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Celebrating Success:
Milltown Reservoir/ Clark Fork River Superfund Site
Milltown, Montana

EPA

Superfund Redevelopment Initiative

Cleanup of contaminated sediment at the site. (*Source:* EPA)

"The state park will help welcome a new chapter in the community's history, while at the same time the river is returning to its original path."

– Michael Kustudia
Work Group Member

Remediation and restoration activities at the site restored normal river flow. (*Source:* EPA)

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Restored Milltown Dam site. (*Source:* EPA)

The Milltown Reservoir/Clark Fork River Superfund site is home to one of the nation's largest river cleanup and restoration efforts. This has resulted in the creation of a new state park on what were once contaminated lands and waterways. Coordination among EPA, the state of Montana, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, tribal leaders and site trustees led to this successful restoration and redevelopment.

For more than a century, mining activities in the region led to arsenic and other contaminants flowing into the headwaters of the Clark Fork River. The contaminated sediments and mine waste traveled downstream and accumulated behind Milltown Dam, resulting in about 6.6 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments. Following initial environmental investigations, EPA listed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 1983. EPA selected the remedy for the site in 2004. The remedy included removing contaminated sediment from the reservoir, removing Milltown Dam in 2010, constructing a bypass channel at the reservoir, and continuing a replacement water supply program.

Thanks to an EPA Superfund Redevelopment pilot grant, local citizens and river stakeholders formed the Milltown Superfund Redevelopment Working Group, which focused on aligning future land uses with community priorities. The Working Group developed a plan that entailed using over 500 acres of land around the reservoir as a new state park, as well as preserving or restoring historic structures and areas. The state of Montana funded almost $18 million in restoration and redevelopment activities at the site. In 2008, the Working Group collaborated with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to develop a conceptual design for the park. The design included trails, river access, wildlife habitat and interpretive areas celebrating the region's history and heritage. In 2013, a stretch of the river flowing through the site opened to water traffic for the first time in over a century. The main areas of Milltown State Park are anticipated to open to the public in the summer of 2016. The support and collaboration among local citizens and tribes, the state of Montana and EPA illustrates how stakeholders can work together to protect human health and the environment, turning Superfund sites into valued assets.

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