



October 24, 2023

[www.epa.gov/superfund/silver-bow-butte](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/silver-bow-butte)

## Site Updates

### Op-Ed: EPA will use community feedback and design process to further inform decision-making related to onsite material in Butte

*Regional Administrator KC Becker*

Thank you to those in the Butte community who reviewed and provided feedback on the EPA's recent position paper related to the potential use of onsite material at the Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit (BPSOU). Designing cleanup plans for one of the largest Superfund sites in the country takes time, collaboration and care, which is why EPA staff are continually working with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Natural Resource Damage Program, Butte-Silver Bow, and Atlantic Richfield, the signatories of the Consent Decree, on the designs for the major project areas in the BPSOU. Speaking of collaboration, below are status updates for design plans for the six major BPSOU project areas, which highlights the work completed since the Consent Decree was signed:

**Grove Gulch:** 95% design phase

**Buffalo Gulch:** 60% design phase

**North Side Tailings:** 30% design phase

**Butte Reduction Works:** 30% design phase

**Diggings East:** 30% design phase

**Blacktail Creek:** Montana DEQ conducting pre-design investigation

As described in the position paper released a few months ago, the potential use of onsite material only applies to three non-residential project areas – Buffalo Gulch, North Side Tailings, and Diggings East. The proposed use includes a number of guardrails, for example: 1) any onsite material would have to be placed within a demonstrated groundwater capture system; and 2) an 18" topsoil cover would be installed to prevent exposure to metals to ensure the remedy is protective of public health.

We heard input from the community, shared in person and in writing, on the position paper and are carefully considering this feedback. Through this public engagement, it has become clear that we need to get a more detailed picture of what the use of onsite material would look like in these three project areas to determine how to proceed. Moving forward with modeling, confirmation of sampling results, and excavation will tell us how many cubic yards of soil are present, what these soils look like in terms of metals composition, and how much soil will be considered waste and taken offsite to a repository or considered suitable for potential reuse in-line with the Consent Decree requirements.

This is all important information which, along with community feedback, will inform future decisions about the potential use of onsite material in these three project areas. Discussions about modeling, sampling results, and design work will take place in upcoming technical meetings, which we are opening to public observation, as a pilot, through the end of this year.

We will continue to share updates and key information through newsletters, public meetings and other outreach as part of our commitment to engage with the Butte community throughout this effort.

It's a critical time in the Butte cleanup, and through this process I am confident we can address community concerns while designing remedies that maintain the integrity of past agreements. [...]

[Click here to read the rest of the oped](#)

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## Residential Metals Abatement Program -- Stodden Park Playground Summary

The present day Stodden Park served as the Butte municipal landfill until approximately 1915. Around 1915 the land was donated to the City of Butte for use as a public park. In 2018, Butte-Silver Bow (with the help of the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation funding) constructed the present-day playground located between the softball complex and the Ridge Waters Waterpark.



In 2022, the Residential Metals Abatement Program (RMAP) – which was established under an EPA Administrative Order with Atlantic Richfield – began soil sampling at Butte area parks. Atlantic Richfield sampled the Stodden Park site in September 2022, and found that some of the samples in the playground area exceeded the residential action level for lead of 1200 mg/kg. As a result, remediation at Stodden Park playground began on August 28, 2023, and we are glad to share that the cleanup was completed this month.

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## Community Engagement and Upcoming Meetings

### Recent & Upcoming Technical Meetings Open to the Public

On Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 the BPSOU Remedial Design/Remedial Action Progress Meeting (RDRA Progress Meeting) convened and was open for public observation via Microsoft Teams. This was part of our pilot to open certain technical meetings for public observation at least through the end of this year. Executive summaries of these meetings will be posted on our website.

The next RD/RA Progress Meeting will be held on November 7<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 11 am and the public can observe virtually using this link: [Click to Join Nov 7 RD/RA Progress Meeting](#). We are aware that there were some technical issues during the last meeting, and we are in contact with Atlantic Richfield to resolve these for the next one. Please look for an invite soon.

### Upcoming Meetings

**11/2: BPSOU Repository Siting Study Process:** Hosted by Atlantic Richfield. 5-8 PM, more information below.

**11/7: RD/RA Technical Meeting:** First Tuesday of each month at 9 AM. Open for public observation, link above.

**TBD: Sitewide Groundwater Technical Meeting.** Open for public observation.

**TBD: Material Management Technical Meeting.** Open for public observation.

**TBD: Butte Community Discussion**

*(EPA will update details for these meetings once the dates are set, include information on our website and in the newsletter, and send out invites via email.)*

### Updates to the BSB Superfund Website

EPA continues to [update our website](#), where you can find questions and answers, site documents, announcements, and links to upcoming and past public meetings.

**NEW:** The website now has a [list and links to past health studies](#) completed in Butte as part of the Superfund process, as well as [updated Q&As](#) from the recent public feedback process on the onsite materials position paper.

If you have questions or suggestions for our website, please contact Charles Van Otten [vanotten.charles@epa.gov](mailto:vanotten.charles@epa.gov).

### CTEC Tour of Lexington Wetlands Conservation Area

The Citizens Technical Environmental Committee (CTEC) hosted a public tour and preview of the Lexington Wetlands Conservation Area on Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. The park-like wetland is currently being constructed by Atlantic Richfield around the existing wetland pond located south of I-90 and west of Lexington Avenue. The wetlands provide habitat for a large variety of migratory birds, and also a great resource for Butte birdwatchers who track the changing seasons with binoculars and Audubon Guides to North American Birds.

These wetlands are the first installment of the Silver Bow Creek Conservation Area that Atlantic Richfield is constructing in the wedge-shaped corridor between Blacktail Creek and George Street. When completed, the overall project will include stormwater management features that mimic natural wetlands, trails, playgrounds and other amenities.



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## Repository Siting Update from Atlantic Richfield

Atlantic Richfield will be hosting an open house on Thursday, November 2 for the Butte community to learn about the BPSOU Repository Siting Study process and to provide feedback on potential repository locations and plans for waste transport. Attendees will also have the opportunity to meet members of the BPSOU project team and learn about design progress and the anticipated construction schedule.

- o **WHAT:** Butte Priority Soils Open House hosted by Atlantic Richfield
- o **WHEN:** 5-8 p.m. on Thursday, November 2
- o **WHERE:** Montana Tech University (Student Union Building, Copper Lounge)  
1300 West Park  
Butte, MT 59701

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### Other Community Resources:

- [Montana DEQ](#)
- [Butte Silver-Bow](#)
- [bpsou.com](#)
- [Butte Natural Resources Council](#)
- [pitwatch.org](#)
- [Clark Fork Watershed Education Program \(CFWEP\)](#)