

**Project Team and Regulatory Oversight**

The EPA oversees the project in consultation with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and must review and approve all portions of the RI/FS work.

CFAC understands EPA Remedial Project Manager Mike Cirian will retire from the project in early 2021, and Ken Champagne will assume the role of Remedial Project Manager. Mike has been instrumental in the CFAC project and its progress. The team wishes to recognize him for his leadership and dedication. Please join in thanking and wishing Mike the best. Joining the EPA team on the project is Beth Archer, who is the agency's Community Involvement Coordinator.

**Reports and Resources**  
**Roux Inc.**  
Email comments to: CFAC-Comments@rouxinc.com

**EPA Website and Contact**  
www.epa.gov/superfund/columbia-falls  
Email comments to Mike Cirian, cirian.mike@epa.gov or Ken Champagne, champagne.kenneth@epa.gov  
Beth Archer, archer.elizabeth@epa.gov

**MDEQ Website Contact**  
http://deq.mt.gov/DEQAdmin/cfac  
Email comments to Dick Sloan: rsloan@mt.gov  
Phone: 406-444-6454

**CFAC Community Liaison Panel Website**  
and Project Contact:  
http://www.cfacproject.com  
Mary Green: mgreen@magc.info  
Phone: 304-932-7673

**Columbia Falls Branch of Flathead County Library.**  
130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT.  
Phone: 406-892-5919  
Library visitors interested in reviewing the material should ask for assistance.

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For more information about the  
Community Liaison Panel, contact  
Mary Green at 304-932-7673.



**COLUMBIA  
FALLS  
ALUMINUM  
COMPANY  
PROJECT  
UPDATE**

**ISSUE #21** **DECEMBER 2020**

**Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Timeline**

Complete?	Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Recent and Upcoming Task Schedule	Schedule *Subject to EPA/DEQ Review
✓	Draft Phase I Site Characterization Data Summary Report	February 2017
✓	Draft Screening Level Ecological Risk Assessment Report	February 2017
✓	2017 Remedial Investigation Field Activities	Summer 2017
✓	Final Phase I Site Characterization Data Summary Report	September 2017
✓	Final Screening Level Ecological Risk Assessment Report	September 2017
✓	Groundwater and Surface Water Data Summary Report	November 2017
✓	Draft Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment Work Plan	November 2017
✓	Draft Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment Work Plan	November 2017
✓	Draft Phase II Sampling and Analysis Plan	February 2017
✓	Phase II Remedial Investigation Field Program	April 2018 – October 2018
✓	Draft Phase II Site Characterization Data Summary Report	March 2019
✓	Draft Baseline Risk Assessments	March 2019
✓	Final Phase II Site Characterization Data Summary Report	July 2019
✓	Final Baseline Risk Assessments	July 2019
✓	Draft Remedial Investigation Report	3rd Quarter 2019
✓	Draft Feasibility Study Work Plan	4th Quarter 2019
✓	Final Remedial Investigation Report	February 2020
✓	Final Feasibility Study Work Plan	April 2020
✓	Draft Feasibility Study Report	October 2020
	Final Feasibility Study Report	2021



Site and Project Overview

Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) purchased the Anaconda Aluminum Smelter in 1999 after 44 years of operation by Atlantic Richfield, its predecessors and other parties. The Anaconda Aluminum Smelter ceased operations in 2009.

In November 2015, CFAC and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) entered into an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent (AOC), which specified CFAC’s responsibilities associated with the completion of a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for the Anaconda Aluminum Co. Columbia Falls Aluminum Reduction Superfund Site (site). The EPA formally added the site to the National Priorities List on September 9, 2016.

Earlier this year, CFAC entered into an agreement to sell 800 acres of land to the Flathead Land Trust and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The property is located on the south side of the Flathead River and at the mouth of Bad Rock Canyon. For information about the project and its progress, visit [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org).

CFAC provided the Columbia Falls Historical Society certain materials from the site, including depictions of the process, historic equipment and reference books, some of which may be used in a CFAC display at the Northwest Montana History Museum.

CFAC has received inquiries regarding potential site reuse and remains open to discussing site development opportunities with interested parties.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Process and Its Purpose

The two-part RI/FS portion of the Superfund process is used to develop a comprehensive understanding of site conditions and options for addressing issues related to such site conditions. The RI serves as the mechanism to determine the nature and extent of potential contamination, and to assess potential risk to human health and the environment.

The FS, the second step in this segment of the Superfund process, uses the information gathered during the RI to screen and evaluate various remedial actions that might be needed for the site. Both steps are critical to determine what must be done to ensure the protection of human health and the environment.

The RI/FS process for the site began in 2015 and will extend into 2021.

