

# Montana Pole and Treatment Plant Federal Superfund Site

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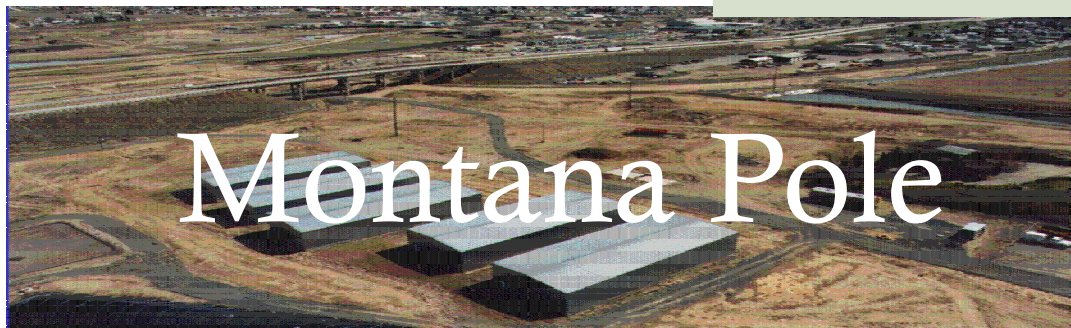
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Check out these websites:  
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[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)



# Montana Pole

Cleanup Update

June 2013

## Site Status

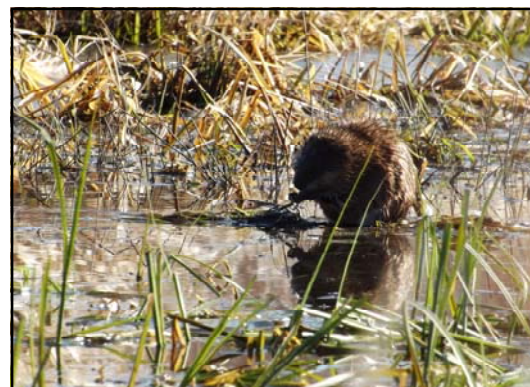
The Montana Pole and Treating Plant (MPTP) is located in Butte, Montana, and operated as a wood treating facility from 1946 to 1984. During most of this period, a solution of about five percent pentachlorophenol (PCP or Penta), mixed with petroleum carrier oil similar to diesel, was used to preserve poles, posts, and bridge timbers. The PCP solution was applied to wood products in butt vats and pressure cylinders (retorts). Creosote was used as a wood preservative for a brief period in 1969.

In March 1983, a complaint was filed by a local citizen concerning oil seeping into Silver Bow Creek near the MPTP facility. The complaint was investigated and an oil seep on the south side of Silver Bow Creek directly down gradient from the MPTP facility was discovered. Further investigation revealed oil-saturated soils adjacent to the creek and on MPTP property. Subsequent sampling confirmed the presence of several different contaminants (see box below) in site soils and oil samples.

### Contaminants Being Cleaned up at the Montana Pole Site

Pentachlorophenol (PCP or Penta)  
Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH)  
Polychlorinated dibenzo p dioxins (dioxins)  
Polychlorinated dibenzo furans (furans)

In July 1985, the EPA Emergency Response Branch began a removal action on the site to minimize impacts to Silver Bow Creek and to stabilize the site.



*A muskrat chews on vegetation along Silver Bow Creek, adjacent to the Montana Pole and Treatment Plant in 2013. (Photo by Tom Bowler).*

Enforcement activities began in October 1989. The remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS), conducted by ARCO, was finalized in February and the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in September 1993.

There are two components to the cleanup at Montana Pole: soils and groundwater.

## Soils

For the soils cleanup, the Land Treatment Unit (LTU) and 13 soil staging and pre-treatment piles were built between 1996 and 1997. Contaminated soils on the north side of the Interstate were excavated and began treatment on the LTU during this same time. In 1999, hazardous and nonhazardous debris remaining on site was removed and disposed.

In 1999 and 2000, treated soils from the LTU were backfilled on site, and approximately 132,000 cubic yards of contaminated

## Site Status continued

soils were removed from the south side of the Interstate and placed on the LTU. Treatment of contaminated soils continues on the LTU, and layers of soil are removed and backfilled onsite as they meet the ROD cleanup levels for PCP and PAHs. Dioxins are also being actively treated, but are being broken down at a much slower rate. The Soil Storage and Pretreatment Piles were dismantled in 2004, and the LTU is down to its last layer of soil.

