



Spokane Tribe  
of Indians

2022  
Region 10

Midnite Mine Superfund Site

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN





# Introduction

EPA and the Spokane Tribe of Indians have developed this Community Involvement Plan to promote meaningful community involvement during the cleanup of the Midnite Mine Superfund site. This plan is designed to align with the needs of the community. To tailor the plan, we asked local people about their views of the cleanup and how they want to be informed and involved. This plan is guided by the input received from interviews with community members as well as from people who participated in the Technical Assistance Needs Assessment (TANA) survey.

The TANA was conducted because EPA received multiple requests for enhanced community involvement regarding the site. The TANA was funded by EPA's Technical Assistance Services for Communities program. TANA input was gathered from 2019 to November 2021 from:

- Background information gathered online about the site and the community.
- EPA's 2019 Midnite Mine Community Survey.
- Telephone conversations with tribal members, community members and stakeholders.
- Comments gathered during the community comment period through September 6, 2021.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to talk with us and share ideas. The TANA Report is available online at [semspub.epa.gov/src/document/10/100369943](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/10/100369943).

## Community Engagement Goals

EPA's and the Tribe's project staff is committed to a meaningful community involvement program. Our goals are to:

- Make available timely, relevant information about cleanup activities.
- Present information in a clear, understandable way.
- Foster open communication, responding to questions and concerns as they arise.
- Be clear about where the public can inform cleanup decisions.
- Seek feedback on major EPA decision documents, and offer formal public comment opportunities when required by the Superfund process.
- Listen to and consider local input.

Informational materials at a public meeting at the Long House on the Spokane Indian Reservation.





Backfilling operations at Pit 4.



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# The Community Involvement Action Plan

This action plan outlines the tools that EPA and the Tribe will use to inform and involve the Community, based on the feedback we received from interviews with community members as well as people who participated in the TANA survey. The action plan also outlines how EPA will be available to receive input from the community. Finally, the action plan details the partnership between the Tribe and EPA in the development and implementation of activities related to the Midnite Mine cleanup.

To best serve the people of this community, including community members with limited Internet access, EPA and the Tribe will provide information in a variety of ways. EPA and the Tribe will focus on the methods and activities listed here.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT



There are two primary points of contact when you have questions about the cleanup or would like more information.

EPA's community involvement coordinator (CIC) for the cleanup is Julie Congdon. She serves as a liaison between community members and Midnite Mine site team members and other agency officials, finding effective and appropriate ways to inform and engage the public.

The Midnite Mine community liaison at the Spokane Tribe of Indians is Ricky Sherwood. He makes sure that the community is informed about work at Midnite Mine, and encourages maximum community participation in the cleanup process. As the Tribe's Midnite Mine community liaison, he is familiar with the land, culture, language and issues surrounding the cleanup.



## FACT SHEETS



When EPA and the Tribe have important information to share about the site, we issue fact sheets. The fact sheets provide cleanup updates, meeting notices and other news. We send them to people on our electronic mailing lists, post them online on EPA's Midnite Mine cleanup webpage ([www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine)), announce them on Facebook (see section on page 11), and put them in the local library and on community bulletin boards. We may also send out an annual cleanup update fact sheet as a mailer to select zip codes in and near the cleanup area and Wellpinit.

## EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Community members requested that EPA and the Tribe provide regular email updates. Updates may include:

- Information on ongoing work at the site.
- Available documents.
- Upcoming meetings and notes from prior meetings.
- EPA decisions.
- Other relevant information about our work at the site.

Through fact sheets, email announcements and other formats, EPA and the Tribe may provide regular site updates about recent and upcoming cleanup and community

involvement activities. Each update could include an updated cleanup timeline. When timely, community liaison Ricky Sherwood will inform the community about the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance and available cleanup jobs. Upcoming public meetings will also be announced in these updates. The updates will be posted through the Rawhide's webpage, the tribal webpage and EPA's cleanup webpage.

To be added to the email distribution list, please send an email to EPA community involvement coordinator Julie Congdon at [congdon.julie@epa.gov](mailto:congdon.julie@epa.gov) with "Midnite Mine" in the subject line.



## INFORMAL COMMUNICATION



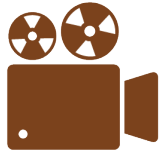
EPA's project manager and community involvement coordinator and the Tribe's community liaison are available to talk with you about the site at any time. Feel free to contact them to share information, discuss concerns or ask questions. We welcome your input throughout the decision-making and cleanup process. Contacts are listed on page 25.

## FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS



During key decision points in the Superfund process, EPA announces and opens public comment periods. EPA carefully considers all public comments. No formal comment periods for the site are expected soon. We welcome community input and suggestions at any time.

## THE MEDIA



From time to time, EPA and the Tribe will ask local newspapers to provide the community with information about our work, about meetings or other updates that may be of interest. We issue press releases to local media whenever there is important news to share. EPA and the Tribe will work with these local newspapers:

- Rawhide Press: [spokanetribe.com/news/rawhide-press](http://spokanetribe.com/news/rawhide-press)
- Spokesman Review: [www.spokesman.com](http://www.spokesman.com)



## COMMUNITY MEETINGS



Meetings offer a chance for attendees to hear updates, ask questions and, in some cases, submit formal public comments. Community interviews indicated that communication is most effective when it comes from the Tribe rather than EPA, and they recommended its delivery by the Tribe, tribal members or local organizations. TANA input recommended that EPA and the Tribe coordinate regularly scheduled in-person public meetings with community members to facilitate interaction between community members and government agencies, and improve information sharing. These site updates could be quarterly or biannually, and cover recent and upcoming cleanup and community activities.

The Spokane Tribe's coordination of community meetings for the site is one example of the Tribe's active involvement in the Midnite Mine Superfund cleanup.

The community liaison will coordinate the meetings. The community liaison and EPA staff will work together to identify community issues and needs to be addressed, and which topics to cover in updates about the cleanup. As needed, a subject-matter expert can attend meetings to share information. The meetings could be hybrid sessions that consist of an in-person meeting as well as virtual access with a call-in number through an online platform such as Zoom.

Organizations can invite EPA's project manager and other staff to speak about cleanup work at the Midnite Mine. When invited to these meetings, EPA staff is available to present information and answer questions about the cleanup.

## SITE TOURS



EPA and the Tribe understand the community is interested in pre- and post-construction season open-house tours of the cleanup site, with transportation provided. Newmont USA Limited (Newmont), the site's potentially responsible party (PRP), has expressed a willingness to do a site tour for tribal council members; otherwise, access to the cleanup site is limited due to construction equipment operations and other hazards. Pre- and post-construction site tours may be available to the community. Virtual tours of the site could also be developed.

## INFORMATION REPOSITORIES



As a part of the Superfund process, EPA must maintain a set of documents and information locally, where the public can easily access printed or digital copies. This location is called the “information repository.” Information repositories contain copies of technical or planning documents, fact sheets, results of previous meetings, and other similar types of information. There will be a public computer available at the Alfred McCoy Administration Building, located at 6195 Ford-Wellpinit Road in Wellpinit, where community members can access the Internet and visit EPA’s site webpage at [www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine).

## WEBPAGE



EPA maintains a webpage focused on the cleanup: [www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine). People can access site activity information, weekly and monthly cleanup progress reports, background details, technical and legal documents, and other materials.

The Spokane Tribe also provides updates about the cleanup on its webpage: [www.spokanetribe.com](http://www.spokanetribe.com).

## LANGUAGE ACCESS



EPA will provide language translation and interpretation services, as needed, to make sure non-English-speaking individuals can have equal access to EPA materials and activities. To date, these services have not been requested and a need has not been identified. To make a request, please contact EPA community involvement coordinator Julie Congdon at [congdon.julie@epa.gov](mailto:congdon.julie@epa.gov).



## FACEBOOK



From our community interviews, EPA and the Tribe learned that the community prefers using Facebook to the EPA website. EPA, working with the community liaison, has agreed to post cleanup updates and information on the Tribe's Rawhide Facebook page. EPA can contribute information on topics such as cleanup progress, traffic changes, grant opportunities, educational events and other site-related topics of interest to the community. EPA will also post site updates on its general Region 10 Facebook page: [facebook.com/eparegion10](https://facebook.com/eparegion10).





Cleanup work at the site.



# About the Site

Midnite Mine is an inactive former uranium mine in the Selkirk Mountains of eastern Washington. Located within the reservation of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the mine operated from 1955 to 1981.

