

NPL Site Narrative for Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area

SILVER BOW CREEK/BUTTE AREA Silver Bow/Deer Lodge Counties, Montana

Federal Register Notice: [September 8, 1983](#)

Conditions at proposal (December 30, 1982): The Silver Bow Creek Site covers about 24 stream miles in Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties, Montana. The creek, between where it meets Copper Creek in Butte and Warm Springs Ponds northeast of Anaconda, has been contaminated with a variety of wastes received from industrial, agricultural, and municipal activities for over 100 years. Contaminants such as heavy metals and phosphates have been detected in the creek, which is used for drinking, irrigation, and recreation.

Status (September 8, 1983): The State is attempting to remove some of abandoned mine tailings from the banks of Silver Bow Creek to reduce its contamination.

Status (June 10, 1986): EPA has conducted a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site. Preliminary evaluation of data indicates that sources upstream of the existing site are contributing to contamination in the creek. EPA considered two options for dealing with the upstream problems -- proposing a separate Butte Area Site or expanding the existing Silver Bow Creek Site. Believing it is more appropriate to expand the Silver Bow Creek Site to include the Butte Area, EPA is now

proposing to do so and is requesting public comment on the proposal.

A thorough analysis of the relationship between the Silver Bow Creek Site and the Butte Area led EPA to conclude that the geographical relationship of the headwaters of Silver Bow Creek (which originate a short distance upstream of the Silver Bow Creek drainage area) and the portion of Silver Bow Creek downstream of the City of Butte favors treating these areas as one site for the NPL. In addition, EPA decided to analyze the nature and extent of contamination under one comprehensive RI/FS because it appears that contamination from both areas threatens the same surface water body and the same target population. The geographic relationship of the two areas suggests that the Butte Area is a major source of contamination to Silver Bow Creek, which is the major receiving water body for mining discharges and drainage from the Butte Area. EPA treats sources of and extent of contamination at other sites in this way and concluded that it was logical to evaluate the Butte Area and the Silver Bow Creek site together. Adding the Butte Area does not greatly expand the site geographically.

Status (July 22, 1987): Following analysis of the comments received, EPA added the Butte Area to the Silver Bow Creek Site and renamed the site "Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area."

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See [56 FR 5600](#), February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]