

# Libby Asbestos Superfund Site Public Meeting

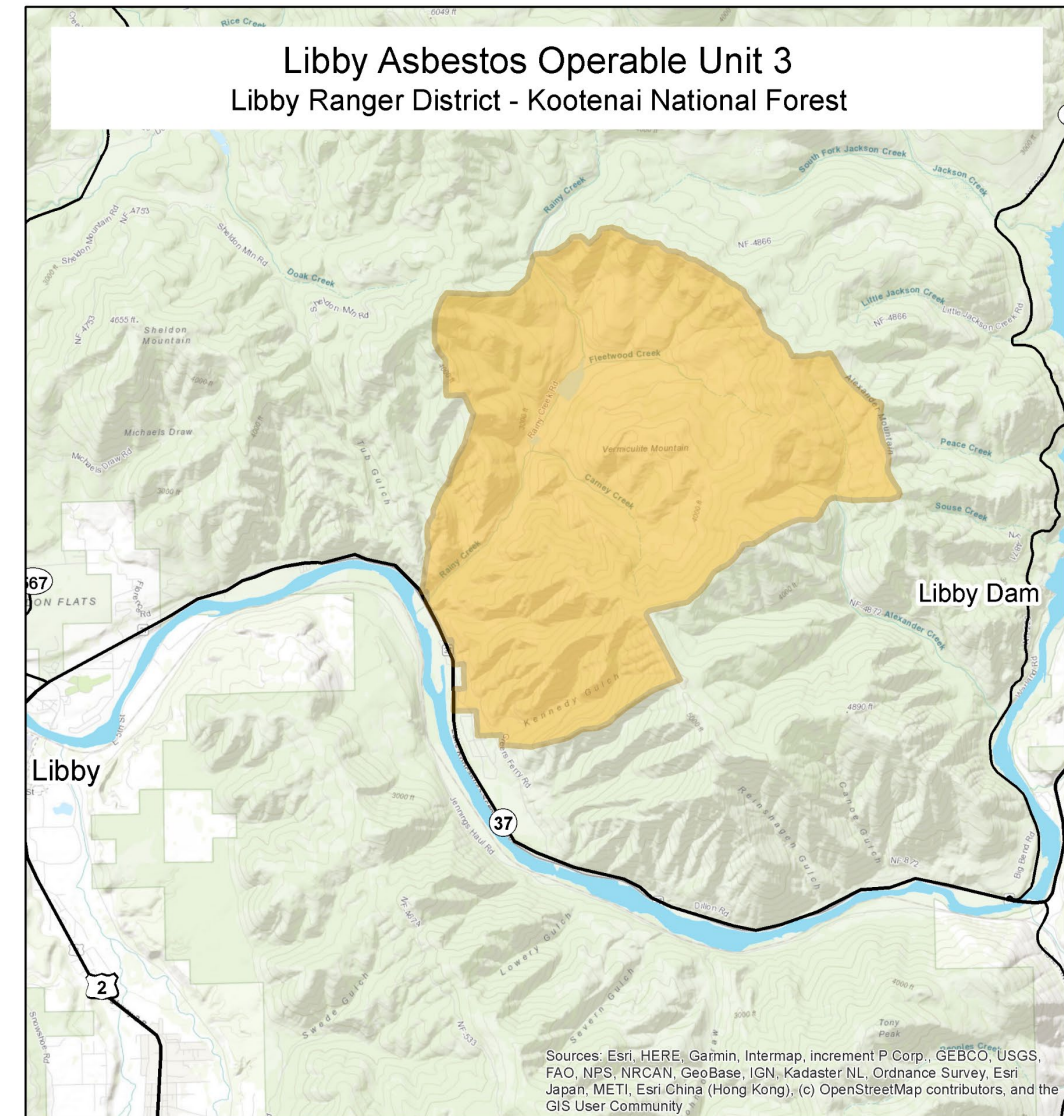
July 15, 2025



LINCOLN COUNTY  
MONTANA

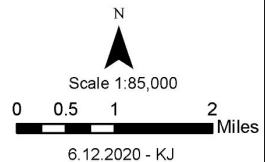
# Agenda

- ▶ Welcome, hybrid meeting best practices
- ▶ Operations and Maintenance update
- ▶ Wildfire plan for Operable Unit 3 (Libby Asbestos Response Plan or LARP)
- ▶ W.R. Grace update on the Kootenai Impoundment Dam (KDID) and fuels & forest management
- ▶ EPA Five-Year Review status update
- ▶ Q & A



## Legend

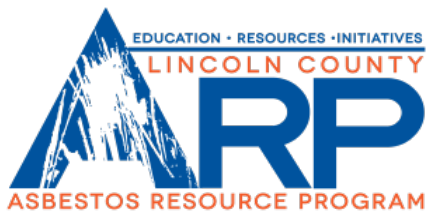
- EPA OU3 Boundary
- SecondaryHighways
- MajorHighways



