



# Annual Project Update

## Libby Asbestos Superfund Site

EPA Information Center • 108 E. 9th Street • Libby, MT 59923 • 406-293-6194  
MT DEQ Troy Information Center • 303 N. Third Street • Troy, MT 59935 • 406-295-9238  
Environmental Resource Specialist • 406-291-5335 (Libby) 406-291-0272 (Troy)

May 2012

### Introduction

The Libby Asbestos Superfund site is located in northwest Montana and includes the towns of Libby and Troy, as well as an inactive vermiculite mine seven miles northeast of Libby. In 2011, the EPA Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) completed its 12th year addressing Libby Amphibole asbestos (LA) contaminated properties in Libby and Troy. This fact sheet provides an update of activities that took place in 2011, what's planned for the rest of 2012, and other EPA site-specific information that may be of interest to the community.

### LA Toxicity Values

The Libby community requested that the risk assessment and cleanup decisions for the Libby site be based on LA-specific toxicity data. Currently, there are no LA-specific toxicity values. In May 2011, the EPA released the draft LA-specific toxicity values to the public, which resulted from the EPA scientific review. In August 2011, the EPA announced a 60-day public comment period providing the public an opportunity to comment on the draft LA-specific toxicity values.

Following the public comment period, a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) was formed to review the EPA's draft LA-specific Toxicity Assessment, as well as any comments received during the public comment period. The SAB is currently reviewing the EPA's draft toxicity values and the public comments received. Upon receiving the SAB's report, the EPA will update and revise the Toxicity Assessment based on recommendations received from the SAB. Any remaining review steps will depend on the outcome of the SAB review. The EPA anticipates finalizing the draft toxicity values in the spring of 2013.



### Human Health Risk Assessment

The final LA-specific toxicity values, combined with site-specific exposure information (including activity-based sampling data), will be used to estimate health risks associated with LA exposures. The EPA will develop a risk assessment that estimates the cumulative exposures, resultant cancer risks and noncancer hazards.

This risk assessment will evaluate exposures to adults, teenagers, and children conducting a variety of activities throughout the Libby valley such as housework, playing in the yard or at school, walking, bicycling, or working both in an office or outdoors.

Based on the results of the risk assessment and other site-related information, the EPA will be able to identify alternatives for reducing exposures at the Libby site. Once the toxicity values become final, the EPA anticipates developing a cumulative risk late 2013.

## Removal Action Update

The EPA and MDEQ completed work at 141 residential and commercial properties in 2011, bringing the total number of removal actions to 1,602 properties. The EPA and MDEQ will continue to conduct residential and commercial property removal actions in 2012. The 2012 construction season began mid-April and includes removal actions for approximately 110 properties in Libby and Troy this year.

In May 2010, the EPA issued a Record of Decision for Operable Unit (OU)1 (the former Export Plant and now the location of Riverfront Park) and OU2 (the former Screening Plant). The construction at OU1, also known as Riverfront Park, began in 2011 and is anticipated to be completed in 2012. Once construction is complete, the EPA will place a notice in the local papers announcing its completion. The construction for OU2 was completed in 2010. In addition, the EPA is currently working with the BNSF Railroad to negotiate a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the railroad corridor that will evaluate alternatives to reduce exposures, where necessary.



## Investigation Update

The Remedial Investigation (RI) for both OU3 and OU4 continue at the Libby Site. In 2012, the EPA will conduct further studies and collect activity-based sampling (ABS) data from these areas of the site, including the former vermiculite mine. The purpose of ABS is to provide the EPA with quantifiable data to

evaluate human health exposures. The EPA will use these data to develop a cumulative risk assessment and to support the selection of a long-term remedy for the site. The main areas of focus for the investigation include the following activities:

### **Surface Water in Rainy Creek and the Kootenai River**

The EPA and W.R. Grace are considering a range of interim actions to reduce asbestos concentrations in the Rainy Creek watershed. The EPA will continue to evaluate the nature and extent of contamination in the Kootenai River watershed and will conduct ABS to evaluate the potential for exposures along the river.

### **Bark and Debris (“Duff”) Sampling**

The EPA will focus on sampling the forested areas within a three-mile buffer zone around portions of the existing site boundary, as well as from parcels of land scheduled for thinning or development.

### **Commercial Logging**

The EPA will conduct ABS to more fully understand potential exposures associated with logging activities within the Libby Site.

### **Wood Stoves**

The EPA will conduct ABS to determine what, if any, exposures result from burning wood that is collected within the Libby Valley for heating stoves, as well as cleaning out stoves and fireplaces.

### **Wildfire Firefighters**

If a wildfire occurs on or near the mine, ABS will be conducted to determine the exposures to firefighters breathing smoke potentially contaminated with LA. This study also will examine how much, if any, of the potentially contaminated smoke may transport back to the towns of Libby and Troy.