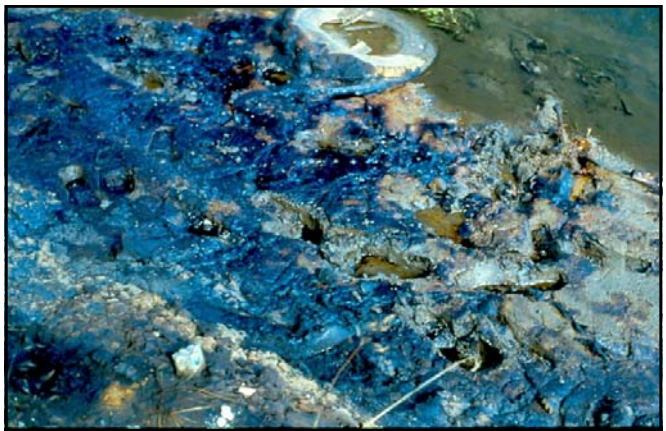
The final steps of the soil cleanup will consist of removing the last of the soil from the LTU and placing it over the south portion of the Site, covering the areas where treated soils have been placed to minimize exposure, dismantling the LTU, and then re-vegetating the area or providing other final cover that will be consistent with the final use. It is expected that the final land use at the site will be determined in conjunction with Butte-Silver Bow (BSB) County and interested citizens, with certain constraints on land use specified by the EPA and DEQ to ensure long-term protectiveness of the remedy, consistent with the ROD.

### Groundwater

For the groundwater cleanup, an addition to the previous Water Treatment Plant (WTP) was constructed in 1996 and 1997. At that same time, two groundwater recovery trenches that form the current groundwater extraction system were constructed, and the previous EPA groundwater recovery system was removed.

In 1999 and 2000, the north and south side infiltration systems were installed. These systems allow treated water to be pumped back into the ground for the purpose of flushing contaminated groundwater to the recovery system. The infiltration systems were operated continuously through November 2002. Since that time, the south side infiltration system has been used periodically to maintain adequate groundwater levels to operate recovery trench pumps and aid in flushing the contaminated soils remaining beneath the interstate. The north side infiltration system has not been used since 2002. Capture and treatment of contaminated groundwater continues.

Interstate 15/90 (I-15/I-90) divides the site. The contaminated soils beneath I-15/I-90 are being addressed as part of the groundwater remedy. No wood-treating fluid has been recovered from the groundwater recovery system in over four years, suggesting that the majority of free-flowing fluid has already been recovered. The area beneath the Interstate continues to be addressed through the groundwater treatment system. Treatability options for this area will be revisited in the future to consider data collected over the last few years.



Pre-remediation soils. (Photo property of DEQ)



Plant treats 345 gallons per minute. (Photo property of DEQ)

### Then and Now



Site debris before remediation. (Photo property of DEQ)



Site after Phase Two remediation, 2000. (Photo property of DEQ)



(Above) An old sign found at the Site during cleanup. (Photo property of DEQ)

(Right): Pressure treated poles and posts sitting onsite while the Pole Plant was still in operation. (Photo property of DEQ)



(Above) Contaminants found at the Montana Pole Site pre-cleanup. (Photo property of DEQ)



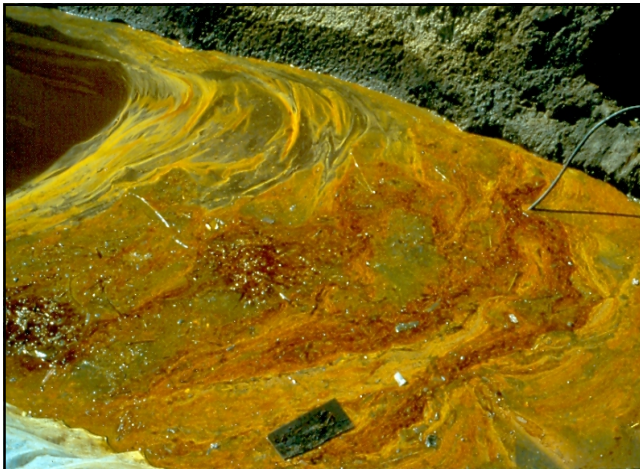
### Then and Now continued



Contamination is seen on Silver Bow Creek prior to clean-up activities at the Montana Pole Site. (Photo property of DEQ)



