



SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

**2025
November**

FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is a “living” document. This means the CIP can be updated or revised as:

- Cleanup progresses.
- Site conditions change.
- EPA receives significant input from the community or other stakeholders on cleanup work.

EPA sets up information repositories to host and share important project information. They are centrally located to provide community members with free and easy access to the information.

The site’s information repositories are listed below:

Stratford Branch Library

509 Stratford Street
Highlands, TX 77562
(832) 927-5400

**Texas Commission on Environmental
Quality**

Building E, Records Management
12100 Park 35 Circle
Austin, TX 78753
(800) 633-9363

Please call to confirm hours/availability.

The CIP is also on EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/tx/sjrwsp. EPA invites the community to provide input and feedback during its work at the site.

EPA Wants to Hear from You!

EPA is looking for community feedback about:

- The information in this CIP.
- Your site-related communication needs.
- Concerns and expectations about the cleanup.
- How you prefer to receive information from EPA.

To submit comments, please reach out to the contacts below:

EPA Region 6 Contacts

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INTRODUCTION

Community Involvement Goals

The goal of this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is to encourage and facilitate community engagement throughout the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site (site) cleanup. The CIP describes how EPA will involve the community and address local needs during the Superfund process. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the community will work together by using the tools described in this plan. Active public involvement is crucial to the success of any project. EPA's community involvement activities at the site are designed to inform the public of all cleanup activities and include the community in the decision-making process.

EPA defines the "community" as those people and entities who have an interest in or are affected by the site. EPA also recognizes that other stakeholders, including local, state and federal agencies, may have an interest in the site. This CIP is based on a series of community interviews conducted in March 2025 with the affected community and stakeholders in accordance with EPA's Superfund community involvement and cleanup guidance. The CIP is a "living document," meaning that it can be updated or revised over the course of site cleanup to reflect long-term changes in the community.

Community Involvement at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

Active and participatory community involvement is an important part of the cleanup process. It is also regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as "Superfund." This CIP follows community involvement requirements in the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) §117 and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) §300.430. EPA's Community Involvement Program is designed to facilitate participation of community members throughout the cleanup process, including the investigation phase and the remedy selection phase. EPA works closely with state and local agencies to provide community involvement throughout the Superfund process.



Skyline of Houston, Texas, which is located just west of the site.

SUPERFUND OVERVIEW

What Is the Superfund Program?

EPA's Superfund program, enacted in 1980 under CERCLA and amended in 1986 by SARA, is responsible for cleaning up the nation's most toxic hazardous waste sites and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills and natural disasters.



EPA requires that those entities responsible for contaminating Superfund sites clean up the sites or reimburse the government if EPA cleans them up. At the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site, International Paper Company, Inc. and McGinnes Industrial Management Corporation are the responsible parties conducting the cleanup with EPA and state oversight. EPA selected a cleanup plan and has been working with local, tribal and state partners to finalize and implement the remedy.

Once EPA has been made aware of a site requiring cleanup, EPA follows a step-by-step process to determine the best way to clean it up and protect human health and the environment. If the site poses an immediate threat to public health or the environment, EPA can intervene with an emergency response action (called a "removal action"), which occurred at the site in 2011. For more information about the Superfund cleanup process, please see pages 16-18 in the Appendices.

Signage at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site.

For more information about EPA's cleanup programs, please visit:

Basic Information About Superfund Cleanups: [epa.gov/cleanups/basic-information-about-cleanups](https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/basic-information-about-cleanups)

EPA's Role in Emergency Response: [epa.gov/emergency-response/epas-role-emergency-response](https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/epas-role-emergency-response)

ABOUT THE SITE

Site Overview

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is located on the San Jacinto River in Harris County, Texas, in EPA's Region 6 (South Central), east of Houston and near the communities of Channelview, Lynchburg, Highlands and Baytown. The San Jacinto River flows southeast from the confluence of the east and west forks at the San Jacinto Dam on Lake Houston. It flows 28 miles to empty into Galveston Bay. Its watershed is approximately 487 square miles within Harris County.

During the mid-1960s, impoundments, or pits, were built on the San Jacinto River to house solid and liquid pulp and papermill wastes. In 1965 and 1966, pulp and papermill wastes from the Champion Papers, Inc. company were transported by barge up the San Jacinto River from Pasadena, Texas, and deposited in the impoundments.

The impoundments are divided into two sections. The northern impoundments are 14 acres in size and partially submerged in the San Jacinto River. They are located on the western bank of the river, north of the Interstate-10 bridge over the San Jacinto River. There is a sand separation area located to the northwest of the northern impoundments. The southern impoundment, less than 20 acres in

size, is located on a small peninsula that extends south of Interstate 10. Wastes deposited in the impoundments are contaminated with polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (dioxins) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) produced from the chlorine used as a bleaching agent for pulp and paper. The site was placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in 2008, making it eligible for additional study and cleanup resources under EPA's Superfund program.



Northern Impoundments

Prior to 1965, impoundments were built by constructing berms within the estuarine marsh to the west of the main channel of the San Jacinto River, just north of what was then Texas State Highway 73 and is now Interstate 10. The impoundments were divided by a central berm running lengthwise (north to south) through the middle. They were connected with a drain line to allow flow of excess water (including rain water) from the impoundment west of the central berm into the impoundment east of the central berm. The excess water collected in the impoundment east of the central berm was intended to be pumped into barges and taken off-site. However, physical changes at the site during the 1970s and 1980s, including regional subsidence of land in the area due to large-scale groundwater extraction, resulted in partial submergence of the northern impoundments and exposure of their contents to the surface water of the San Jacinto River.

The site's final remedy, selected in October 2017, provides a long-term solution of excavation and off-site disposal of the impoundments' waste.

Southern Peninsula (Impoundment)

The peninsula south of Interstate 10 has a complicated history that includes evidence of paper mill and other anthropogenic waste disposal and subsequent industrial activities. An impoundment on the southern peninsula was used for disposal of paper mill waste and was likely constructed sometime between 1962 and 1964. Ole Peterson Construction Co., Inc. and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation disposed of paper mill waste from Champion Papers, Inc. at the southern impoundment.