# Agencies & Roles

- ▶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency = Lead agency for the Superfund site
- ▶ U.S. Forest Service = Support agency, lead on wildfire response
- ▶ Montana Department of Environmental Quality = Support agency for Superfund site, responsible for the operations and maintenance program
- ▶ Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program = Responsible for Libby Amphibole Asbestos questions and response
- ▶ Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency = Owner of the Libby Asbestos Response Plan document
- ▶ Lincoln County Health Department = Public health advisor for air quality for large fires in Operable Unit 3
- ▶ W.R. Grace = Potentially Responsible Party and owner of the former vermiculite mine
- ▶ Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation = Oversees dam safety with W.R. Grace (dam safety is separate from Superfund cleanup efforts); supports wildfire response in Operable Unit 3

# Libby Asbestos Operations and Maintenance Program



# Operations and Maintenance Program

- ▶ What is Operations and Maintenance (O&M) as it relates to Superfund?
  - ▶ O&M ensures that the remedy continues to perform and remains protective of human health and the environment
- ▶ The State of Montana DEQ took over the O&M program for OU4 and OU7 on July 1, 2020

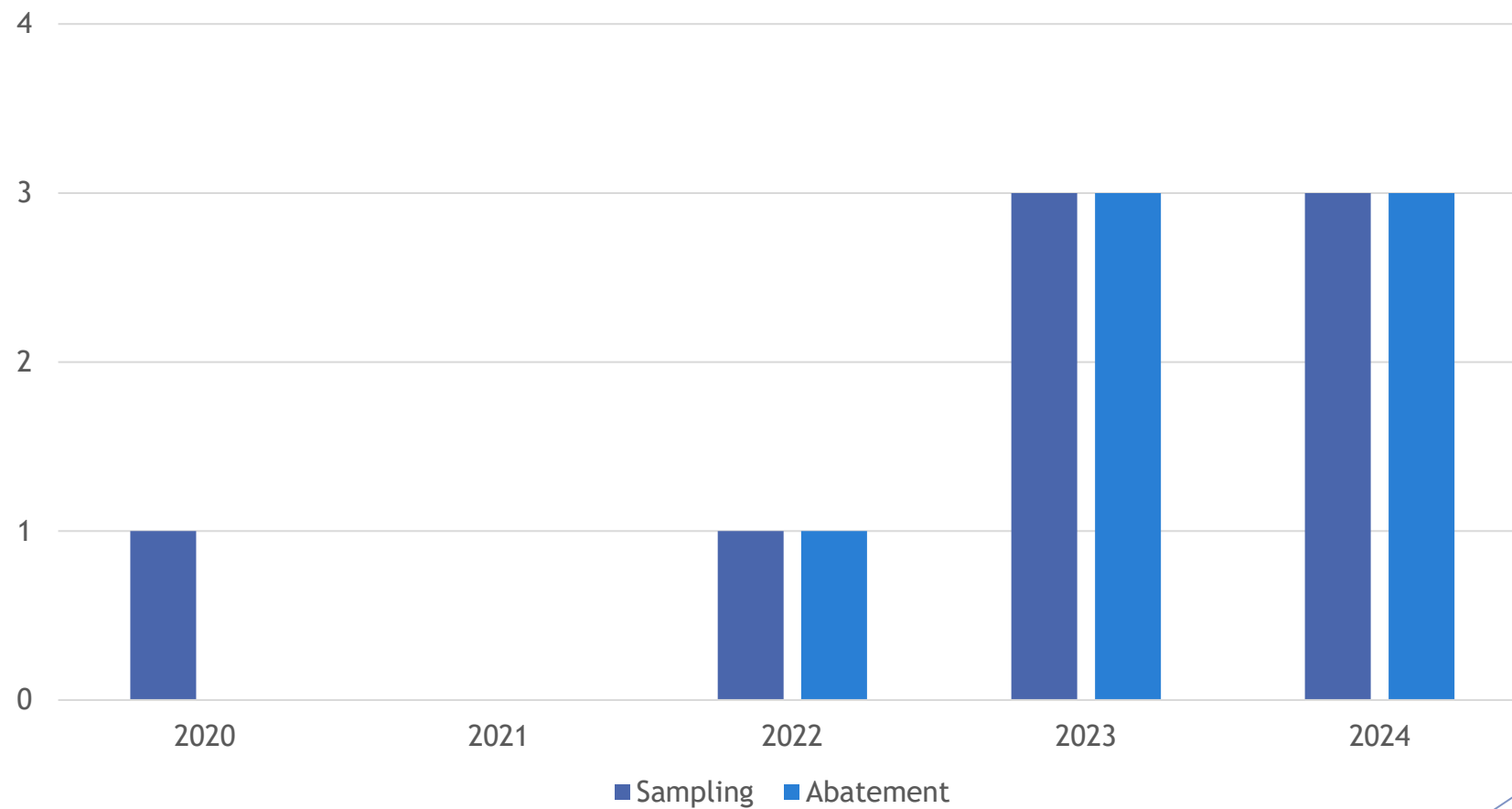
# O&M Programs for Libby Asbestos

- ▶ **Asbestos Resource Program (ARP)**
  - ▶ Provide information to the public
  - ▶ Perform inspections, oversee sampling and abatement work
  - ▶ Emergency Responses
- ▶ **Libby Asbestos Superfund Oversight Committee (LASOC)**
  - ▶ Oversees and manages State appropriated funding
  - ▶ Provides local input and oversight on Libby Asbestos Superfund Site
- ▶ **Department of Environmental Quality - Superfund Program**
  - ▶ Reimbursements
  - ▶ Management and preparation of O&M Documents
  - ▶ Annual Inspections

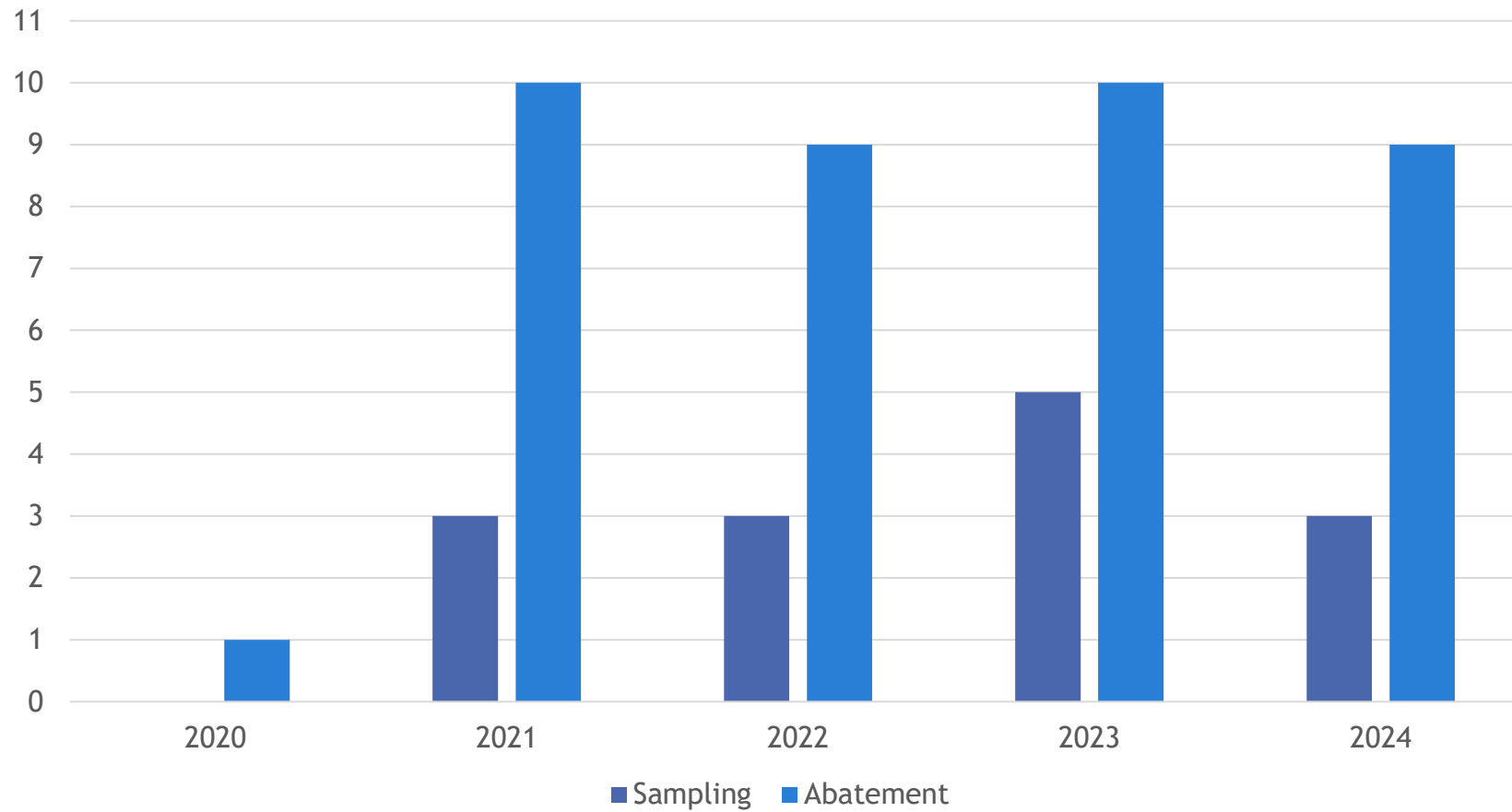
# O&M Funding

- ▶ **EPA Grant - O&M Fund**
  - ▶ Account of around \$10 million dollars allocated to Libby Asbestos O&M
  - ▶ DEQ applies yearly for grant money for operations
- ▶ **Orphan Share - State Allocated Funds**
  - ▶ \$600,000 per year until 2038
  - ▶ Unspent funds are held in trust until 2029
  - ▶ Currently have a balance of \$4.2 million for future O&M activities
- ▶ **W.R. Grace Bankruptcy Funds**
  - ▶ State holding \$5.2 million dollars in a trust for future O&M activities

