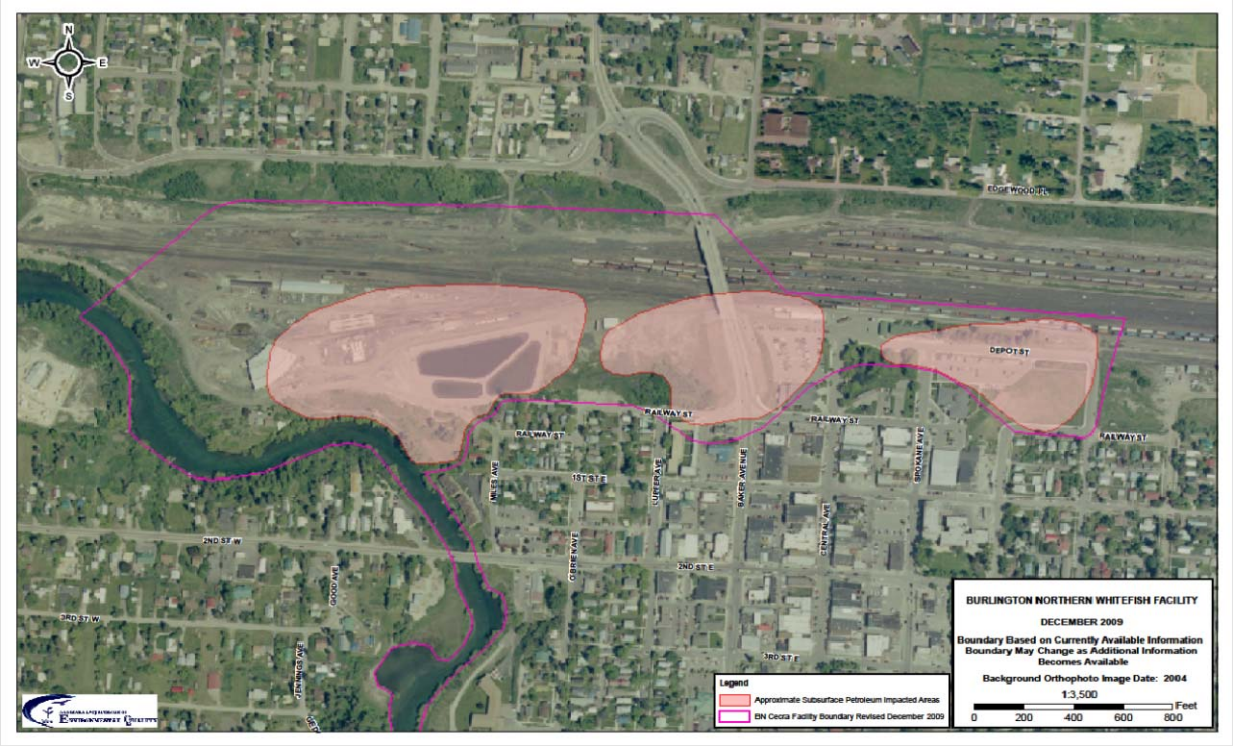
BN Whitefish Update

State Superfund **March 2015**

Background

The Burlington Northern (BN) Whitefish Facility is a State Superfund facility located near Railway Street and Spokane Avenue in Whitefish, Montana. It is a 78-acre locomotive fueling and repair facility that has been in operation since 1903. The Facility has three separate fueling areas: a freight fueling area west of the highway overpass, and two Amtrak fueling areas east of the overpass. The Amtrak areas are known as the east and west passenger fueling areas (the map below shows corresponding underground petroleum plumes). The passenger fueling areas have not been used since the mid-1980s, but the freight fueling area is still active. Historically, a powerhouse was located on site. Currently, waste water from the roundhouse is collected in three wastewater lagoons (shown in the left plume).