The impoundment on the southern peninsula was also used for dumping of various anthropogenic wastes (e.g., wood, plastic sheeting, paint chips, ceramic shards) since at least the early 1970s. The entire peninsula south of Interstate 10 changed significantly from the early 1970s through the 1980s. From 1985 to 1998, Southwest Shipyard leased part of the western shoreline of the southern peninsula. Southwest Shipyard sandblasted and painted barges in this area and spent blast sand was stockpiled along an unknown portion of the shoreline. Aerial photographs provide evidence of deposits and transport of large volumes of material and significant landscape changes from at least 1972 to the present.



Southwest Shipyard building on the San Jacinto River in nearby Channelview.

Site Investigations and Cleanup Plans

A release of the hazardous substances from the northern impoundments was identified through site assessment activities led by EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in 2005 and 2006. Site assessment activities included surface water and sediment sampling for the presence of dioxins and furans.

A time-critical removal action to temporarily address the hazardous substances associated with the impoundments north of Interstate 10 finished in July 2011. The removal action included the installation of geotextile and geomembrane underlayments in certain areas and a temporary armored cap. The purpose of the temporary cap was to prevent hazardous substances from washing into the river during the site characterization and remedy selection process and to prevent the recreational use of the northern impoundments that had been occurring.

Based on these findings, EPA proposed the site for listing on the NPL in September 2007 and finalized the site's listing on the NPL in April 2008. EPA selected the site's long-term remedy in the site's October 2017 Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD addressed unacceptable human health risks associated with the consumption of fish exposed to contamination and direct contact (skin contact and incidental ingestion) with the waste material from the site. It also addressed site-related ecological risks to bottom-dwelling organisms (benthic invertebrates) from exposure to sediment and waste material.

In September 2019, Tropical Storm Imelda flooded southeastern Texas, and nine barges broke loose from their moorings upstream of the site. One barge became grounded on an armored cap installed over the eastern cell of the northern impoundments during the 2011 time-critical removal action. After removal of the barge and inspections of the site for

damage, it was determined that no waste was released but that the riverbed elevations had decreased. Additional rock was placed in the channel areas to further protect the edge of the armored cap.

As of November 2023, excavation activities are complete on the southern impoundment. At the northern impoundments, the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) submitted a Third Final (100%) Remedial Design in 2025, and work on the northern impoundments is ongoing.

Site Timeline

Mid-1960s	A set of impoundments were built for the disposal of solid and liquid pulp and paper mill wastes.
1965-1966	Pulp and paper mill wastes were transported by barge from the Champion Papers, Inc. paper mill in Pasadena, Texas, and deposited in the impoundments.
2005-2006	Contamination was discovered. EPA and TCEQ began gathering information about the site.
2008	EPA placed the San Jacinto River Waste Pits site on the NPL.
2011	EPA conducted a time-critical removal action at the site, covering the northern impoundments with an armored cap to temporarily contain the contaminants.
2017	EPA selected the site's cleanup plan in a ROD.
2019	Flooding because of Tropical Storm Imelda led to a barge becoming grounded on part of the armored cap.
2023	Southern Impoundment: All excavation activities concluded, and all impacted material has been disposed of off-site.
2025	Northern Impoundments: Potentially Responsible Parties submitted a Third Final (100%) Remedial Design.

Contaminants of Concern

Dioxin and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are considered the contaminants of concern (COCs) in the San Jacinto River and downstream in the Galveston Bay. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) issued Texas Fish Consumption Advisories because studies of fish and shellfish indicate that the presence of contaminants poses an increased risk to human health. To view a map of current advisories in place in the Galveston Bay and its tributaries, visit: <https://galvbay.org/take-action/#seafood-consumption-advisories>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a series of summaries about contaminants called ToxFAQs. You can find ToxFAQs on these contaminants at wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsLanding.aspx. For more information on contaminants at Superfund sites, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/contaminants-superfund-sites.

Dioxin

Dioxins are COCs at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits site. Dioxins are present in our environment from a variety of sources including emissions from waste incineration and other combustion, as well as discharge from chemical factories. Dioxins are found throughout the world in the environment, and they accumulate in food chains. Typical human exposure comes from the intake of animal fats, mainly meat, dairy, fish and shellfish. Dioxins take a long time to break down once they are in the environment, but exposure can be minimized by following the Texas Fish Consumption Advisories issued by DSHS.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

PCBs are also considered a COC at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site. PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until 1979. They were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications because they are non-flammable and chemically stable, have a high boiling point and have electrical insulating properties.

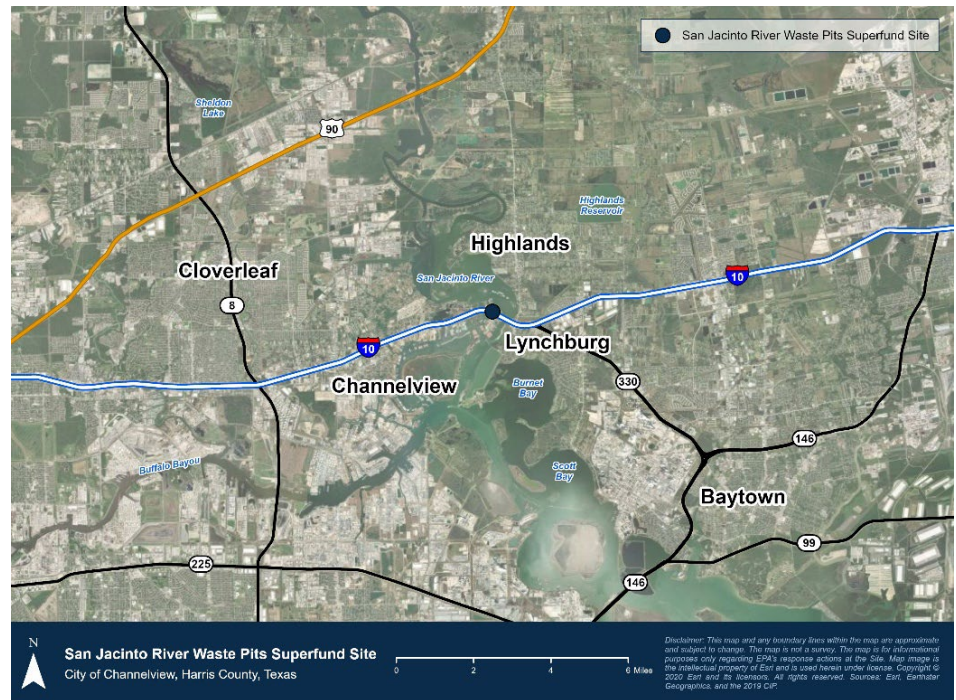


Photo taken at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site during EPA's response to Hurricane Harvey.