# State Funded Projects

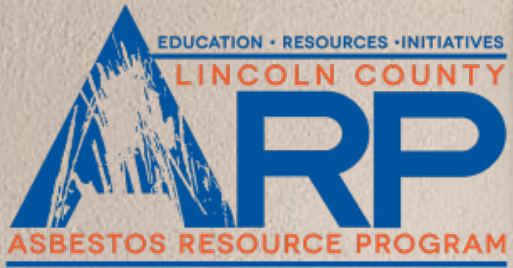


# EPA Funded Projects



# Current ARP Activities

- ▶ Calls for Property Evaluation Notifications and U-Dig Locate Requests
  - ▶ 6541 calls since July 1, 2020
  - ▶ 1115 calls since July 1, 2025
- ▶ Current Projects
  - ▶ 7 Abatements
    - ▶ 3 Emergency Responses
    - ▶ 2 with additional sampling



# Contact Us!

## Asbestos Resource Program

406-291-5335

[lcarp.org](http://lcarp.org)



## Melody Wunderlin

Department of Environmental  
Quality

406-594-4017

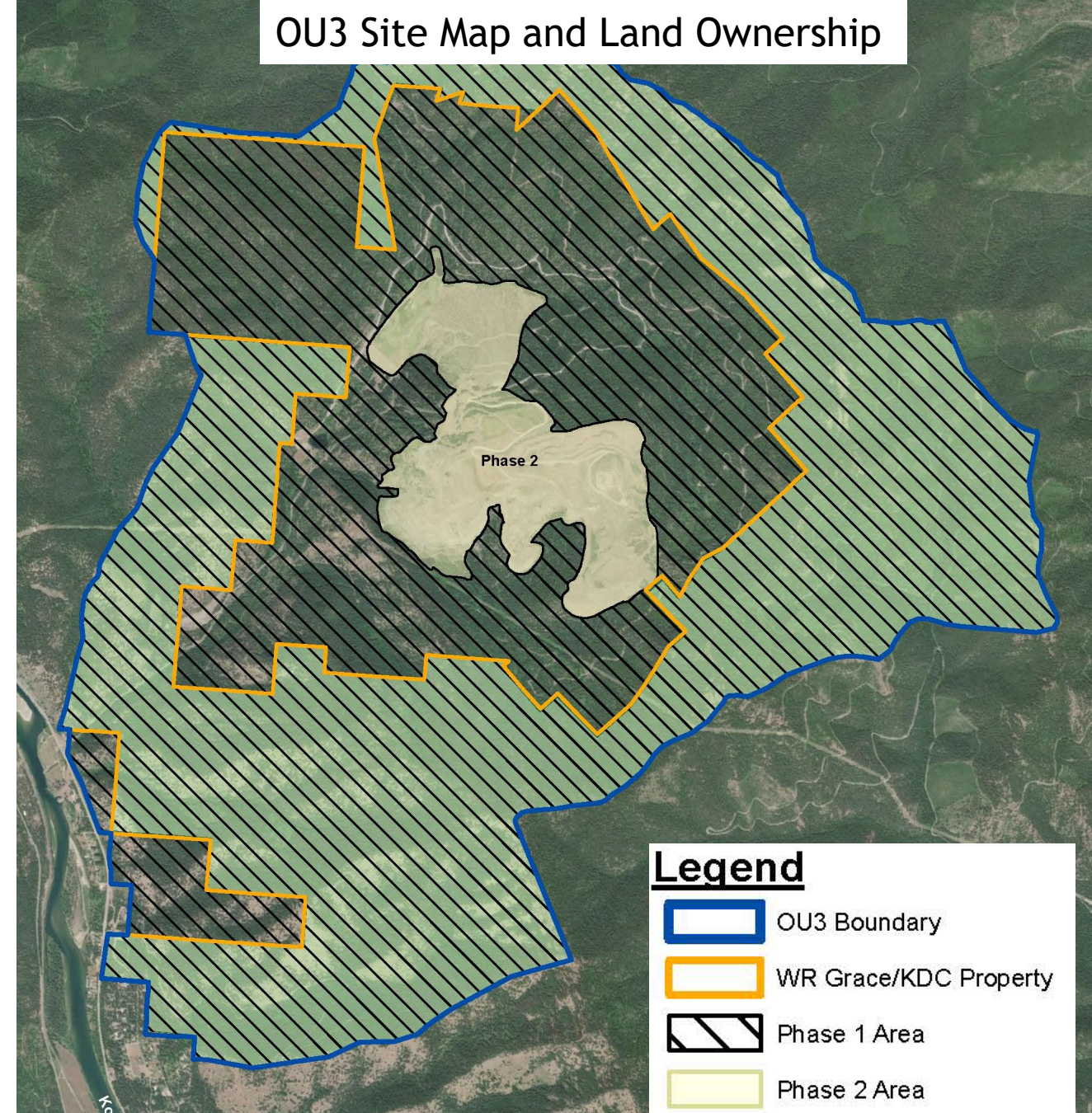
[melody.wunderlin@mt.gov](mailto:melody.wunderlin@mt.gov)