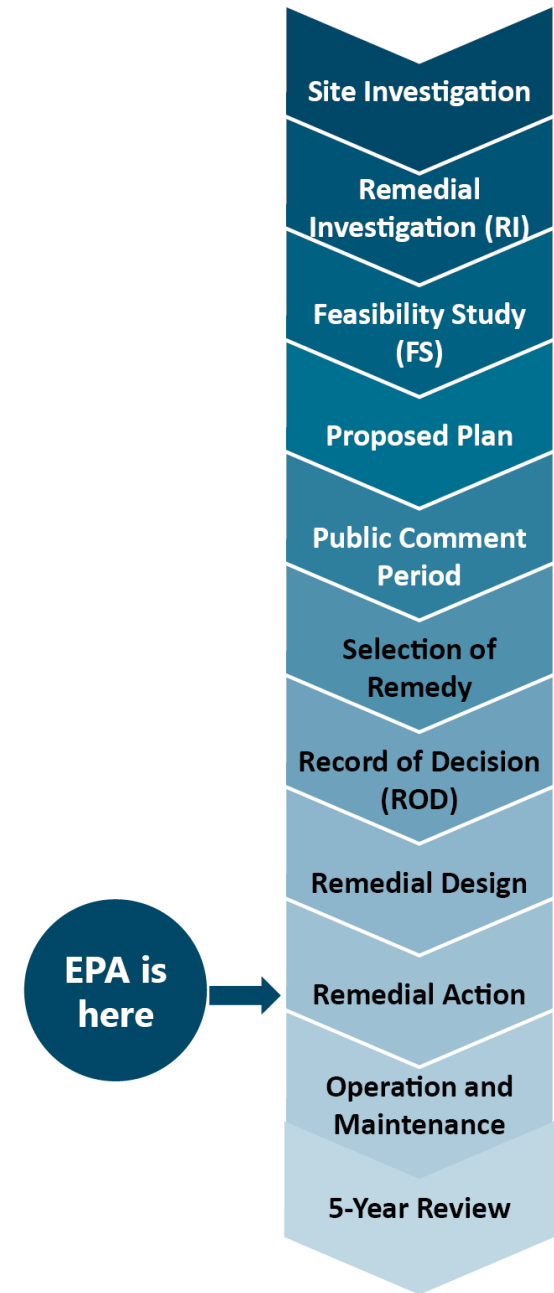
Two open pits, waste rock piles and several ore/procore stockpiles remain on site. In addition to elevated levels of radioactivity, heavy metals mobilized in acid mine drainage pose a potential threat to people's health and the environment. The site drains to Blue Creek and Whitetail Creek, which enters the Spokane Arm of Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake. Contaminated water emerging below the waste rock and ore piles is captured for treatment in a treatment system on site.

## THE SUPERFUND SITE CLEANUP PROCESS

EPA added the Midnite Mine to the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 2000 and selected the site's cleanup plan in the site's 2006 Record of Decision. The site is currently in the "remedial action" phase of the cleanup process. Cleanup construction began in 2016. It should be completed in 2026. After the cleanup is complete, certain controls will be put in place to ensure that the work remains protective – things such as fences, signs, and site use covenants. Other activities might be implemented to manage and maintain the remedy when cleanup work is complete.

## What is Superfund?

Superfund is a federal law authorizing EPA to clean up contaminated sites. Its official name is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, or CERCLA.



## THE MINE CLEANUP

EPA's policy is to have the responsible parties – also called potentially responsible parties, or PRPs – pay for cleaning up pollution. Responsible parties can be past or present operators and landowners.

Under a legal agreement called a Consent Decree, Dawn Mining Company, LLC and Newmont will complete the cleanup work. EPA will oversee the cleanup work in coordination with the Tribe.

After a study of the site, EPA sought public comment on a proposed cleanup plan in September 2005. EPA selected the final cleanup plan for the site in the site's September 2006 Record of Decision. Planning for the cleanup work finished in 2015.

Another focus is keeping the backfilled pits dewatered with a pumping and treatment system during and after construction. A new water treatment plant is under construction; it will replace the legacy plant that is currently in operation. Construction will include the extension of a new effluent line to relocate the discharge area.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO CLEAN UP THE SITE?

Construction of the cleanup began in 2016. It is expected to continue through completion in 2026. Cleanup at the site includes the following activities:

- Earthwork: prepare the two open pits for consolidation of mine waste rock by removing contaminated water and sediments and placing a layer of drain rock and liner in the pit bottoms.
- Excavation: excavate mine waste rock, protore, and contaminated soils and sediments from the waste rock piles, access roads and drainages.
- Backfilling: consolidate the mine waste rock, protore, and contaminated soils and sediments in the lined pits.
- Cover: cover the consolidated waste rock, protore, and contaminated soils and sediments to limit water infiltration and migration of contaminants.

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

EPA would like to remind everyone to follow safety guidelines related to the site. Where there are signs or fencing, trespassing is prohibited. Please follow posted speed limits in the area and be alert for traffic flaggers and re-routes.