THE COMMUNITY

History of the Community

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is situated in the Houston metropolitan area, in Harris County, near the unincorporated areas known as Channelview, Lynchburg, and Highlands. The city of Baytown is also nearby. The Houston area was home to the Akokisa tribe, an Atakapan-speaking group that is considered extinct. It is believed that surviving members merged with the Atakapa in Louisiana. Houston was founded in 1836 and officially incorporated in 1837, following the Battle of San Jacinto, which marked the end of the Texas Revolution. In the Battle of San Jacinto, the Texian Army defeated the Mexican force, resulting in Texas' independence.¹



Many of the early settlers came from the South, using enslaved people for menial labor. As a result, Houston's early beginnings were similar to that of other Southern towns, where there were few free Black people, and segregation was by law following the Civil War. Following economic growth and development in recent decades, the Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands metropolitan area is now home to over 7.5 million people, making it the 5th most populated metropolitan area in the country, representing people of many cultures and backgrounds.

Houston started out serving as the capital of the Texas Republic, but after the capital moved to Austin, Houston's economy depended on cotton and commerce. As transportation continued to develop, Houston also continued to grow its lumber market. In the twentieth century, the discovery of oil in the area caused a large shift, as refineries began locating in the area, where it was safe from storms in the Gulf. Trade primarily focused on petroleum or petroleum-related products. Now, Houston is a bustling city, home to top educational and cultural institutions, professional sports teams, first-rate medical facilities, and more.

Channelview

Named for its location on the curve of the Houston Ship Channel, Channelview was home to oil refinery workers and their families in the 1910s. As ship channel industries grew, the population did as well, and schools and businesses were established. Once home to Lorenzo de Zavala, one of the founders of the Republic of Texas, the Channelview area is a tourist destination for those interested in Texas' history both as a republic and as a state.

Based on the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, Channelview is home to 43,536 residents. The majority (72%) of the Channelview community identifies as Hispanic (of any race). About 11% of the population identifies as Black, with an additional 36% identifying with two or more races. Nearly 20% are below the

¹ Sources consulted for the community section of this CIP include Texas State Historical Association (tshaonline.org), the Harris County Public Library (<https://hcpl.net/blogs/post/a-quick-primer-on-texas-native-american-tribes>) and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html>).

poverty line, about 1.5 times the rate in the Houston metropolitan area. About 16% of the households are considered limited English-speaking households, where the primary household language is Spanish.

Lynchburg

Just across the river, Lynchburg, also known as Lynch's Ferry, is about 10 miles east of Houston. Lynchburg is named after Nathaniel Lynch, who in 1822 established a still-operating ferry that crosses at the junction of the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou. Historically, Lynchburg was one of the main settlements in the area before the Battle of San Jacinto, but its population has since diminished, and the U.S. Census does not provide separate demographic data for the community.

Highlands

On the east bank of the San Jacinto River, the unincorporated area of Highlands is in an industrialized area. Highlands was home to a railway station in 1908, and population has fluctuated based on industry presence over time, with the 2023 ACS reporting a population of 7,339. The majority of residents (68%) are White, with 7.5% identifying as Black and 18% identifying as two or more races. About 35% are Hispanic. About 9.8% of residents are below the poverty line, which is lower than the rate in the area. About 7% of the 2,500 households are considered limited English-speaking households, where the primary household language is Spanish.

Baytown

Farther southeast, Baytown is a highly industrialized city. Settlers arrived in the 1820s when Lynch's Ferry was established. Aside from a plantation, a shipyard and an orphanage, the area was largely undeveloped until oil was discovered near Tabbs Bay in 1908. In 1916, the first offshore drilling operation in Texas began in 1916 at Goose Creek oilfield. Baytown developed around the refinery, and the city was established in 1948 with a council-manager form of government. More than ten major petrochemical plants operate in the Baytown area today. Baytown is home to a vibrant Downtown Arts District, as well as the Houston Raceway, a motorsports venue for National Hot Rod Association races that holds 40,000 people. The Baytown Nature Center, along the Houston Ship Channel, is on a peninsula and serves as both a wildlife sanctuary and a recreation area.

The population in Baytown has steadily grown, and the 2023 ACS reports a population of 84,538. About 45% identify as Hispanic, 32% identify as White, and 22% identify as Black. The poverty rate is higher than that of the Houston metropolitan area, at about 18%. Of the 31,063 households, about 8% are considered limited English-speaking households, where the primary household language is Spanish.



View of the San Jacinto River near the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site.

Past Community Involvement Activities

EPA Region 6, in coordination with TCEQ, Harris County and the site's Community Awareness Committee, has conducted community involvement activities during the course of the Superfund process. These activities have included community meetings as well as the publication of fact sheets detailing site activities since the site's listing on the NPL in 2008.

In early outreach efforts, some community members voiced concerns that they were not receiving sufficient information from EPA. As a result, EPA increased its outreach and community involvement efforts. EPA identified the site as a Community Engagement Initiative site and in 2010 performed additional outreach planning, including informational meetings and mail-outs to a large site mailing list. Later that year, EPA initiated a Community Advisory Group for the site known as the Community Awareness Committee. The 16-member group, which includes representatives from the community as well as state agencies, local governments, environmental organizations and the PRPs, began a series of regular meetings at the Harris County Attorney's Office.

Other outreach and community involvement efforts include coordinated outreach with the Texas Department of State Health Services to survey nearby communities (door to door) to better understand their health concerns and to provide site information. In 2012, EPA provided a Technical Assistance Grant to the Galveston Bay Foundation to hire a technical advisor. In addition, several local online resources keep area residents updated on site events.

In January 2025, EPA, in cooperation with TCEQ, federal, state and Harris County agencies, local officials and industry, held a community meeting about the site at the Highlands Community Center. At the meeting, participants received an update on current and upcoming site activities and participated in a question-and-answer session.

Community involvement plans such as this one help guide EPA's efforts to engage nearby residents and learn about and respond to community concerns. This CIP updates the previous plan, shared with the public in 2019. Community interviews are an important part of EPA's public engagement program. EPA will continue to conduct community interviews to identify community concerns about the site and ensure effective community engagement throughout the Superfund process.