# Libby Asbestos Response Plan

# Operable Unit 3 Former Vermiculite Mine

- ▶ Approximately 10,000 acres
- ▶ Land Ownership
  - ▶ U.S. Forest Service - 5,400 acres
  - ▶ W.R. Grace - 4,650 acres

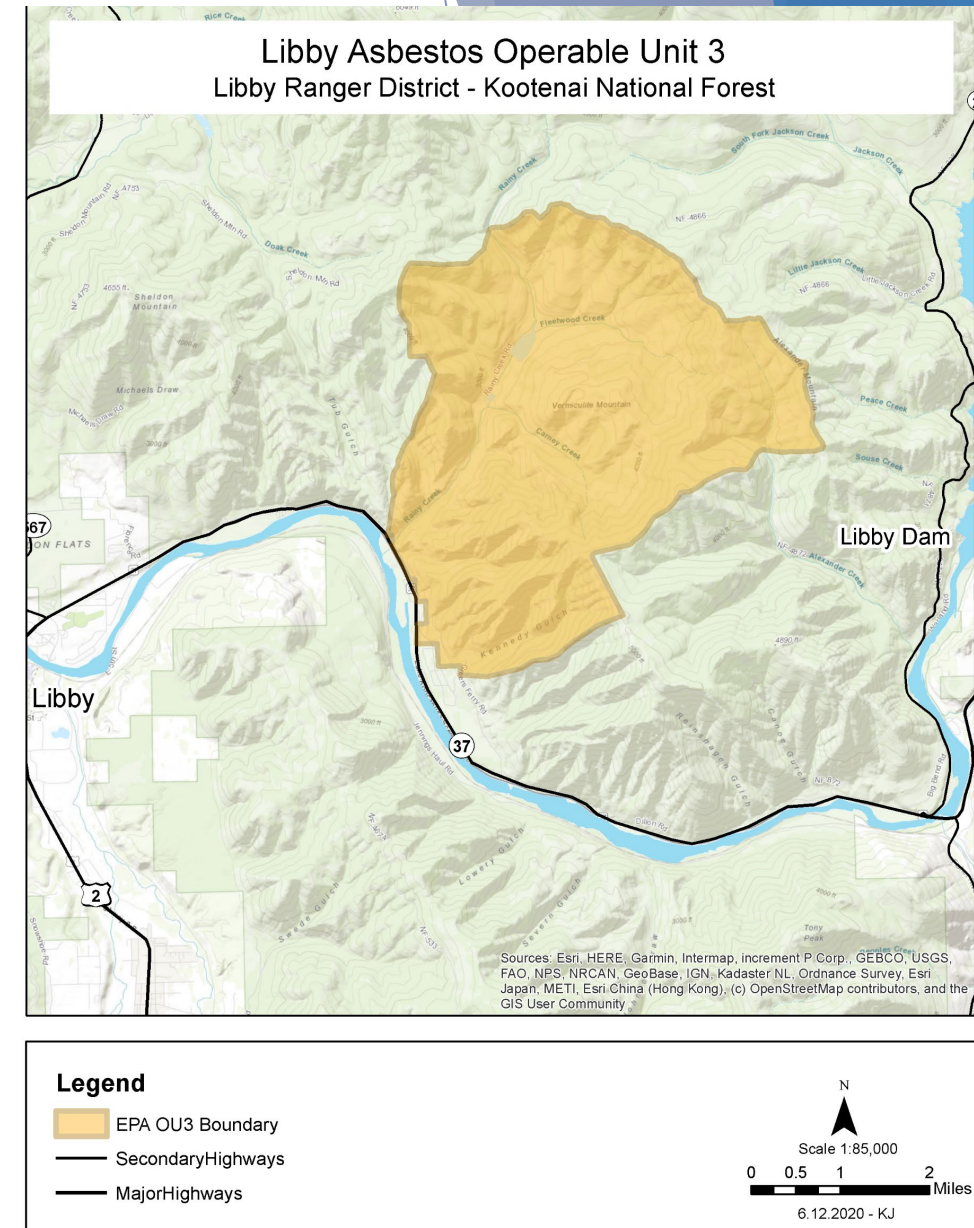


**Notes:**

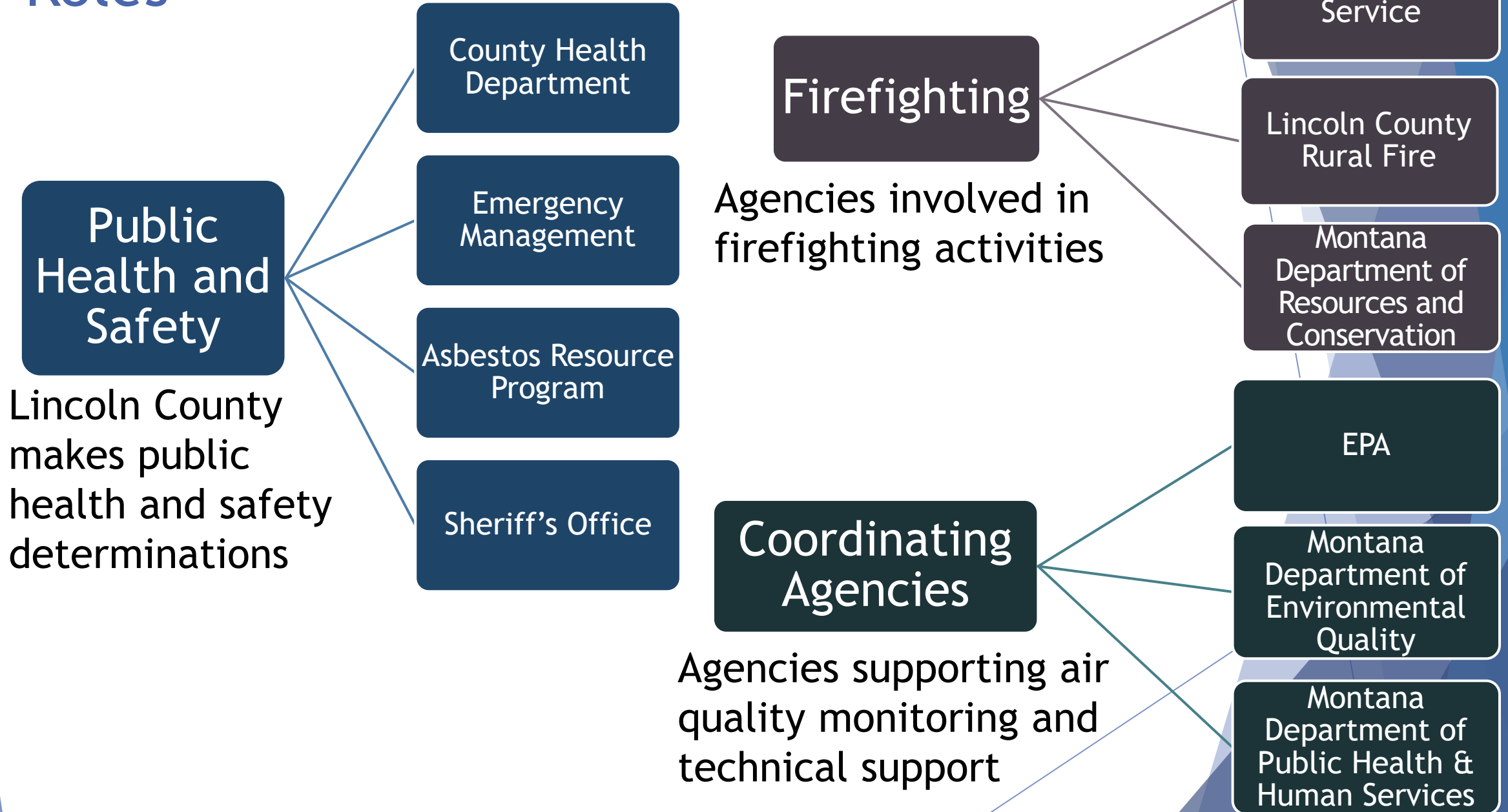
1. The portion of the Kootenai River that is included in OU3 is under discussion.
2. Phase 2 also includes creeks and the haul road.

# What is the Libby Asbestos Operable Unit 3 Response Plan (LARP)?

- ▶ Plan for agency coordination to respond and share public information
- ▶ Activated if there is a wildfire in or around the former vermiculite mine (Operable Unit 3).
- ▶ Agencies will conduct thorough air monitoring and share health information as quickly as possible.

