

NEWSLETTER



The Fox Creek Valley is blanketed in snow.

SUPERFUND SITE UPDATES

Below are recent updates for the St. Regis Superfund site. Areas of the site are referred to by their actual names or location.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

EPA has made progress with forming a Community Advisory Group for the Superfund site. This group can help EPA and the local community to share information. A few weeks ago, EPA and its facilitator visited Cass Lake to chat with interested community members about the advisory group. There will be more opportunities to meet with EPA this spring, so please contact Phil Gurley if you are interested in being involved (contact information on back page).

RESIDENTIAL AREA SOIL CLEANUPS

This spring, crews will be sampling to determine how much contaminated soil needs to be excavated. EPA will contact individual property owners on the Superfund site when we need access. On April 14, EPA will host an availability session for all residents who may have questions about the sampling and cleanup. Keep an eye on EPA's webpage for more information on the availability session (link on back page).

GROUNDWATER

► Fox Creek Valley

EPA will soon complete our investigation of the Fox Creek Valley groundwater plume to better understand the contamination and create a cleanup plan. When the ground thaws, some final samples will be taken upland of Fox Creek (east of the DRM office) and in the wetlands. EPA, working with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's Division of Resource Management (DRM) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), is looking over the data collected so far. This data will help EPA figure out what other samples might need to be collected in the next part of the investigation.

► North Area & City Dump Groundwater

EPA is investigating these areas to check for any other historic contamination in the soil that may be adding to the groundwater plumes. These areas have been sampled before, so this investigation will only sample where more data is needed to accurately map the groundwater plumes.



Monitoring wells next to the Pike Bay channel are sampled twice per year to track contamination in the groundwater.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This April, EPA's risk assessors, the DRM, and the MPCA will visit the site with the responsible party to prepare to update the Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (see The Superfund Process below). Then, the responsible party will submit a workplan for what samples they need to further study how the site affects human health and the environment. EPA, the DRM, the MPCA, and MDH will review this workplan before the study can start.

QUESTIONS

How do you know if samples are accurate?

From sampling to reporting, safety measures ensure proper collection and testing. EPA workplans and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) show where, how, and why to sample. Labs provide precleaned containers, including amber glass for light-sensitive chemicals. Field teams wear clean gloves and use fresh or cleaned tools between samples. Chain-of-custody forms and tamper-evident seals track handling; broken seals can mean rejection of a sample. Labs use control samples (which have a known amount of a chemical) to check that equipment is working as it should. Also, some extra field samples (duplicates) are used to ensure that results match. Labs review data before releasing results. If there are issues with any data points, lab technicians either qualify those data points or reject them.

Who should we contact for health concerns or questions?

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is involved in the Superfund site to give guidance to EPA, the DRM, and the community on health and exposure. Daniel Peña is the MDH scientist who is available to answer any site-related health questions and listen to concerns. His contact information, and DRM and EPA contacts, is under Site Team Contacts below.

I have an environmental issue or violation to report, what can I do?

You can report environmental issues or violations 24/7 to Leech Lake Emergency Management at 218-335-8277, or to MPCA Emergency Response at 651-649-5451. Also, the National Response Center is the federal contact for reporting oil or chemical spills and can be reached at 1-800-424-8802. You can also report environmental issues or violations to the DRM at 218-335-7400. If there is an immediate threat to life or property, call 911 first!



A historic photo showing children playing in puddles on the contaminated Superfund site.

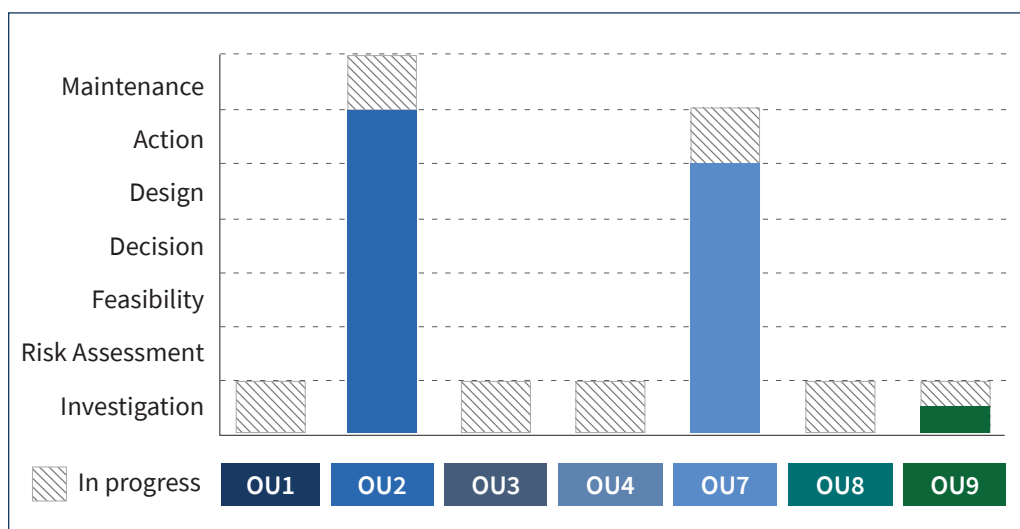
PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Updated photos and videos of the St. Regis site are available to view on EPA's webpage. Check out the Photos, Videos & Audio section.

THE SUPERFUND PROCESS

Human & Ecological Health

EPA makes its cleanup decisions based on risks to human and ecological health. The original Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) was completed for the St. Regis site in 2011 by International Paper, the responsible party. EPA approved this document and it's available online under Key Cleanup Documents. After reviewing the original HHERA report and discussing it with the DRM, EPA decided to update the original assessment to improve sampling methods and risk assessment practices and plan the rest of the cleanup. Toxicologists check sample results to make sure cleanup levels are safe for people and the environment.



*Cleanups for OU1 and OU3 (groundwater plumes) were completed by the MPCA in the 1980s. Currently, EPA is investigating these areas because more cleanup may be needed. The treatment system was one of the cleanups previously installed by the MPCA and is still operated by the PRPs with EPA oversight.

OPERABLE UNITS

In this newsletter, areas of the St. Regis Superfund site are referred to by their actual names (i.e. Fox River groundwater plume or residential soils). But, in EPA's decision documents and maps, we use the term "operable unit" or the acronym "OU" to describe specific areas. EPA will not be finished at the site until all OUs have gone through the Superfund cleanup process.

ST. REGIS
SUPERFUND SITE

Newsletter

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This newsletter is developed by EPA to share important updates with Band and community members. This newsletter will be mailed biannually, and digital editions, including Ojibwe translations, can be found online. If you would like more information about the topics discussed, or are interested in updated maps or documents related to the St. Regis Superfund site, please visit epa.gov/superfund/st-regis-paper or contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Phil Gurley.



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