### **Post-Remedial Action**

The EPA will conduct ABS during 2012 and 2013 to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedies that have been completed at OU1 and OU2.

*The EPA will provide the community with updates on activities as more information becomes available.*

## Institutional Controls (Long-Term Plan)

The EPA recently awarded a cooperative agreement to the City and County Board of Health to assist Lincoln County with establishing an Institutional Controls (ICs) program to reduce LA exposures over the long-term and to protect the final remedy. ICs are administrative and legal tools that do not involve construction or other engineered controls. ICs help reduce the possibility that people will encounter contamination and will protect the final remedy at a site. An example of ICs could be establishing programs similar to the existing U-Dig program, which recommends that people follow a certain process should they decide to dig in an area that may contain contamination. Another example might be establishing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for performing certain activities that could disturb soils possibly contaminated with LA.

For more information about ICs, the cooperative agreement and how you can provide input during the development of the ICs, please view the document at [www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/ic/guide/citguide.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/ic/guide/citguide.pdf) or contact Rebecca Thomas at 800-227-8917, ext. 6552 (toll free).

### Did You Know?



The EPA is conducting a study of LA background levels in the Libby valley. Some of the EPA's sampling activities and results from studies conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey have shown that LA in the area comes from both vermiculite mining and processing activities, as well as from natural geologic processes.

Quantifying background levels in the Libby area will help inform risk management decisions for the site. Last year the EPA began sampling soil in a variety of locations not affected by vermiculite mining and processing or other human activities. These soil samples contained small, but detectable levels of LA asbestos. It has also been noted in past sampling efforts that asbestos fibers are found in ambient air samples in other towns outside of Libby.

The EPA plans to conduct additional investigations during the summer of 2012. These studies will contribute to the understanding of asbestos in Libby and Troy and answer questions regarding comparable exposures in areas outside the Libby Valley.

## Need more Information?



### Libby Asbestos Superfund Website

The EPA continues to update and add more information to the Libby Asbestos Superfund website. Recently, the EPA has added a calendar showing upcoming public meetings and site activities, as well as a new feedback form. Visit the Libby Asbestos Superfund website at [www.epa.gov/libby](http://www.epa.gov/libby).

### Best Management Practices

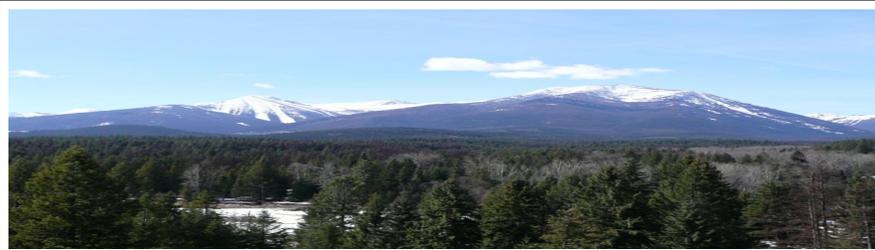
It is possible that you might unexpectedly find vermiculite while digging in your yard, when performing work on your home or as part of your job activities. If you do, the EPA strongly cautions you not to disturb it further and to contact the Environmental Resource Specialist (ERS).

Call the ERS **at no cost to you** if you suspect you see ANY vermiculite at home or at work, even if you are unsure if what you see is vermiculite. If the ERS determines that there is vermiculite on your property that needs to be addressed, it will be removed **at no cost to you**.

**ERS for the Libby area — 406-291-5335**

**ERS for the Troy area — 406-291-0272**

The EPA has recently updated the Best Management Practices (BMPs) fact sheets. BMPs are effective, practical, physical or nonphysical methods that prevent or reduce potential exposures from soils and structures, or which otherwise protect you while allowing the practical use of your properties. The information contained in BMP fact sheets provides precautionary steps you should take to reduce potential exposures to LA. These fact sheets are available at the Libby and Troy Information Centers and on the Libby Asbestos Superfund website at [www.epa.gov/libby](http://www.epa.gov/libby).



## ***Libby Asbestos Superfund Site Project Summary: 2002 to 2011***

### **2002**

- 26 residential removal actions completed
- Most removal actions of WR Grace facilities, schools, and public areas completed
- The EPA announces the decision to conduct removal actions at residential properties including vermiculite insulation
- Libby added to the National Priorities (Superfund) List
- 3000+ properties inspected and sampled during the contaminant survey screening

### **2003**

- 157 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- 1500+ properties inspected or sampled during the contaminant survey screening
- The EPA publishes interim removal action benchmarks and protocols
- City boat ramp removal action completed

### **2004**

- 170 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- The EPA announces it will include Troy in the removal actions
- Removal action of BNSF rail yard completed
- Removal action of Flyway property completed
- New removal action contract awarded