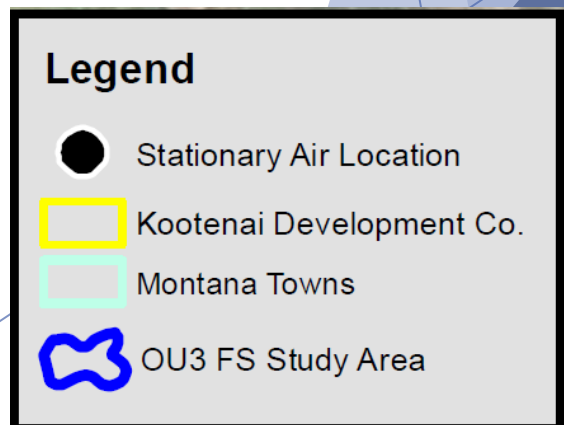
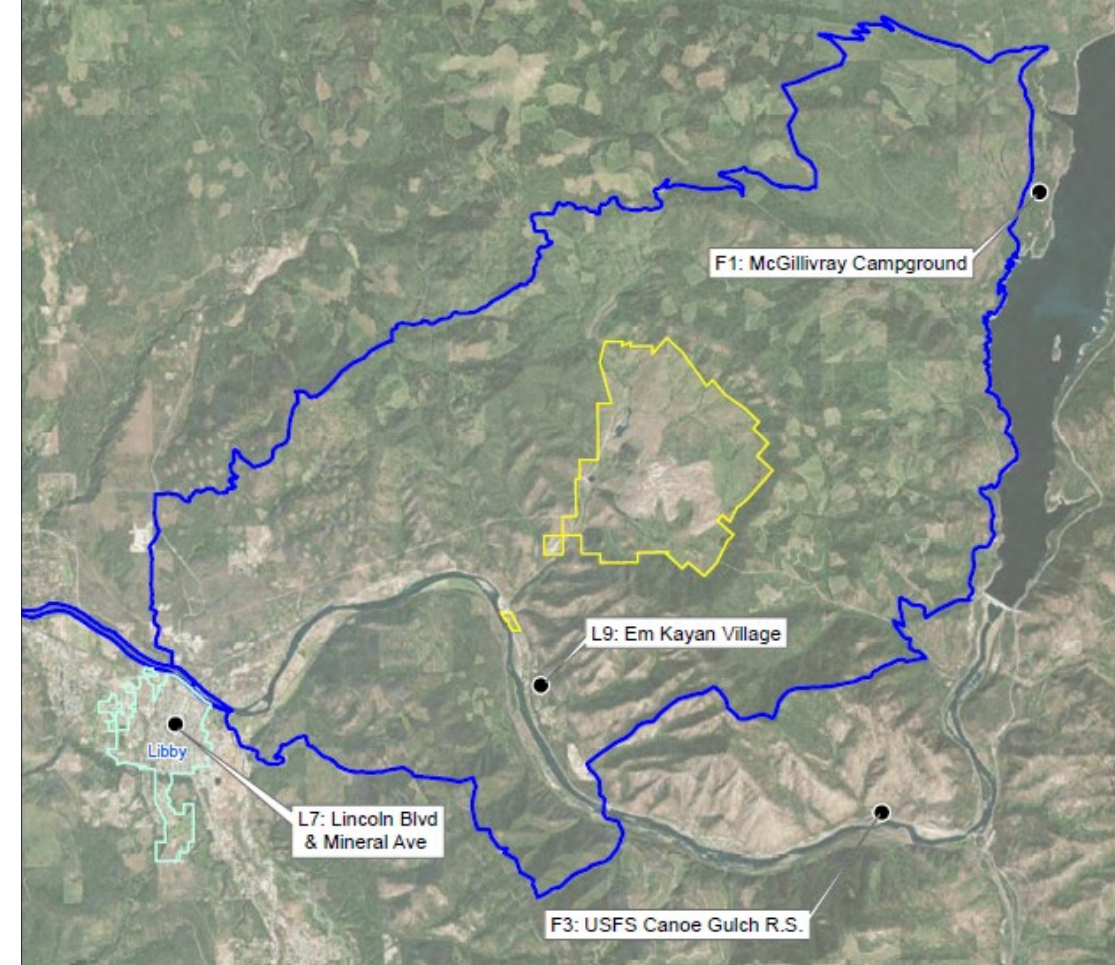


# Roles



# Plan Details

- ▶ Public Health
  - ▶ Particulate matter, or PM 2.5, will be a main driver for public health decisions.
  - ▶ Regardless of the asbestos levels, agencies recommend that you take precautions to protect yourself against wildfire smoke.
- ▶ Asbestos sampling
  - ▶ Asbestos Resource Program (ARP) collects air samples every 24 hours assess for Libby amphibole (LA) asbestos in the ambient air (locations to the right).
  - ▶ Results are expected 72 hours after monitoring begins.



# What Do You Need to Know?

- ▶ April 2025 wildfire response exercise
  - ▶ Tested plan with an emphasis on public health and safety, air sampling and monitoring, and public information.
- ▶ How can you protect yourself and your family during a wildfire?
  - ▶ Pay attention to local air quality reports: <http://todaysair.mtdeq.us/>
  - ▶ If you are told to stay indoors, stay indoors and keep your indoor air as clean as possible.
  - ▶ Do not add to indoor pollution by using anything that burns (e.g. candles, fireplaces).
  - ▶ Do not rely on cloth or dust masks for protection.
  - ▶ Avoid smoke exposure during outdoor recreation. Information on outdoor activity guidelines: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/airquality/index>