**CAUTION**



**RADIOACTIVE  
MATERIALS  
AREA**

G/O Corporation

800-933-8501

GS1046 AS

*Waste rock poses a health risk if  
proper precautions are not taken.*





*This page and to right: SHAWL society members prepare a feast of traditional foods at a community meeting, including wild game, local fish, traditional roots and dessert with fresh local berries.*



# About the Community

The Midnite Mine Superfund site is an inactive open-pit uranium mine located on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Stevens County, Washington, about 8 miles northwest of Wellpinit. The Site is about 50 miles north and west of the city of Spokane.

## TRIBAL CONCERNS

The members and residents on the Reservation of the Spokane Tribe of Indians are disproportionately affected by the mine and its cleanup. According to the Tribe's website, tribal membership included about 2,900 people, as of September 2021. According to the 2020 Census, about 2,541 people live on the Spokane Reservation and off-reservation trust land; the population is about 85% American Indian. Most speak only English at home. Many residents report having worked, or lived with family members who worked, at the mine and the mill in Ford before they closed. This area's high percentage of indigenous residents experience lower incomes, higher unemployment and higher levels of pollution (such as ozone, radon and particulate matter) when compared to other residents in the state of Washington.

## Environmental Justice

is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. EPA Region 10 works to make sure underserved, low income and tribal communities facing disproportionate environmental risks have opportunities for meaningful participation in environmental decision making. Many EPA environmental justice resources are available online at [www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice](http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice).





## Tribal Consultation – Coordination with the Spokane Tribe of Indians

EPA's policy is to consult on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized tribal governments when EPA actions and decisions may affect tribal interests. Consultation is a process of meaningful communication and coordination between the EPA and tribal officials prior to EPA taking actions or implementing decisions that may affect tribes. As a process, consultation includes several methods of interaction that may occur at different levels, depending on past and current practices, adjustments made through EPA's national policy, the continuing dialogue between EPA and tribal governments, and program and regional office procedures and plans.

EPA will continue to consult with the Spokane Tribe of Indians on a government-to-government basis and will closely coordinate with the Tribe throughout construction and long-term monitoring of the Midnite Mine cleanup.

### COMMUNITY CONCERNS

It is important for EPA to understand community concerns and issues so that we may be responsive. It also allows us to consider local perspectives as we move forward with planning and decision-making. EPA has had conversations with the Spokane Tribal Council, community advocates, Tribal staff, and area residents in Wellpinit and Spokane about current and ongoing concerns with the site and its cleanup. We requested additional input with online surveys and in-person interviews. We will continue to foster open communication with all stakeholders. As we continue to build relationships within the community and learn about people's concerns and perspectives, we can make updates to this CIP.

Members of the local community have varying views about the cleanup at the Midnite Mine Superfund Site; however, most agree that it is important to protect people and animals and the environment from further contamination from uranium mining at the site. Health concerns are very high among Tribal members and residents of the Spokane Reservation and with elders who worked at the mine and mill and their family members. In addition, there was frustration about past turnover in EPA personnel. Also, community members expressed an interest in receiving assistance in



making technical reports and documents more easily understood.

In response to community members' interest and to better understand the technical assistance needs and concerns of the tribal members and the local community, EPA's Technical Assistance Services for Communities program conducted a Technical Assistance Needs Assessment. The TANA report was finalized in the autumn of 2021 and is available on EPA's website for Midnite Mine. Based on the recommendations provided in the report, we have updated the CIP to incorporate the report's recommendations on engaging with the community.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Community respondents asked that EPA continue working with community groups and tribal partners in sharing information and building trust. EPA can partner with tribal members or agencies for outreach materials and events and keeping websites and repositories up to date. Tribal staff are active in decision making for the Midnite Mine Superfund site cleanup.

In addition to outreach to the tribal government, EPA coordinates with the community liaison. An organization that EPA could partner with is the Spokane Tribal

*A remembrance of ancestors in the Long House in Wellpinit.*





Network (STN), an independent nonprofit on the Spokane Indian Reservation. STN provides system resource collaboration and generates hope for the Spokane tribal community by fostering intergenerational wellness and resilience. The group is conducting food sovereignty efforts that have been impacted by mining activities at the site. The group consists of Spokane tribal members.

EPA also coordinates with other agencies and organizations. Other federal agencies that may be involved from time to time during the cleanup include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.