Overview of the CIP Process

EPA conducted seven virtual interviews in March and April 2025. Interviewees included local residents as well as representatives of the Galveston Bay Foundation and Texas Health and Environment Alliance. EPA gathered the feedback below during the interviews.

Community Issues and Concerns

Most interviewees were familiar with the site or site history, and many expressed an interest in learning more. While the interviewees and their responses were varied, comments from the community interviews fit into six main categories: Human Health, Cleanup, Economy, Water Quality, Community Involvement and Method of Communication. The section below provides a summary for each of these categories.

HUMAN HEALTH



Interviewees said they are concerned with the quality of the groundwater in the area and how the site contributes to that issue. Many interviewees were concerned about cancer rates for all community members.

Interviewees reported that people still fish and recreate on the river. They noted the presence of fish advisory signs, and some interviewees are concerned about health impacts from fishing.

Interviewees are concerned that flooding events will wash contaminants from the site to their properties, possibly exposing community members. Interviewees questioned how much contamination has already entered the groundwater due to flooding, increasing exposure to the community.

CLEANUP



Most interviewees said they hoped for a quick, responsible and complete cleanup process with minimal impact on people and businesses. They were concerned that cleanup efforts are moving without urgency, taking a long time for decisions and implementation.

Some interviewees are concerned that nearby construction of Interstate 10 will either slow the cleanup process or increase exposure to contamination based on flooding and runoff from the site.

Also, some interviewees are concerned that the levels at which the site will be cleaned up will not be strict enough to be protective of human health.

ECONOMY



Interviewees are concerned that the PRPs associated with the site will slow down the cleanup or remediation process due to funding concerns.

Interviewees mentioned the prioritization of industrial needs over the needs of the community and hoped that this site would consider the economic needs of the community as well when dealing with the cleanup and reuse of the site.



Kirby Inland Marine's operation centers in Channelview.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Interviewees shared that most of the community is aware of the site, but they would like to see more efforts for community engagement and involvement at local events directly with the community.

Interviewees shared they would like an in-person community meeting about the site once or twice a year to keep the community updated on site activities.

Community members mentioned they were fatigued by many issues they face in this community, with the Superfund site being just one of them.

WATER QUALITY



Interviewees are concerned with the quality of the surface water and groundwater at the site and its impact on the surrounding area. Interviewees specifically mentioned flooding events as a concern as floods have increased in frequency.

Interviewees also shared concerns that water quality issues in the river will impact the local fish community, which will reduce the amount of recreation that can be done on the river in the future.

METHOD OF COMMUNICATION



Most interviewees have been receiving updates from EPA but asked for more frequent communication about site activities and progress both happening now and in the future.

Interviewees also suggested the use of billboards, printed postcards and factsheets, office hours with the EPA site team, EPA attending relevant community events as well as sending out frequent updates about site activities and progress to help keep the community informed.

Interviewees suggested EPA sends out a site update either by email, social media, or mail two or three times a year, and more if needed.

Community members have suggested partnering with community organizations and using their existing community meetings to share information about the site. Many organizations are dedicated to environmental education and can help disseminate information from EPA.



Glendale Boat Works, offering boat repair services, is one of several businesses that operate at the site today.

THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Introduction to the Action Plan

The Community Involvement Action Plan highlights EPA's key objectives, methods and timelines for keeping residents, community stakeholders and local officials informed and involved throughout the cleanup process. Using information gathered during community interviews, EPA developed this Action Plan to address the community's needs, concerns, questions and expectations as well as highlight the community's communication styles and preferences.

Community Involvement Objectives

The primary goals of the Community Involvement Action Plan are to:

- Provide the community with accurate, timely and understandable information about the site in a manner that is considerate of the community's preferences and culture.
- Facilitate opportunities for public input and ensure community needs and concerns are considered.
- Respect and consider community input and feedback throughout the Superfund process.

The Community Involvement Action Plan is the foundation of EPA's community involvement program. It is a reference that the EPA site team often turns to during cleanup to identify useful community involvement strategies. EPA is committed to involving the public, keeping the community informed of cleanup activities and how these activities may affect them, and helping people understand the ways in which they can participate in decision making.

Ongoing Communication

EPA will continue to work with city and state staff, elected officials, community organizations and community members to ensure that any important updates or information regarding the site are shared directly with the public.

To sign up for the site mailing list, please contact
Janetta Coats
Senior Community Involvement Coordinator
(214) 665-7308
Coats.Janetta@epa.gov



View of the urban center of Houston, Texas.

Community Involvement Tools and Activities

EPA has identified and developed a variety of tools and activities to better engage with and involve the community.

Webpage

EPA will continue to maintain a webpage specifically for the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site. For past, current and future updates on the site, please visit: www.epa.gov/tx/sjrwp.

The webpage will:

- Provide an overview and history of the site and EPA's involvement.
- Post updated information about the cleanup process to the public.
- Share site-related reports and documents with the public as they become available.
- Provide links to additional site-related resources.

EPA also has other webpages available for information about the Superfund program and Region 6:

- National Superfund program: www.epa.gov/superfund
- EPA Region 6: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-6-south-central>
- Superfund Community Involvement: www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement

Community Meetings

Based on availability, EPA staff may attend meetings held by community groups, the local government and other organizations upon request to share information about the site and to address community questions, concerns, ideas and comments. To identify appropriate opportunities and venues to deliver information about the site, EPA will work with the community to coordinate the meetings.

EPA-hosted Events

EPA staff may host meetings, workshops and/or open houses to share information with the community. Meetings will be held in person when possible. EPA may host meetings virtually, in coordination with the community. To ensure accessibility, EPA staff will provide options for people to participate by phone if they are not able to join a web-based meeting. Whenever possible, EPA staff will share meeting materials in advance of meetings so people have time to review them and so people unable to view them electronically can follow along.

Briefings with Local Officials

EPA staff may brief city and state officials upon their request for information or in correspondence with relevant site information.

Educational Materials

To help address community concerns about the site, EPA staff may collect, prepare and distribute user-friendly documents to help people understand site conditions. This may include postcards and fact sheets.

Periodic Updates

EPA staff will develop and distribute information about the site two to three times a year via email, social media, mail or in-person community meetings. These site updates will:

- Provide regular updates about the Superfund process and activities at the site.
- Notify the public about public meetings and availability sessions and public comment periods.
- Provide links to publicly available documents and other resources.