A muskrat is seen swimming in Silver Bow Creek near the Montana Pole Site in 2013. (Photo by Tom Bowler)



Contaminants at the Montana Pole Site pre-remediation. (Photo property of DEQ)



A beaver is seen swimming in Silver Bow Creek near the Montana Pole Site in 2013. (Photo by Tom Bowler)

**The new Community Involvement Plan will be available later this summer. Look for it and other documents online at <http://deq.mt.gov/fedsuperfund/mtpole.mcp>**

**Montana Pole documents can also be viewed at:**

**Montana Tech Library, 1300 West Park St.  
Butte, MT 59701**

**DEQ Remediation Division  
1100 North Last Chance Gulch  
Helena, MT 59601**

### Then and Now continued

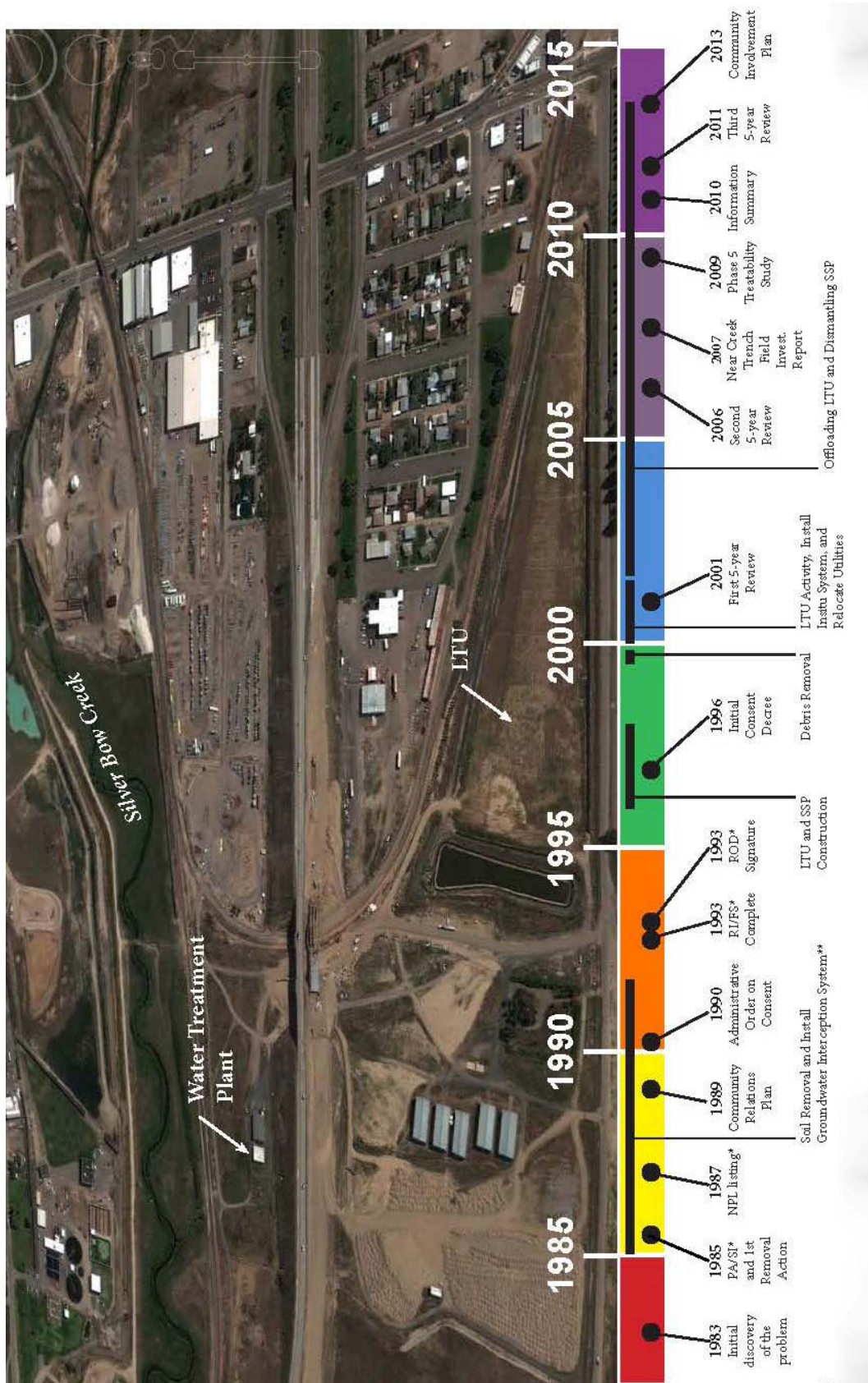


*A 2011 aerial photo of the South West portion of the Montana Pole Site. (Photo by Applied Ecological Services, Inc.)*