# Where can you find emergency information?

- ▶ LCEMA Office Line: 406-293-6295
- ▶ Health Department hotline: 406-283-2442
- ▶ CodeRED (sign up here: <https://lincolncountymt.us/>)
- ▶ EMA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LC.EMA.MT>
- ▶ Lincoln County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/LincolnCountySheriffMontana>

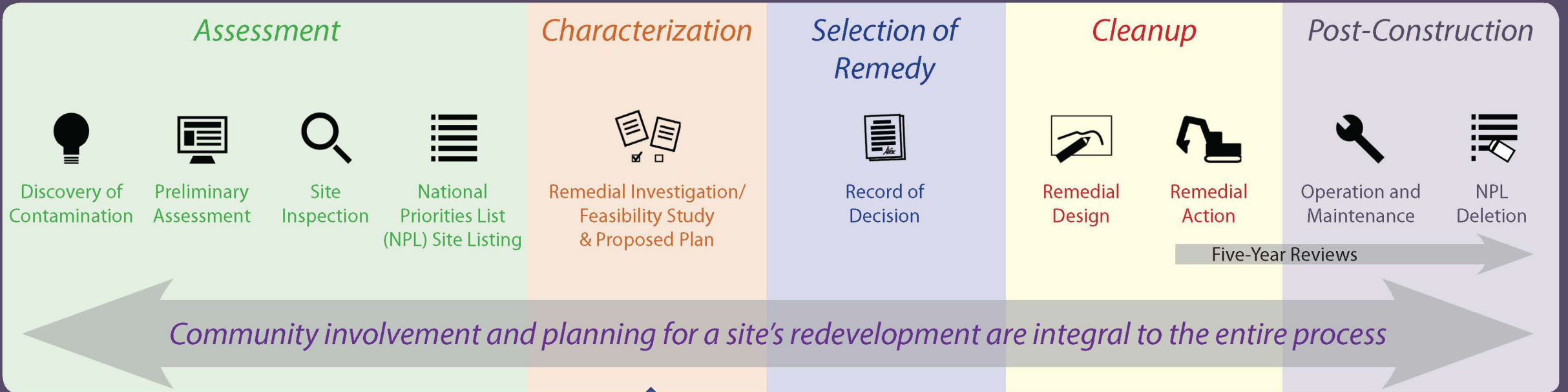
# W.R. Grace Update

# EPA Update



# Superfund Process

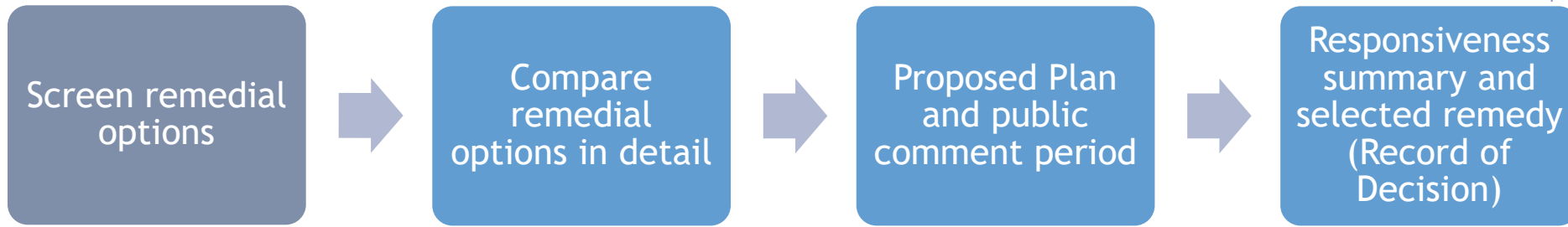
## THE SUPERFUND REMEDIAL PROCESS



Operable Unit 3 is here

# Operable Unit 3 Status

- ▶ Feasibility study
  - ▶ What are the best options to remediate the site and prevent unacceptable risk
  - ▶ Includes both forest (phase 1) and mine site and waterways (phase 2)



- ▶ Unacceptable Risks:
  - ▶ wildland firefighters during mop up,
  - ▶ commercial loggers during hooking and skidding
  - ▶ trespassing rockhounds on the mine site.
- ▶ OU3 fact sheets are available at: [www.epa.gov/superfund/libby-asbestos](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/libby-asbestos)

# EPA's Third Five-Year Review

- ▶ EPA reviews any Superfund site with waste left in place every five years
- ▶ Evaluated all operable units except former vermiculite mine (OU3)
  - ▶ OU3 still needs cleanup
  - ▶ Public Health Emergency will not be lifted until OU3 remedial action is completed
  - ▶ EPA included MDEQ's annual operations and maintenance inspection reports into five-year review

# EPA's Third Five-Year Review

## ▶ Findings of 2025 Review

- ▶ All operable units are protective of human health and the environment
- ▶ Next review is planned for 2030
- ▶ Note: to be responsive to community letters, EPA consulted with the Agency on Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
  - ▶ Libby Amphibole asbestos toxicity value
  - ▶ Public health data registry



# Questions and Answers