*Spokane Tribe of Indians signage  
outside of fenced site area.*

## **WARNING:**

**Water, plants, fish and  
animals along this creek  
may be unsafe to use.**

Questions about Midnite Mine?  
Contact: Randy Connolly at 509-626-4425



# EPA's Community Survey

## Survey of community needs during the Midnite Mine cleanup work

We hope to learn what information and support the community needs from EPA during the “Remedial Action” / construction phase of the work at Midnite Mine. Construction of the remedy began in 2016 and will continue for a few more years. There are currently no plans to hold a formal public comment period, but we would like to ensure that what we’re sharing about the cleanup work is interesting, relevant, and meaningful to you. To help us better understand what you would find interesting, relevant, and meaningful, and to allow us to plan for relevant community engagement, please answer the following questions. We’ll use your answers to update the Community Involvement Plan.

1. *Regarding the Midnite Mine, what topics do you find relevant, what would be relevant to your family, your community?*

- ☐ What is Superfund, how does it work?
- ☐ What’s happening at the Mine this week / this month / this year?
- ☐ What does the work look like in the years ahead?
- ☐ What is uranium and why does the Midnite Mine need to be cleaned up?
- ☐ What happens when Newmont finishes their cleanup work at the Mine?

2. *How did you learn about EPA’s work at the Midnite Mine?*

- ☐ Newspaper articles
- ☐ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- ☐ Community members/family/friends
- ☐ Radio or TV news
- ☐ Information about the site is “common knowledge”
- ☐ I know someone who worked at the site
- ☐ Public meeting or information session held by the EPA
- ☐ EPA mailings
- ☐ EPA’s web page ([www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine))

3. *How would you prefer to get information from EPA?*

- ☐ Fact sheets about technical issues
- ☐ Webinar updates
- ☐ Fact sheets about general issues
- ☐ Documents at the local library or information repository
- ☐ Website updates / links to other websites
- ☐ Speak to community groups and organizations
- ☐ EPA participation in community meetings
- ☐ Mail documents on your request
- ☐ Postcard or flyer with updates, in the mail
- ☐ Technical assistance through the TASC program
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Technical Assistance Grant to a non-profit community group

4. *EPA provides information and documents for download on its website: [www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine). Here are some of the documents available on the Midnite Mine website – which of these are of interest to you:*

- ☐ Weekly and monthly reports
- ☐ Five-year reviews
- ☐ Annual report
- ☐ Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Reports

- ☐ Work plans
- ☐ Human Health Risk and Ecological Risk Assessments
- ☐ Fact sheets
- ☐ Radiological Surveys
- ☐ ATSDR Public Health Assessment
- ☐ Basis of design reports

- ☐ Proposed Plan for cleanup of the Mine
- ☐ Technical memos
- ☐ Record of Decision
- ☐ ALARA Reports yearly (ALARA = “as low as reasonably achievable”)

*What other documents would you like to have available on the website?*

5. *EPA can secure contract services through the TASC (Technical Assistance Services for Communities) Program. Which of the TASC services would be useful to you:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technical advisor services: Assistance to better understand historical information, such as decisions that were made related to risk assessments, remedial investigation, feasibility study, enforcement, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting facilitation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Websites</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maps, diagrams, visual aids</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance to better understand current information, such as weekly reports, monthly reports, annual reports, other technical documents.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workshops (response: health assessments)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

*What other technical assistance services would you like to have provided?*

6. *To be added to our mailing list, please provide your email address or your mailing address:*

7. *Thank you for your time and consideration. Please provide any additional thoughts you have about how EPA can best provide relevant information and involvement opportunities to you and to your community.*





Cleanup activities at Pit 4.



# For More Information:

## EPA Contacts

### Project Manager

*Linda Meyer*

(206) 553-6636

1 (800) 424-4372 ext. 6636

[meyer.linda@epa.gov](mailto:meyer.linda@epa.gov)

### Community Involvement Coordinator

*Julie Congdon*

(206) 553-2752

1 (800) 424-4372 ext. 2752

[congdon.julie@epa.gov](mailto:congdon.julie@epa.gov)

EPA's webpage for the Midnite  
Mine Superfund site: [www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine)

If you need materials in another language or an alternate format,  
please contact EPA community involvement coordinator Julie  
Congdon at 1 (800) 424-4372, ext. 2752.

## Spokane Tribe of Indians Contacts

### Tribal Council, Chair

*Carol Evans*

(509) 458-6504

[carole@spokanetribe.com](mailto:carole@spokanetribe.com)

### Community Liason

*Ricky Sherwood*

(509) 458-6586

[rickys@spokanetribe.com](mailto:rickys@spokanetribe.com)

### Spokane Tribe

(509) 458-6500

[www.spokanetribe.com](http://www.spokanetribe.com)



*Air Monitoring on site.*



*Placement of material in Pit 4.*