EPA staff will maintain and continue to build a site mailing list. If you would like to be on EPA's mailing list to receive site updates via regular mail or electronically, please contact EPA's community involvement coordinator. Updates will also be available at the site's information repositories.

Formal Public Comment Periods

During the Superfund process, EPA announces and opens public comment periods and encourages people to submit information. EPA accepts formal comments on several types of documents, including Proposed Plans, as well as when EPA proposes a site for listing on or deletion from the NPL. EPA considers all public comments in the Superfund decision-making process.

Public Comment Tips

Commenting is an important way to make your voice heard. Public comments can strengthen an environmental decision by providing the authoring agency with facts or perspectives lacking in the original draft. Commenting helps EPA create an accurate and comprehensive document to support appropriate and informed decision-making.

- Prepare for commenting by familiarizing yourself with the scope of the issue and relevant laws.
- Identify your key issues and concerns.
- Identify allies who can help with the document review and understanding of the report and coordinate your comments with them to strengthen your message.
- Be specific with your comments, including what you think could improve the document, what you think is missing from the document, what you like about the document, and what parts you want to remain in the document.



View of the river at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site.

Community Technical Assistance Resources

EPA provides additional assistance to communities through a variety of technical assistance resources. These resources include the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program, the Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program and Community Advisory Group (CAG) formation support. For more information on these resources, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-technical-assistance-communities.

	TAG	TASC	CAG Formation Support
Overview of Program/Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards grants to eligible community groups affected by the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) sites and proposed NPL sites to contract with independent technical advisors to provide the services listed below. • Community groups must be able to manage a grant, be an incorporated non-profit and provide a 20% match, which can include in-kind services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical information assistance services through a national EPA contract. Services are provided at no cost to communities. • Suitable for communities with short- and long-term needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAGs provide a forum for community discussion of site-related issues and are made up of representatives of different community perspectives. • EPA can help with CAG formation.
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and explanations of site technical documents and information. • Comments on technical documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and explanations of site technical documents and information. • Comments on technical documents. • Community trainings and workshops. • Educational presentations. • Technical assistance needs assessments. • Technical advisor services during community meetings. • Outreach and educational materials for communities. • Assistance understanding the environmental decision-making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized technical support for formulation and operation of Community Advisory Groups.

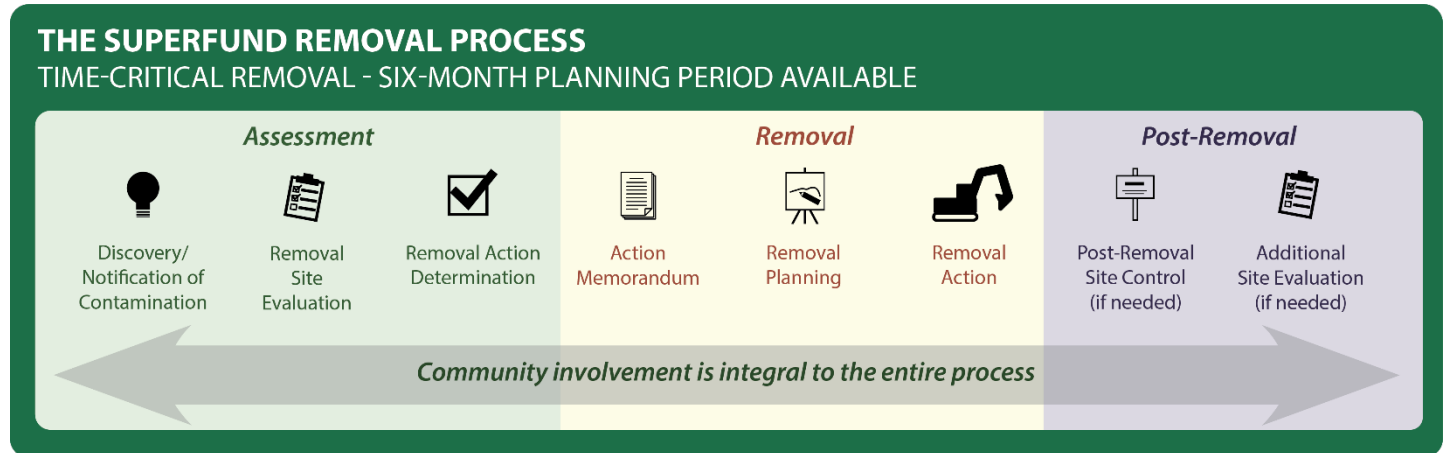
APPENDICES

Superfund Removal Process

After Superfund sites are discovered or identified, EPA uses two basic types of responses to manage polluted sites: removal actions and remedial actions. Removal actions handle emergency oil spills, chemical releases and short-term responses. Emergency actions eliminate immediate risks and ensure public safety. Remedial actions handle complex sites needing long-term responses. Removal responses are common at Superfund sites when the contamination poses an immediate threat to human health and the environment. Removal actions tend to be swift responses to immediate threats from hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants to eliminate dangers to the public. Removals are classified as either emergency, time-critical or non-time-critical, depending on the extent and type of contamination. At the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site, a time-critical removal was completed in 2011 to stabilize the site.

Superfund Removal Process – Time-Critical Removal

Time-critical removals are situations where EPA determines that a removal is appropriate and on-site removal activities must begin within six months. Examples include removal of drums or small volumes of contaminated soil and stabilization of lagoons. The following section describes the general steps in a time-critical removal.



Assessment

After the contamination is discovered, EPA evaluates if the site poses a threat to people and the environment and whether hazards need to be addressed immediately or additional site information will be collected.