Update for CFAC Site Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

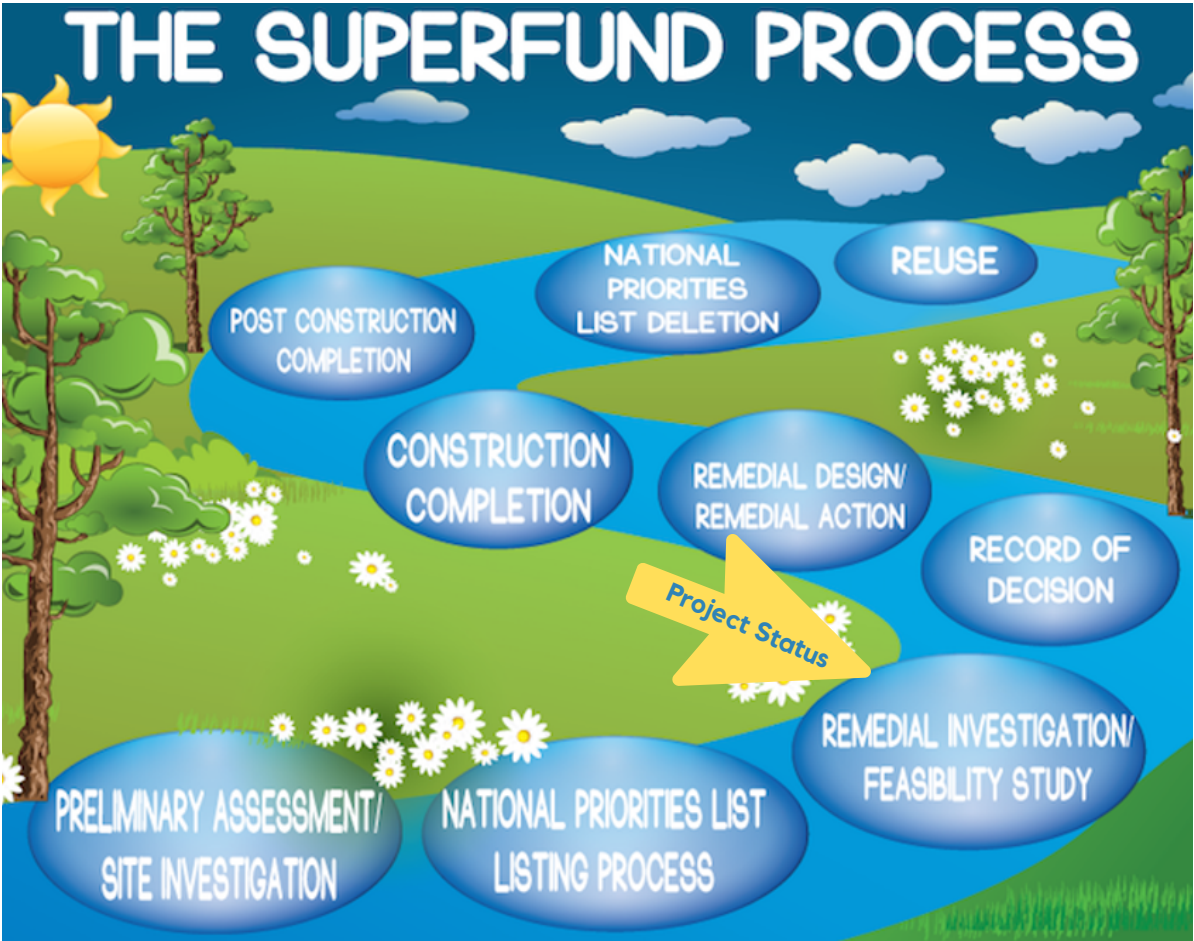
The project team met a major milestone in February this year when it submitted the final Remedial Investigation (RI) Report to regulators. The report was the culmination of three years of on-site testing to form a comprehensive assessment of site conditions and of the potential theoretical risk to human health and the environment.

The report showed on-site there are chemicals and metals above groundwater and soil benchmarks. However, there is no off-site risk to human health or ecosystems, including Aluminum City or the main stem of the Flathead River.

The project team will use the information in the RI Report to craft and evaluate options to address constituents above benchmarks and theoretical risks to human health and the environment in the Feasibility Study (FS). These options will be compared to each other, considering their likelihood of achieving standards, implementability, costs and other criteria. The EPA will use the evaluation for selecting the plan to remediate the site. This plan is known as the Record of Decision (ROD) and describes the ultimate site remedy.

Next Steps for the Feasibility Study (FS)

The project team submitted a draft Feasibility Study (FS) report to regulators for review in October of this year. The team expects to submit a finalized report to the agencies by March 12, 2021.



Early Efforts Undertaken to Address South Percolation Ponds and Allow the Flathead River to Follow Its Natural Course

While the study phase is ongoing, CFAC is not waiting to take action where appropriate. In July of this year, CFAC entered into an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent (ASAOC) with the EPA to take early action at the site to remove sediments from the South Percolation Ponds and to return the flow of the Flathead River to its northern channel.

Under the usual EPA Superfund process, such cleanup is not conducted until after completion of the RI/FS study phase; this work was not scheduled to begin for at least two years. Because the area had been fully characterized and the natural movement of the Flathead River threatened flooding of the area, CFAC sought to take action now to address the condition. This preemptive removal action will prevent the potential for future erosion of the ponds and will eliminate the risk for impacted sediment to reach the river.

Work began in October 2020 and will take place in two phases. The first phase is the removal of impacted sediments and infrastructure from the South Ponds. This phase is almost complete. The infrastructure and 90 percent of the sediments have been removed. Sediments are being stored safely at an approved location on the site. Once that phase is completed, CFAC will remove the existing sheetpile wall at the north end of the South Ponds as appropriate to allow the river to resume its natural course. The project is expected to be completed by October 2021. Project tasks must be planned and executed intermittently around winter months and water levels of the river.



About the CFAC Community Liaison Panel

The CFAC Community Liaison Panel’s (CLP) purpose is to provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of ideas and opinions about the project. Those involved represent the community, project consultants, state and federal agencies and CFAC.

For more information about the project or the community liaison panel, please contact Mary Green at 304-932-7673 or [mgreen@magc.info](mailto:mgreen@magc.info).