

LEARNING TO DEVELOP, INNOVATE, LIVE  
AND WORK IN ANACONDA'S SUPERFUND.



## BRIEF HISTORY OF SUPERFUND

**This article and the following three will cover the history, status quo, and future of Superfund in Anaconda in an attempt to make the ongoing process more clear.**

The Arrowhead Foundation has recently received requests for a brief history of Superfund and the Superfund Consent Decree process at the Anaconda Smelter NPL site from citizens with a renewed interest in community issues.

Detailed information regarding our specific Superfund site may be found on Arrowhead's website at [www.anacondasuperfund.com](http://www.anacondasuperfund.com)

### **What is Superfund?**

Superfund reclamation stems from the lack of understanding of how certain wastes might affect people's health and the environment. Potentially dangerous materials were dumped onto the ground, into rivers or left out in the open. As a result, hazardous wastes accumulated in vacant lots, at factories, warehouses, landfills and dumps across the United States. Among the most pressing problems were wastes that leached down through the ground to contaminate drinking-water supplies.

In response to growing concern about health and environmental risks posed by these pollutants, Congress established the Superfund Program in 1980 to clean up waste sites. Superfund is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with individual states and tribal governments. Superfund locates, investigates and cleans up hazardous-waste sites throughout the country.

In the case of Superfund "Environment" means many things: The air you breathe, the water you drink, surface water in rivers, lakes, puddles; plants and trees; other creatures -- from pets to pests. EPA is responsible for safeguarding our health in Superfund areas.

### **Long-term Cleanups**

Anaconda Deer Lodge County is indeed a long-term cleanup project for EPA. The amount of land that needed to be remediated was vast and the kind of remediation would not be completely removing the waste but capping it to protect citizens from coming into contact with it. Long-term actions are extensive. Some sites were caused by years of pollution and may take years, even decades, to clean up. Built into this process are several phases that lead to the ultimate goal of restoring the site and making it safe. Long-term actions also may include restoring ground water or taking measures to protect wetlands, estuaries and other ecological resources.

- First, detailed studies of the site are done to identify the cause and extent of contamination, the possible threats to the community, and options for cleaning it up. EPA uses this information to develop a **Proposed Plan for Long-Term Cleanup**. The Plan is presented to citizens and to local and state officials for comment. The community has at least 30 days to respond in writing. EPA also invites community members to a public meeting to express their views and discuss the Plan with EPA (and sometimes state) officials.
- Once community concerns are addressed, EPA publishes a **Record of Decision (ROD)**, which describes how the Agency plans to clean up the site. A notice is placed in the local newspaper to inform the public of the cleanup decision. The community has an opportunity to inspect and comment on the ROD. The Remedial Design and actual cleanup are conducted by EPA, the State or by the parties responsible for the contamination at the site. EPA closely oversees the design phase and the development of the cleanup. When the design is completed, the Agency distributes a fact sheet to the community, describing the design and the action that will take place.

### **What it all means to you**

Clean-up in Anaconda, due to the sheer size of the site, was broken down into 9 different action plans now known as Operable Units (OUs). The techniques used include stabilization, removal, and remediation actions. While the first 8 OUs are currently being completed the final one still has a long way to go. In order to make remediation in this final Operable Unit more manageable it has been divided into the following 15 Remedial Design Units (RDUs):

1. Stucky Ridge
2. Lost Creek
3. Smelter Hill Uplands
4. Anaconda Ponds (construction completed)
5. Railroad/Blue Lagoon
6. South Opportunity
7. North Opportunity
8. Opportunity Ponds
9. Fluvial Tailings
10. Warm Springs Creek
11. Cashman Concentrate (construction completed)
12. Slag
13. Old Works Groundwater
14. Smelter Hill Facility
15. Mt. Haggin Uplands

The Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) is preparing remedial designs for the remaining RDUs. EPA will review the designs and provide site management and ongoing operations and management to verify that remedies are protective and achieve remedial action objectives.

The next article will focus on the current status of each RDU, the last will focus on the future timeline proposed by EPA to finalize our Superfund Site.