Removal

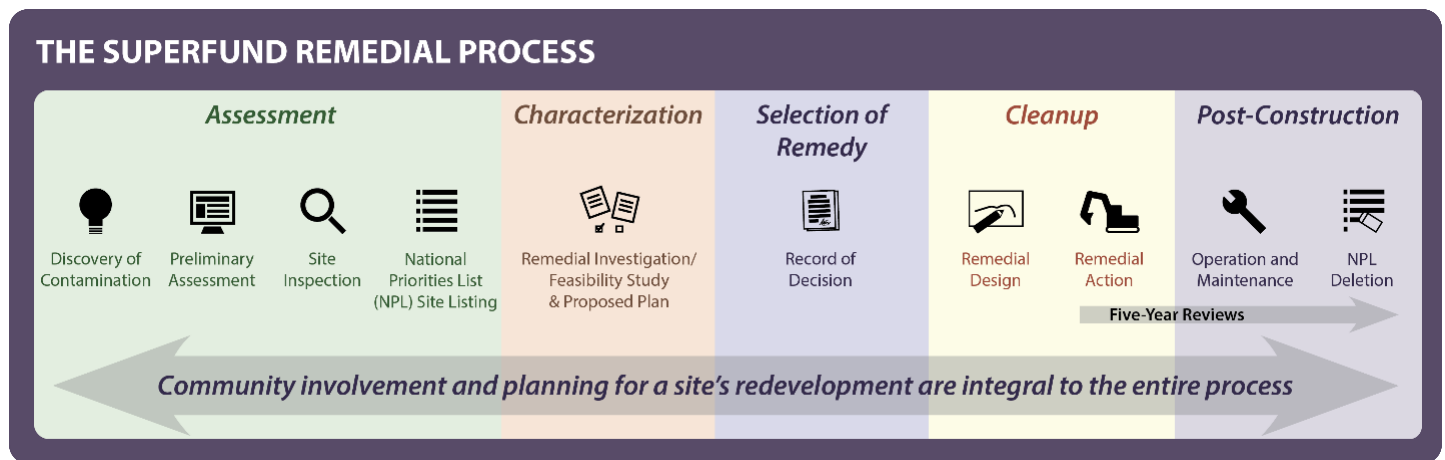
The Action Memorandum describes the cleanup method chosen for the site and the reasons for the selection. Removal planning is the phase during which the plans for removal are designed, and then removal action begins.

Post-Removal

After the removal action, site controls are implemented to protect human health and the environment if needed. Additional site evaluation may take place to determine whether further action is needed.

Superfund Remedial Process

In addition to removal actions, EPA can respond with a remedial action to handle complex sites needing long-term responses. Remedial actions manage releases that do not pose an urgent threat to public health or the environment and do not require immediate action. Remedial actions involve complex and highly contaminated sites that often require several years to study the problem, develop a permanent solution and clean up the hazardous waste. These are the sites that most people think of when they hear about the Superfund program. The section below describes the general steps in EPA's Superfund remedial process. At the San Jacinto River Waste Pits site, the northern and southern impoundments are in the Superfund remedial process. The northern impoundments are in the cleanup phase, and the southern impoundment is in the post-construction phase.



Assessment

EPA determines if a site poses a threat to people and the environment and whether hazards need to be addressed immediately or if additional site information will be collected. EPA uses the information collected during the assessment phase of the Superfund process to score sites according to the danger they may pose to human health and the environment. If a site has a high enough score on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS) and meets all other criteria, EPA may propose it for listing on the NPL.

Characterization

Once a site is on the NPL, further investigation into the problems at the site and the best way to address them is required. This is called the remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS). After development of cleanup alternatives, EPA recommends the option it considers best for the site and offers it to the community for evaluation and comment in a Proposed Plan.

Selection of Remedy

The cleanup method ultimately chosen for the site, and the reasons for the selection, are set forth in the ROD. The ROD discusses all activities prior to the selection of a cleanup method and describes how the cleanup method will be protective of human health and the environment.

Cleanup

The cleanup phase includes two parts. During the remedial design phase, plans for the cleanup method are carefully designed. The remedial action starts the actual cleanup at a site.

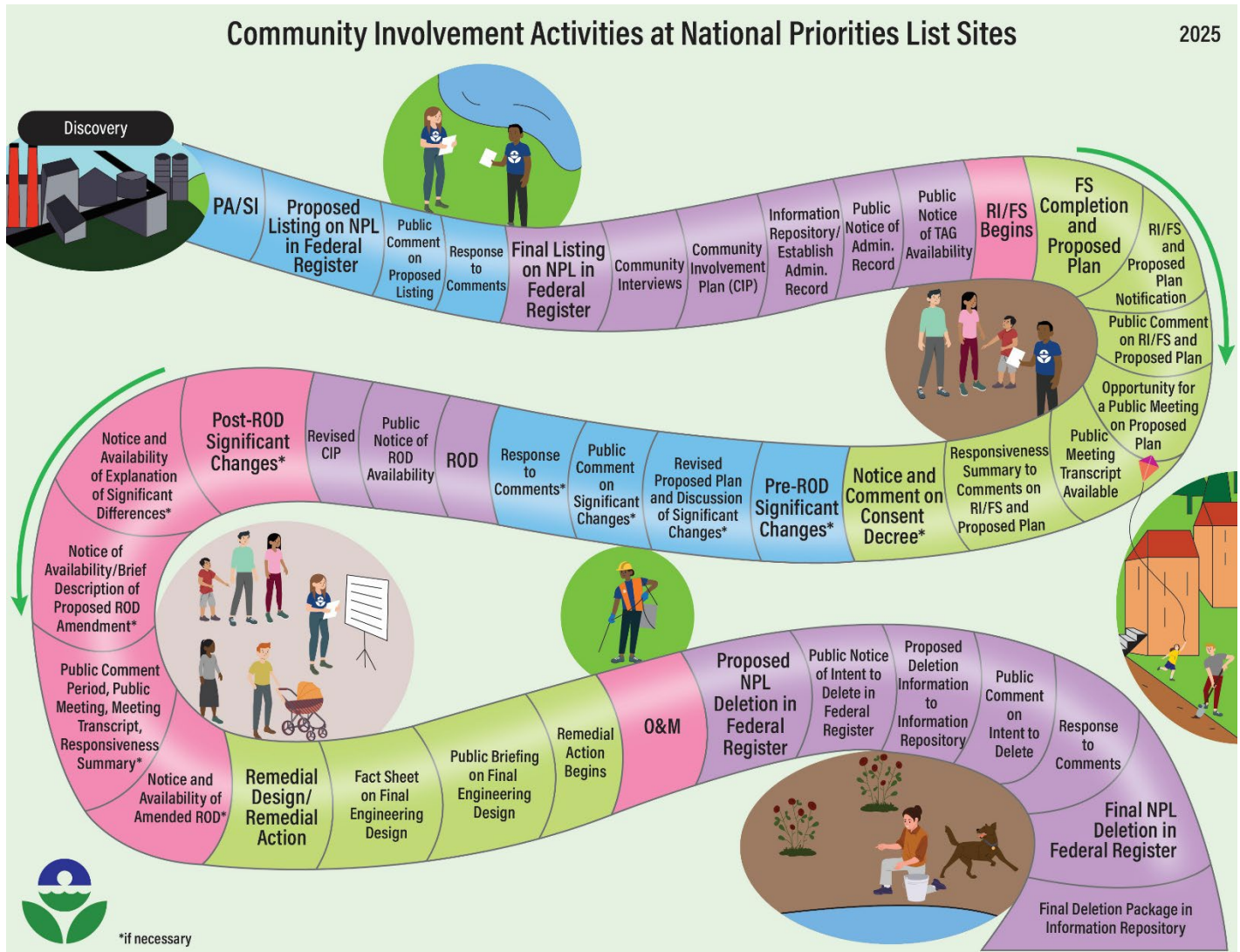
Post-Construction

After EPA determines that the physical construction at a site is complete, post-construction activities ensure that the cleanup actions will protect human health and the environment over the long term. These activities may include routine

