silver Bow Creek to the south, Missoula Gulch to the west, and the Yankee Doodle Tailings Pond and upper Silver Bow Creek to the north.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1140014"]) (16 pp, 1 MB)

Rocker Timber Framing and Treating Plant OU7 covers about 16 acres and includes the contaminated groundwater resulting from site operations under and near the land surface. It is located south of U.S. Interstate 15/90 near Rocker, Montana, about 3 miles west of Butte, in Silver Bow County. The community of Rocker is just north of Silver Bow Creek.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1282724"] (27 pp, 37.6 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1227767"] (249 pp, 11 MB)

Warm Springs Ponds OU4 & 12 is in southwestern Montana at the lower end of Silver Bow Creek approximately 27 miles downstream of Butte. This 2,600-acre area consists of a series of three sediment settling ponds. OU 4 includes the portion that actively treats the entire flow of Silver Bow Creek prior to its confluence with Warm Springs Creek that forms the start of the Clark Fork River. OU 12 is the portion that is not part of the active treatment of Silver Bow Creek Water.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1164442"] (179 pp, 61.5 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1290402"] (16pp, 48 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1189581"]) (455 pp, 16.3 MB)

OU8, Butte Priority Soils OU8 (BPSOU): – includes impacted soils, mine wastes, and contaminated attic dust located within portions of the city of Butte, along with mining-impacted alluvial groundwater and surface water associated with the historic and current Silver Bow Creek floodplain within the City of Butte.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1195680"]) (134 pp, 30.6 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1195656"]) (35 pp, 10.7 MB)
- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1098577"]) (731 pp, 161 MB)

In 2011, EPA issued a unilateral administrative order to implement most aspects of the 2006 Record of Decision.

OU13, West Side Soils: includes the mining-impacted areas in and around the city of Butte that are not included in the BPSOU or the permitted active mining area. A comprehensive investigation to characterize the nature and extent of contamination will start in 2018.

Over the timeline of Superfund cleanup in Butte, EPA has completed four five-year reviews to determine how the remedy is working and if it remains protective of human health and the environment. The last Five-Year Review was completed in 2016.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1551629"] (324 pp, 24.7 MB)

Use this space to describe any institutional controls that exist at this site.

Activity and Use Limitations

Click here to enter text.

Provide narrative and/or links detailing sampling events, ongoing monitoring and other environmental data.

Sampling and Monitoring

Comprehensive sampling and monitoring actions are ongoing at the site.

The [HYPERLINK "http://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1817951"] (406 pp, 71.4 MB) presents a summary and interpretation of surface water quality data collected at the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit.

Green remediation is the practice of considering all environmental effects of remedy implementation and incorporating options to minimize the environmental footprints of cleanup actions. Summarize green remediation approaches and outcomes at this site here.

Green Remediation

Click here to enter text.

Provide information on emergency response and removal-related activities. Focus primarily on current or recently completed work. Any current work should be mentioned under "What is the Current Site Status?" but additional detail can be provided here.

Emergency Response and Removal

Eleven time-critical removal actions and expedited response (Non-Time Critical Response) actions were conducted from 1987 through 2005 to address immediate and significant human health and environmental risks at BPSOU. One removal action, the Lower Area One tailings removal, was a large scale removal of wastes within the Silver Bow Creek floodplain at the site of two former smelters and resulted in substantial improvement to Silver Bow Creek water quality and a reconstructed floodplain.

Share enforcement-related information here such as information on potentially responsible parties and settlements.

Enforcement Information

In 2011, EPA issued a unilateral administrative order (UAO) to implement parts of the 2006 Butte Priority Soils Record of Decision for the portions of the cleanup where there was agreement between EPA and the State of Montana.

- [HYPERLINK "https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1195680"]) (134 pp, 30.56MB)

In 2018, EPA, the U.S. Department of Justice, Montana DEQ, Butte Silver Bow, and the Atlantic Richfield Company reached a conceptual agreement to address future cleanup work at the site. EPA will be working with all parties to develop a proposed plan to amend the existing Record of Decision. The proposed plan will be made available for a 60-day public comment period.

Health & Environment

If the site is active and poses risks to human health or the environment, those should be documented here. Summarize potential risks to human health and the environment posed by this site. Describe how each of these risks can be avoided or minimized.

What Are the Risks at the Site?

Groundwater, surface water and soils are contaminated with arsenic and other heavy metals, including copper, zinc, cadmium and lead.

Potential health threats include direct contact with and ingestion of contaminated soil, surface water, groundwater, or inhaling contaminated soil.

Use this field to describe key contaminants of concern. Provide context around why those are the key contaminants and what EPA is doing about them.

Contaminant Information

Lead and arsenic are the primary contaminants of concern in Butte. These and other contaminates have impacted soil and ground and surface water.

Contaminant of Concern	Solid Media (like soil)	Groundwater	Surface Water
Aluminum			♦
Arsenic	♦	♦	♦
Cadmium		♦	♦
Copper		♦	♦
Iron			♦
Lead	♦	♦	♦
Mercury	♦	♦	♦
Silver			♦
Zinc		♦	♦

Use this field for additional maps beyond the standard Cleanups in My Community map of the site location. Hyperlink to maps manually.