### **2005**

- 225 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Conducted sampling to verify protectiveness of removal actions
- Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study underway
- Begin initial coordination for 2006 Troy investigations

### **2006**

- 216 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study underway
- Outdoor Ambient Air sampling program initiated

### **2007**

- 160 residential and commercial removals actions completed
- Outdoor Ambient Air sampling program in progress
- Activity-Based Sampling program initiated
- Toxicity studies identified for risk assessment
- Environmental Resource Specialist (ERS) program initiated
- Sampling in Troy initiated

### **2008**

- 149 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Activity-Based Sampling conducted at OU4
- Toxicity studies continue for risk assessment
- Sampling in Troy continues
- Investigations at all OUs continues
- Conducted removal actions on creeks with contaminated rip-rap
- \$250 million settlement from W.R. Grace

### **2009**

- 159 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Golf course removal action completed
- Removal actions and restorations or remaining creek beds completed

### **2010**

- 201 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Remedies selected for OU1 & OU2
- Removals in Troy begin
- Investigations at the Mine continue
- Removal action for the Historic Hotel Libby completed

### **2011**

- 141 residential and commercial removal actions completed
- Draft LA-specific toxicity values completed by the EPA and submitted to Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for review
- The EPA moves toward a neighborhood approach for addressing removal actions



## How to Get Involved– CAG & TAG

The Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) and the Libby Technical Assistance Group (TAG) continue to work with the EPA on community concerns and interest in the Libby Superfund site. The CAG and TAG are always seeking new members. The CAG has recently changed its meeting time so that it immediately follows the TAG meeting, and has revised their format to focus on specific topics of interest to the community related to the Superfund site. To learn more about how to get involved, please attend one or both of the following:

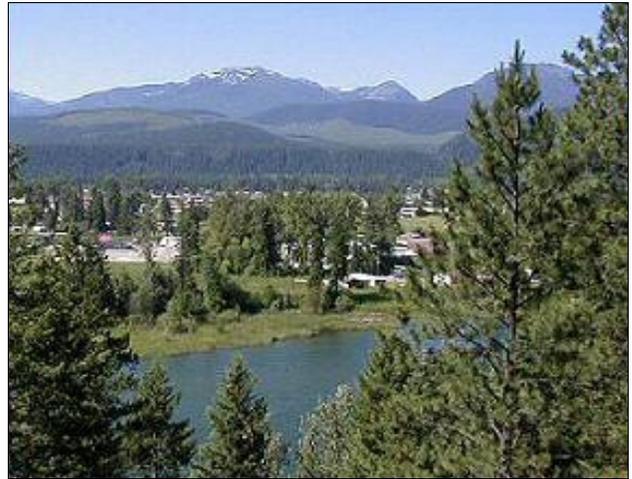
The monthly TAG meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and are followed by the CAG meeting, which are held every other month, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Both meetings are held at the Lincoln County Flathead Valley Community College, 225 Commerce Way, Libby, MT 59923.

You can read minutes from the CAG meetings on Libby's Superfund website at [www.epa.gov/libby](http://www.epa.gov/libby) or on the TAG website at [www.latag.org](http://www.latag.org).

*Contact the following:*

CAG - Mike Giesey, [mgiesey\\_card@hotmail.com](mailto:mgiesey_card@hotmail.com)

TAG - Mike Noble, [mcnoble1151@gmail.com](mailto:mcnoble1151@gmail.com)



-----**TEAR OFF**-----

## LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK!

We value your opinion about the EPA's activities in Libby and Troy. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions and drop them by the EPA Information Center in Libby, the MDEQ Information Center in Troy or mail them to the U.S. EPA Region 8, ATTN: OC-PAI, 1595 Wynkoop Street, Denver, CO 80202-1129.

1. Are we providing you with the information you need and is it understandable?
2. What other types of information would you like from us?
3. We place public announcements in the local Libby newspapers to inform the Libby and Troy community about public meetings, upcoming removal activities, etc. Is this way of disseminating information useful?
4. Are there other ways we should try to disseminate information to the community?
5. Any additional comments/feedback?

**Optional: Name and phone no./email**

_____
_____

**Victor Kettelapper**  
 Libby Team Leader  
 800-227-8917, ext. 6578

**Mike Cirian**  
 On-Site Project Manager  
 406-293-6194

**Libby Faulk**  
 Community Involvement Coordinator  
 800-227-8917, ext. 6083

Please visit or call the EPA Information Center at 108 E. 9th Street in Libby (406-293-6194) or call the following EPA staff:

**Questions?**

Before working on your property call  
 ERS for the Libby area: 406-291-5335  
 or for the Troy area: 406-291-0272



USEPA Region 8 OC-PAI (KE)  
 1595 Wynkoop Street  
 Denver, Colorado 80202-1129

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