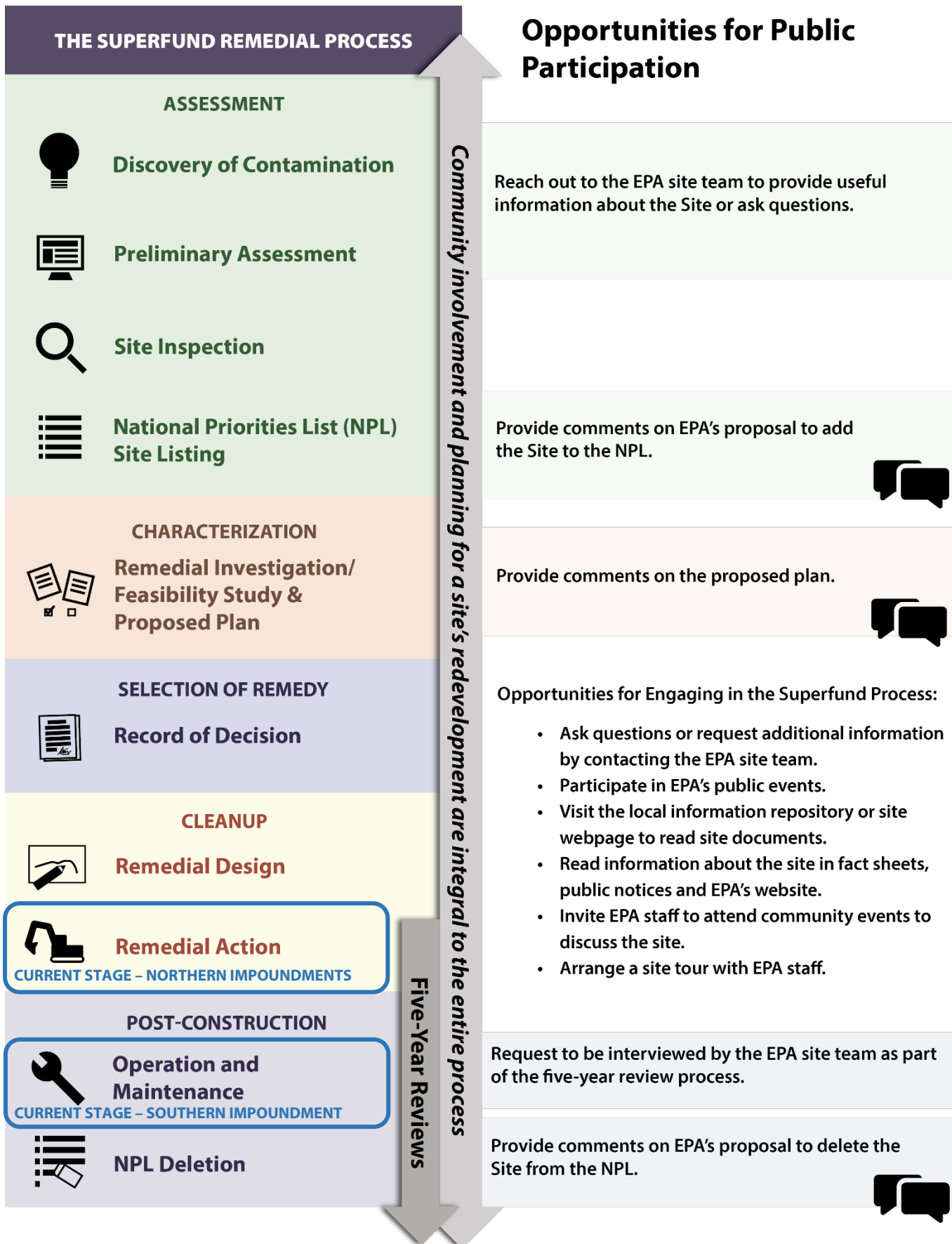
maintenance at a site such as making sure signs and fences are intact or soil treatment systems are running smoothly. EPA may delete a site or portion of a site (sometimes called an operable unit) from the NPL if all cleanup goals have been met and no further cleanup action is required to protect human health and the environment.

Community Involvement Activities at NPL Sites

Community involvement activities take place throughout the entire Superfund process, as shown in the graphic below. Key public comment periods are highlighted in the graphic on the next page.



Opportunities for Public Participation



Site Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA's goal is to make sure site cleanup is consistent with its likely future use. Consideration of reuse at a site can occur at any point in the Superfund cleanup process, from investigation activities to deletion from the NPL.

Community Involvement During Reuse and Redevelopment

EPA works with local governments, community organizations, businesses, residents and partners to consider the reuse of Superfund sites. Reuse planning enhances community engagement during Superfund cleanups by proactively including communities in the decision-making process.

For more information about reuse planning and technical assistance resources available for communities, visit:

www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment-initiative/community-support-superfund-sites.

Community Involvement Plan Community/Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire

EPA used the following questions when conducting community interviews about the site. The responses from these questions informed the Community Issues and Concerns section of this CIP.

General Affiliation

1. Do you work or live near the site area? If yes, for how long?
2. What is special/important to you about your community?
3. Do you belong to a community organization or group? If so, which one(s)? Do you hold any position with any Tribal, municipal, state, or federal agency? If so, what is the position?

General Knowledge about the San Jacinto site

4. Are you familiar with the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site? If so, please tell us what you know and how you learned about the site and what has been your involvement? (for example, nearby resident, attended past meetings, etc.) How has the site affected the day-to-day life of you, your family and your community?
5. What is your greatest concern about the site?
6. What is your greatest concern moving forward with the site cleanup?