*A 2011 aerial photo of the Land Treatment Unit at the Montana Pole Site. (Photo by Applied Ecological Services, Inc.)*

# Timeline



## Federal Superfund and Montana's Restoration Economy

Federal Superfund activities have brought hundreds of millions of remedial construction dollars and hundreds of jobs to Montana's economy. According to the 2009 state report, An Estimation of Montana's Restoration Economy, approximately 31 jobs and \$2.59 million in economic activity are created for every million dollars of funding spent on remediation and restoration.



**Check out our new FAQ page on our website at**

**<http://deq.mt.gov/fedsuperfund/mtpole.mcpx>**

**Sign up for our email List Service at <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/ListServe/MTPOleStep1.asp>**

**to receive future updates straight to your email!**

*Final plans for future use of the site will be coordinated by community members and Butte-Silver Bow government. This property will benefit the residents of the Butte area for generations to come.*

### Costs and Coordination

Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) and other responsible parties, through a settlement agreement, paid \$38 million for cleanup. The DEQ, in consultation with the EPA, conducts cleanup activities.

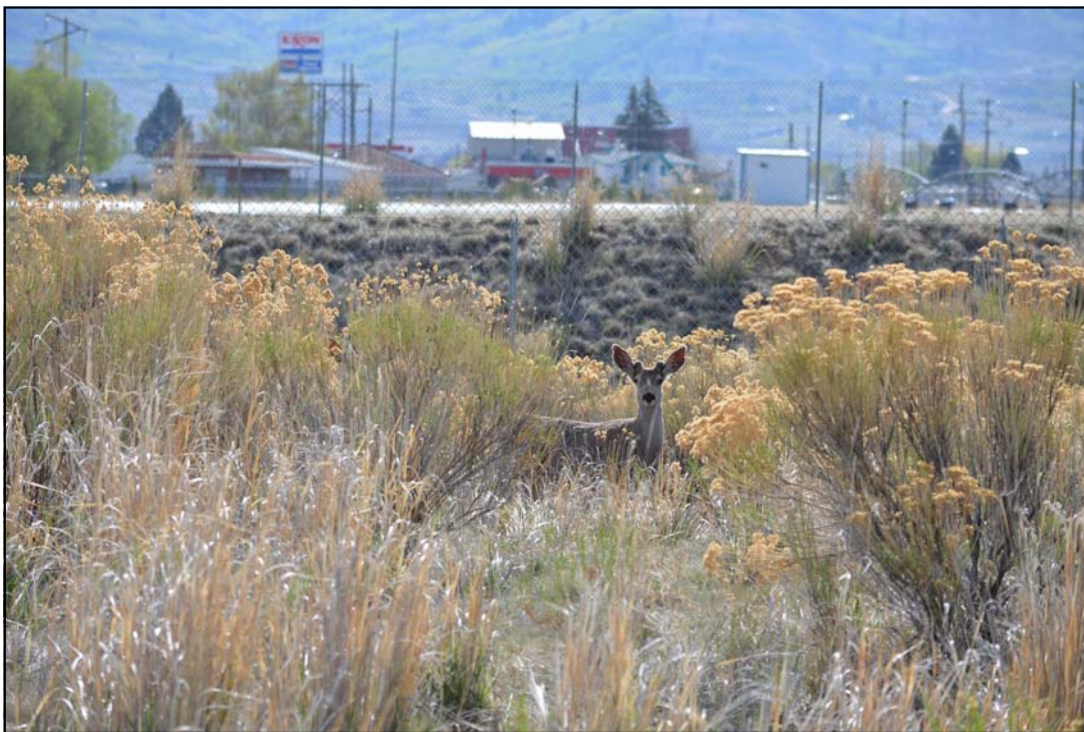
The DEQ is the lead agency for remediation of the Montana Pole Site under the consent decree for final cleanup, 1996. The EPA works in partnership with the DEQ to provide oversight.



## Parting Shots



*A family of geese seen swimming on Silver Bow Creek near the Montana Pole Site in 2013. (Photo by Tom Bowler)*



*A deer is seen grazing through the Montana Pole Site in 2013. (Photo by Tom Bowler)*