Maps

Click here to enter text.

Stay Updated: Get Involved

List details of public-comment opportunities related to the site, provide complete information about upcoming public meetings, or provide a link to the site's public-events calendar if one exists.

Public Participation Opportunities

[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/mt/forms/comment-proposed-future-cleanup-actions-butte-priority-soils-operable-unit-within-silver"]

Note: The comments submitted via the link above do not constitute formal public comments for proposed future cleanup actions. Opportunity for formal comments will be solicited when EPA announces a public comment period for the upcoming Proposed Plan for a Record of Decision Amendment.

When a community advisory group exists, site teams should populate this field with a brief background on the group that includes its website (assuming the website accords with the Agency's external link policy), contact information, links to social media accounts, upcoming meetings, and any other information that may be helpful to the community.

Community Advisory Group

Click here to enter text.

Provide information on grants and other resources available to public and community groups. This is also the place to put links to environmental justice grant documents, Technical Assistance Services for Committees program documents, etc.

Community Resources

The following links exit the site [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa" \o "EPA's External Link Disclaimer"]

[HYPERLINK "http://www.pitwatch.org/"] is a website that monitors the water levels in the Berkeley Pit and provides information about the history and cleanup of the site to the public.

Citizens Technical Environmental Committee (CTEC) is a group of volunteer citizens who work with EPA, the State of Montana, responsible parties, and others to make the Superfund process and cleanup decisions in the Butte and Clark Fork Basin area of Montana understandable to everyone. CTEC manages a [HYPERLINK "http://www.buttectec.org/"] that provides a listing of updates and recent news.

[HYPERLINK "http://bpsou.com/site/index.php"] is a website where the public can find information and data about the remediation of the Butte Priority Soils Superfund site.

The City and County of Butte-Silver Bow maintains a [HYPERLINK "http://www.co.silverbow.mt.us/417/Superfund-Division"] that includes information and resources about the Superfund designation in Butte and the [HYPERLINK "http://www.co.silverbow.mt.us/467/Residential-Metals-Abatement-Program"].

Use this field to archive past news events that bear mention.

Site News Archive

Click here to enter text.

Redevelopment

Describe business activity, residential development, parkland and other development already occurring on site. Also describe any additional land that could be returned to beneficial use at the site. Site teams can use the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative's (SRI) snapshot information for this section.

Redevelopment at the Site

Montana's Copperway trails run through the site, linking together historic preservation sites in Butte and Walkerville. The community park on the site features a sports complex with baseball fields, a driving range and volleyball court, walking trails with interpretive signs and stations, public restrooms, and picnic areas.

Restoration efforts also recognize the area's history. The Butte Hill Trail walking path reuses an abandoned railroad bed. The Granite Mountain Memorial area memorializes the 2,500 men who died in Butte area mines. Historical preservation of Butte's mining legacy is evident throughout town with interpretive signage.

Restored wetlands now serve as a key habitat for osprey and migrating Canada geese.

Any Ready for Reuse Determinations, reuse plans, fact sheets or other documentation supporting reuse of the site would go here.

Supporting Documents

Click here to enter text.

Provide any information on renewable energy installations at this site, including the types of installations and how much power they generate.

Renewable Energy at the Site

Click here to enter text.

Use this field to link to any SRI case studies or success stories for this site. Use the title of the case study or success story and the document date (month and year) as the link text. Follow the Agency web standard for PDF links.

Case Studies and Success Stories

- [HYPERLINK "http://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1570747"] (17 pp, 6 MB, May 2014, [HYPERLINK "http://www.epa.gov/home/pdf-files"])

SRI completes regional case studies every two years highlighting redevelopment projects at various sites. Link to the last three regional case studies here. Follow the Agency web standard for PDF links.

Regional Economic Studies

Click here to enter text.

Site Documents & Data

Link to the documents most often requested for this site. This section keeps users from having to search through the SEMS collections to find often-referenced documents. Generally, it's best to limit to 5-10, but try not to go over 20. List in order of external demand, with those documents of greatest interest to external audiences coming at the top. Follow the Agency web standard for PDF links.

Featured Documents

Click here to enter text.

Insert the name, physical location, and phone number of all information repositories for this site where the public can go to review site records.

Public Information Repositories

EPA Butte Office
400 North Main Street, Room 339
Butte, MT 59701
406-782-7415

EPA Superfund Records Center
Montana Office
10 West 15th Street, Suite 3200
Helena, MT 59626
406-457-5046
866-457-2690 (toll free)
Hours: M-F, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Photos, Videos, & Audio

Embed videos related to the site. Videos must be posted on the EPA YouTube channel. Contact your regional public affairs office for assistance getting your videos posted.

Videos

Click here to enter EPA YouTube URLs only

Post audio files for streaming or download. Audio files should first be entered into SEMS. Hyperlink to the SEMS audio file here.

Audio

Click here to enter SEMS-RM numbers of audio files.