

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Smokey Mountain Smelters Site Knoxville, Tennessee



Remedial Action Fact Sheet

February 2023

Introduction

The Smokey Mountain Smelters Site (the Site) has been selected to receive funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to perform cleanup of the Site. Funding will now allow for a cleanup suitable for reuse and redevelopment once the Superfund cleanup (or remediation) is complete. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is committed to engaging with the community in south Knoxville throughout the Superfund process, including on upcoming cleanup activities. This Fact Sheet provides a description of the Site, information about the upcoming cleanup (Remedial Action) to be performed at the Site, and planned activities to address environmental contamination at the Site.

A public meeting, hosted by the EPA, will be offered in person and virtually to discuss the Remedial Action activities. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the phased work planned for the Site and associated activities. Participants who plan to attend virtually are encouraged to pre-register to receive a meeting link.

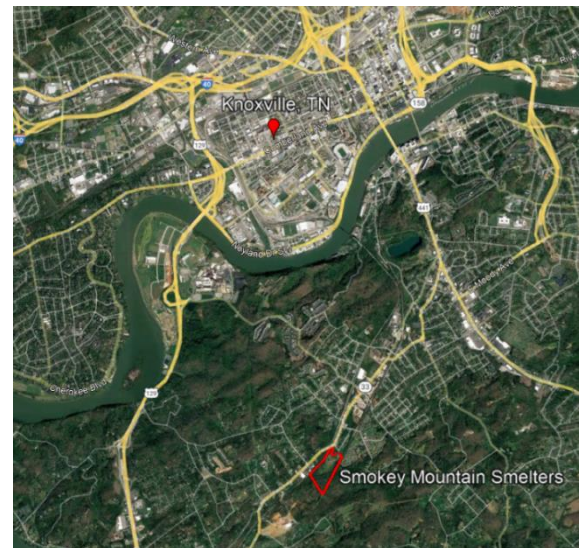


Figure 1: Site Location Map

Future Cleanup Activities/Remedial Action

The Remedial Action (RA) for the Smokey Mountain Smelters Site will begin in February 2023 and is expected to be completed by November 2023. During this time, please be aware that there will be an increase in heavy equipment traffic on and around Maryville Pike and Caleb Avenue, and at times, on Lewis Avenue SW and Joe Lewis Road, Knoxville, TN. The contractors will ensure that dust and noise pollution are minimized.

The following RA activities are planned:

Phase I - Consolidation (expected to begin this February) A temporary onsite workstation will be constructed, temporary utilities and fencing will be installed, Site clearing will occur, and the existing entrance and haul roads will be improved/stabilized.

- Soil will be consolidated from two existing waste piles into one waste pile (See Figure 2, on page 2: Dashed green lines outline the waste piles).



**EPA Public Meeting
to discuss the Remedial Action for
the Smokey Mountain Smelters Site**

**Monday, February 13, 2023
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**South Knoxville Community Center
522 Maryville Pike, Knoxville, TN**

**Meeting will be offered in person and
virtually. To register for the virtual
meeting, please visit the website:
[www.epa.gov/superfund/smokey-
mountain-smelters](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/smokey-mountain-smelters)**

Phase II – Cap Construction and Site Restoration

(expected to occur March through June) – See Figure 2 on the right. The approximate cap area is outlined with a solid yellow line.

- Soil will be excavated, relocated, and consolidated to a containment area (the consolidated waste area in Phase I), followed by Site grading and restoration of wetlands and tributary bed areas.
- An engineered cap will then be installed on top of the consolidated waste area. This cap will consist of a gas collection layer; two different synthetic liners; a drainage layer; and a covering of 24 inches total of soil, seed, and mulch. The purpose of the cap is to prevent storm water from contacting waste under the cap, prohibiting migration of the contaminants to ground and/or surface waters.



Figure 2: Identification of Specific Activities within Site

Phase III – Onsite Groundwater Injections (expected to occur from February through the end of May) - The injection areas are represented with concentric blue and black circles in Figure 2.

- A fungicide called calcium polysulfide will be injected into the groundwater at identified locations. This process uses bacteria to reduce contaminants and immobilize metals.

Phase IV – Remedial Action Report (expected to occur June through November).