Your Information Needs and Resources

7. Are there widely attended community events, like neighborhood festivals, which would be good venues for us to meet residents and share information?
8. What is the best way we can communicate with you about work at the site?
 - a. Do you prefer to receive materials (such as fact sheets) electronically by email or as paper copies by mail?
 - b. How often should information be provided?
9. What is the best way for EPA to provide information to the community in general?
 - a. What newspaper(s) do you prefer to read for local information and news?
 - b. What radio stations do you listen to most?
 - c. What websites do you look at for local information and news about the site?
 - d. Are there any other sources that you use to obtain local news?
10. If you wanted to contact EPA with a question about the site, would you know who to contact and how to reach them?
 - a. What is your preferred method for contacting EPA (email/phone/in person)?
11. Are you on the site's email list? If not, would you like to be added?

12. Are there local civic groups, service clubs or environmental organizations that EPA should contact to provide information to or speak with?

The Community

13. What do you think are the community's issues and concerns related to the investigation and cleanup?
14. Do you think people in the community have the information they need or know where to get it?
- a. If not, how can EPA improve the availability of information for the community?
15. What kind of activities do people do on or around the site? Do you think these activities might be affected by contamination or the cleanup of the site?
16. Would communications in languages other than English be helpful?
17. Do you know of any individuals or groups that may have special needs or need special considerations (deaf, blind, disabled, homebound, etc.)?

Reuse

18. Do you know of any impacts from reuse or redevelopment related to this site? (areas where there are interests in development that could be a consideration)

Wrap-Up Questions

19. Are there any other community issues that EPA needs to know about? Is there anything else you would like to share with us to help improve cleanup and community involvement activities at the site?
20. Anyone else you recommend we contact for an interview?

Our Partners



EPA is working closely with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County, the Port of Houston, the site's Community Awareness Committee and the site's potentially responsible parties on cleanup efforts at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits site.

TCEQ is the site's support agency. With EPA, TCEQ has conducted site assessment activities and community meetings, reviewed site decision documents, and also provides oversight of the site's ongoing remedial design activities.



US Army Corps of Engineers®

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides technical expertise and guidance at the site. For example, the Corps reviewed the site's cleanup alternatives and provides guidance for the site's remedial design.



Harris County coordinates with EPA and TCEQ on site-related activities and helps ensure that the relevant agencies take community concerns and priorities into account throughout the Superfund process.

The Port of Houston Authority manages the Houston Ship Channel. Along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Port also manages Lost Lake, a confined disposal facility for sediments from the Houston Ship Channel maintenance dredging program.



The site's Community Awareness Committee has met regularly since 2010 to assess and share perspectives on ongoing community interests as they relate to the site. The Community Awareness Committee includes representatives from the community as well as from state agencies, local governments, environmental organizations and the potentially responsible parties.



PORT HOUSTON
THE INTERNATIONAL PORT OF TEXAS™



In addition, other key stakeholders are involved at the site. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) prepared a public health assessment for the site in 2012 and serves as a public health and review resource at the site. DSHS also monitors fish for the presence of environmental contaminants and alerts the public through closures and advisories when a threat to human health may occur from the consumption of contaminated fish. The Texas Health and Environmental Alliance (THEA) is a regional nonprofit with a mission to protect public health and the environment by engaging, educating and empowering impacted communities to advocate effectively for cleanup of historical contamination. The Galveston Bay Foundation's mission is to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay as a healthy and productive place for generations to come. Finally, the site's potentially responsible parties, International Paper and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation, are responsible for conducting the site's cleanup under EPA and TCEQ oversight.

Key Contacts

EPA Contacts

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Crystal Taylor

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Elected Officials

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(713) 274-2222

commissioner@pct2.hctx.net

Harris County Precinct 3
Commissioner
Tom S. Ramsey
1001 Preston, 9th Floor
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 274-3100
pct3@pct3.com

Elected Officials

- U.S. House of Representatives. Visit www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative for contact information for your current congressional representatives. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is in the 2nd and 36th congressional districts.
- U.S. Senate. Visit www.senate.gov/senators for contact information for your current U.S. senators for the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site.
- Texas House of Representatives. Visit <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home> for contact information for your current representative. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is in the 143rd and 128th districts.
- State Senate. Visit <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home> for contact information for your current senator. The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site is in the 4th and 6th districts.

Local Media Outlets

EPA may provide updates to and publish public notices about meetings and other events in local newspapers and send notices to local news outlets. EPA staff will be available for interviews and will respond to media inquiries in a timely fashion. Inquiries from the news media should be directed to EPA Region 6's Office of External Affairs at (214) 665-2200.

EPA may include the following media outlets as part of outreach and information delivery efforts.



Newspapers: Highlands Newspaper, North Channel Star, The Star Chronicle, The Houston Chronicle and Baytown Sun.



Radio stations: KEPH-LP 95.3, KUHF 88.7 and KSJP 89.3.

Mailing List

EPA will continue to maintain and update the site mailing list. The list has been developed based on meeting sign-in sheets, community interviews, and email and telephone inquiries. To be added to the mailing list, please send a request by email, telephone or regular mail to EPA Senior Community Involvement Coordinator Janetta Coats (contact information on page 22).

Social Media

EPA will share site updates through Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and other social media:

- <https://www.facebook.com/EPASouthCentral/>
- <https://x.com/EPAregion6>
- www.epa.gov/superfund/san-jacinto-river

Fish Advisories

When contaminant levels in fish or shellfish are unsafe, advisories help people make informed decisions about where to fish or harvest shellfish. Advisories recommend that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish and shellfish caught in certain places. They may be issued for the general public or for specific groups of people at risk. For more information about the advisories in Texas, visit <https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/>.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACS	American Community Survey	NPL	National Priorities List
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry	PCBs	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
CAG	Community Advisory Group	PRP	Potentially Responsible Parties
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act	ROD	Record of Decision
CIP	Community Involvement Plan	SARA	Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act
COCs	Contaminants of Concern	TAG	Technical Assistance Grant
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services	TASC	Technical Assistance Services for Communities
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency	TCEQ	Texas Commission of Environmental Quality
NCP	National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan	THEA	Texas Health and Environmental Alliance

SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

**2025
NOVEMBER**

www.epa.gov/tx/sjrwsp

