



# BNSF Railway Co. – Former Tie Treating Plant Somers, Montana

October 2009



EPA and DEQ agreed to temporarily shut-down the Somers Groundwater Treatment System (GWTS) for a period of two years to study groundwater contaminant stability. The GWTS was turned off on October 12, 2007. Since then, groundwater has been sampled quarterly. No significant contaminant migration has been observed.

## Facility and Cleanup Overview

BNSF operated a railroad tie treating plant in Somers from 1901 until the plant's closure in 1986. Plant operations caused contamination of soil and groundwater with creosote. EPA specified cleanup actions in 1989. In 1992 BNSF designed and built a groundwater treatment system (GWTS) and a 14.4 acre land treatment unit (LTU). Treated soils were cleaned up by 2002 and the LTU has been closed. The GWTS operated from 1993 through 2007.

EPA and DEQ required groundwater and land use restrictions as an Institutional Control for the site. A Controlled Groundwater Area (CGA) was established in 2003 to prevent new appropriations that could impact the migration of contaminants in groundwater. A deed notification was filed with Flathead County in 2008 restricting land use where waste has been left in place on Site. These Institutional Controls will continue to prohibit activities that could negatively impact the remedy.

BNSF requested termination of the GWTS in 2007 based on modeling data showing that in the area in which groundwater contamination is located, whether or not the GWTS is operating, hydrologic and contaminant barriers limit the movement of groundwater and creosote onsite.

**Join EPA, DEQ and BNSF on October 28, 2009  
at the Somers Volunteer Fire Hall  
from 6:30 – 8:00 pm  
for a discussion of the BN Somers site cleanup  
and latest groundwater monitoring results.**



## Groundwater Monitoring

Approval to shutdown GWTS operations for an interim two year period was granted in October 2007. Since that time, BNSF has collected eight quarters of monitoring data to evaluate the stability of the creosote constituent plume and to verify that natural processes are present to aid in breaking down creosote constituents. Samples are also collected semi-annually from the municipal well, which provides drinking water to the town of Somers, to ensure protectiveness of the public drinking water supply.

Since it has taken almost two years for the effects of pumping the aquifer to dampen and for the aquifer to reach natural conditions, EPA and DEQ are requiring that BNSF collect an additional eight quarters of groundwater monitoring data to confirm the contaminant

plume is stable and will not migrate outside the CGA. The next Five Year Review for the BN Somers Site is scheduled for 2011. As part of the Five Year Review process, the agencies, in consultation with BNSF, will evaluate all monitoring data and provide recommendations on the number and frequency of wells that will be monitored in the future. Additional work may also be required to ensure the plume is stable and to create an appropriate network of monitoring wells for long-term groundwater monitoring.

If results of the evaluation and additional work confirm that the residual creosote plume is stable and breaking down through natural processes and that contaminants are contained, a long-term monitoring plan will be developed and EPA and DEQ will complete the evaluation of the request to decommission the GWTS.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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#### **UPCOMING COMMUNITY MEETING**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality will hold a public information meeting in Somers at the Somers Volunteer Fire Department on Wednesday, October 28, 2009. Join us from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm to learn more about the cleanup, groundwater monitoring and future plans at the former tie-treating plant site.

#### **INFORMATION REPOSITORIES**

EPA Superfund Records Center; 10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street; Suite-3200; Helena, Montana

Current Site documents can be viewed at

<http://www.deq.mt.gov/fedsuperfund/BNSomers.asp>

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