- A Remedial Action Report will be developed and reviewed. Once final, this document will be available on the Site webpage: www.epa.gov/superfund/smokey-mountain-smelters.

Site Location and Description

The Smokey Mountain Smelters Superfund Site is a 13-acre property located at 1508 Maryville Pike in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Site is in a mixed industrial, commercial, and residential area four miles south of downtown. An apartment complex is located to the east of the Site, within 75 feet of the Site boundary, that houses about 560 residents. The apartment complex includes recreational and playground areas and a daycare facility. Undeveloped properties are located to the south of the Site. Additional single-family homes and commercial properties are located to the north and west of the site. The Site boundaries are fully fenced. There are no physical structures, as all were removed as part of the previously conducted removal action, discussed in detail below. Active railroad lines, owned by Norfolk-Southern and CSX Transportation, border the property to the east and west, respectively.

The EPA has performed short-term cleanup actions to stop immediate threats. These actions included repairing the fence surrounding the Site, removing a portion of the on-site waste, capping the remaining on-site waste piles with one foot of compacted clay and six inches of topsoil, and planting the capped areas with grass. Currently, the Site is undeveloped and consists of grassy and wooded areas.

Site History

A series of fertilizer and agricultural chemical companies operated at the Site from the 1920s to the 1960s. Later, Smokey Mountain Smelters, Inc., also known as Rotary Furnace, Inc., operated a secondary aluminum smelter at the site from 1979 to 1994. The process involved melting scrap aluminum and aluminum dross (a waste byproduct of the initial smelting process) together, and casting that into aluminum metal bars. Raw materials at the facility primarily consisted of scrap aluminum and aluminum dross. Waste material from the operation was primarily saltcake, a residue with high salt and low metal content, along with baghouse dust and discarded aluminum dross.

The EPA placed the Site on the Superfund program's [National Priorities List \(NPL\)](#) in 2010 because of contaminated soils, sediment and surface water resulting from past industrial operations at the Site.



Figure 3: Past Operations Aerial Image

As discussed in further detail below, the EPA and the [Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation \(TDEC\)](#) have investigated Site conditions and initiated cleanup of the property to protect people and the environment from contamination.

Previous Investigations

In the 1980s, The State of Tennessee's Division of Solid Waste Management issued a notice to Smokey Mountain Smelters, Inc. after concluding that the Site was "unsuitable for use as an industrial landfill." However, landfilling continued to occur on the property for several more years. In addition, the Knox County Department for Air Pollution Control documented numerous citizen complaints regarding excessive air emissions from the Site and cited Smokey Mountain Smelters, Inc. for several air quality violations in the 1980s.

The EPA took short-term cleanup actions to stop immediate threats from 2008-2011, including executing a removal action, which involved removing a portion of the onsite waste, capping the remaining onsite waste piles with one foot of compacted clay and six inches of topsoil, and planting the capped areas with grass, as mentioned above. Existing fencing was also repaired to keep trespassers off the Site. In 2015, EPA issued a cleanup plan (a [Record of Decision, or ROD](#)) to address the remaining contamination. EPA completed a Remedial Design in April 2018 and began negotiating with the Site's potentially responsible parties to conduct the cleanup.

By 2022, that investigation was concluded and the Site was determined to be Fund Lead, meaning that the federal government would have to use the EPA's Superfund money to perform the cleanup. A contractor was selected to conduct the cleanup activities as described in the [Record of Decision](#) and Remedial Design documents, and as outlined in Phase I – IV above.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

EPA Staff

EPA Remedial Project Manager

Peter Johnson

Johnson.peter@epa.gov

(470) 261-5868

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator

Marjorie Thomas

Thomas.marjorie@epa.gov

(919) 407-0721

Information Repository

Bearden Branch Library

100 Golf Club Road

Knoxville, TN 37919

(865) 588-8813

In compliance with the Paper Reduction Act, all documents will be available online rather than hard copies sent to the information repository. In addition, these digital documents are also accessible on public computers available at the Bearden Branch Library listed above.

Site Webpage:

The Smokey Mountain Smelters has a designated EPA website, which houses all Site-related documents. To access this, and to pre-register for a Zoom link for the public meeting, please visit the website at:

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/smokey-mountain-smelters>.