Releases associated with fueling, repair, railroad operations, and wastewater transportation to the lagoons have resulted in soil and groundwater contamination by petroleum products (primarily diesel), polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals.

BN Whitefish Site Update

State Superfund March 2015

What has been done at the site so far?

- **1973**– BNSF began recovering free product from shallow groundwater via an interceptor trench, located between the Facility and the Whitefish River.
- **1986**– EPA inspected the Facility after a residential complaint. EPA recommended no further action and the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (predecessor to DEQ) began oversight.
- **1987 through 1989**-BNSF conducted investigations at the freight fueling area and waste-water lagoons. Results indicated free product floating on the water table, PAHs and metals in the groundwater, and petroleum hydrocarbons in soils.
- **1998**– DEQ issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to BNSF requiring the completion of a remedial investigation and feasibility study.
- **2005**-DEQ approved a work plan to expand the interceptor trench and excavate surface soils contaminated with heavy metals which were located west of the roundhouse.
- **2007**– A complaint of oil observed in the Whitefish River spurred an EPA investigation. EPA ordered BNSF to remediate the river under the Oil Pollution Act, and river sediments were excavated and dredged between 2009 and 2013.
- **2008**– BNSF constructed a microwell recovery system to address remaining petroleum free product.
- **2011**– DEQ approved the Remedial Investigation report which detailed all investigations that had occurred on the Facility between 1973 and 2000. DEQ noted several data gaps and required BNSF to collect more data in the fall of 2011.
- **2014**– DEQ approved the Remedial Investigation Report Supplement, which included all of the investigation work that had occurred on the Facility between 2000 and 2013. DEQ also approved the Whitefish River Human Health Risk Assessment which evaluated risk associated with activities on the river, (e.g. boating, swimming, fishing, etc.)
- **On-going:** BNSF continues to conduct groundwater monitoring accross the Facility . Free product recovery has been ongoing since the installation of the interceptor trench and microwells. Since 1991, approximately 15,105 gallons of free product have been recovered from the interceptor trench and 743 gallons have been recovered from recovery wells.

BN Whitefish Site Update

State Superfund March 2015

What's next in 2015?

- **In progress**: DEQ has required BNSF to produce a Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) work plan for the Facility. Once the work plan is approved by DEQ, BNSF will prepare the Human Health Risk Assessment Report for the Facility.
- **Spring 2015**: BNSF investigated the trichloroethene (TCE) plume, located to the west of the roundhouse, under an interim action work plan. They submitted the investigation findings to DEQ in December 2014. DEQ will evaluate the next steps for addressing this area.
- **Spring 2015**: BNSF will perform sampling to evaluate the ecological health of the Whitefish River. Sampling will demonstrate whether the Whitefish River post-cleanup has successfully re-established organisms that live in the sediments.

What are the future steps for this site?

- **Feasibility Study:** Once the HHRA for the Facility and the ecological evaluation for the river are complete, BNSF will develop a Feasibility Study to identify and evaluate cleanup options. This may include treatability studies to evaluate technologies.
- **Proposed Plan:** Once the Feasibility Study is in final draft form, DEQ will identify its preferred final cleanup plan and publish the plan for public comment.
- **Record of Decision:** DEQ will evaluate public comment on the Proposed Plan and will issue its final decision on the cleanup plan in a Record of Decision (ROD). BNSF will finalize the Feasibility Study.
- **Remedial Design:** BNSF will prepare design documents to implement the activities required by the ROD.
- **Remedial Action:** BNSF will implement the final cleanup as approved by DEQ in the remedial design documents.

BN Whitefish Site Update

State Superfund March 2015

Contact Information

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Public Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 12, 2015

Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Whitefish City Council Chambers
402 E. Second St.
Whitefish, Montana

DEQ will share information about recently completed work at the Facility, including a brief overview of the Whitefish River cleanup, information on the Human Health Risk Assessment currently under-way, and details on the next steps. DEQ will also answer questions from the public.

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