



---

## Community Liaison Panel

**Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Community Liaison Panel Minutes**  
**November 3, 2016**  
**Columbia Falls High School**  
**Cafeteria**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**CLP Members Attending:** Turner Askew, Mayor Don Barnhart, Don Bennett, Nino Berube, Senator Dee Brown, Chad Campbell, John Fuller, Jerry Meerkatz, Lyle Mitchell, Susan Nicosia, Shannon Stringer, Clarence Taber, and Bev York.

**CFAC Representatives:** Cheryl Driscoll, John Stroiazzo, and Steve Wright.

**Agency Representatives:** Mike Cirian, USEPA; Lisa Dewitt, Cory Mikita, MDEQ.

**Guests:** Mike Ritorto, Roux Associates; David Lauber, Carrie Eklund, Dillan Tabigh, Greg Lindstram, Nicky Ouellet, Melvin Flansaas, Chris Moritz, Paul Travis, Chris Peterson.

**Facilitator:** Mary Green, Ann Green Communications, Inc.

**Minutes:** Mary Green, Ann Green Communications, Inc.

---

The regular meeting of the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Community Liaison Panel (CLP) was called to order by facilitator Mary Green at Columbia Fall High School cafeteria, beginning at 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, 2016.

Mary welcomed those present and asked all present to introduce him- or herself and their affiliation with the community or the project. She reviewed the agenda and meeting materials.

### Listing Update

Mike Cirian said since the last meeting in January, the site was added to the National Priorities List as a Superfund site. He said the conditions of the site will be examined as part of the process underway, and the listing does not change anything for that work, which is being

conducted and is scheduled to go until 2021. This is the date when the Feasibility Study Report is submitted to the agency. [A schedule is attached to these minutes.]

The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) will determine the conditions at the site. It is a long process, he said. He urged the community to provide input to the project team if there are questions or concerns. Mike said Robert Moler, the agency's community involvement coordinator, is working to put together a Community Involvement Plan. Mike said he has reviewed the plan, provided comments and will share it with the public in the future.

Upon reviewing the Superfund process map, Mike said the RI/FS work will take about four additional years. He said the demolition shows progress; however, soil and groundwater work can be challenging for the public to understand progress is happening because it is not visible.

Mike provided feedback about several aspects of the project:

1. Aluminum City – wells are being testing, and there are no results that cause “raised eyebrows.”
2. City of Columbia Falls – the area has great water that is tested by the city and does not have issues.

There are three more rounds of groundwater sampling to happen. When the report for Phase 1 is submitted in February 2017, Mike said the needs of Phase II will be determined.

Lisa Dewitt said MDEQ works closely with USEPA to provide support for the Superfund process. She said Colleen Owen is the local representation. Cory Mikita is in the hazardous waste management program at the agency.

### Communications Update

Mary Green reviewed communications' activities by CFAC since the January meeting. She said an updated brochure was mailed in May and October to more than 600 residents. The media also was notified of the meeting and information was placed in the local newspapers. She said she has received no calls. She asked if the panel has heard of issues in the community; no one noted comments from the public. Mary encouraged the panel to let the project team know of issues if they arise.

### Project Update:

Mike Ritorto provided an update of project activities:

- Field work began with site reconnaissance, which took two weeks to execute. This included meetings with the local community and walking the site with Nino

Berube.

- Pre-intrusive surveys were conducted. This included geo surveys to understand what was below grade before drills were placed in the ground; and included utility mark outs and soil gas surveys.
- The sampling plan addendum was submitted to the agency in August.
- Phase I Characterization drilling was completed at 132 areas on the site. More than 400 soil samples were collected. To better explain the process, Mike showed photos of the sampling process.
- Sediment and surface water sampling was collected in 24 locations across the site, including 10 in June with dry conditions and 14 in late August.
- Regarding groundwater, 60 samples were collected. This includes sampling from 44 new wells and 20 existing wells.
- Test pitting was conducted in the asbestos landfills. Some metal objects/debris were found but no cathodes were located.

Mike noted the next steps for the field work:

- Data validation will be conducted by a third party to ensure the lab work was done properly. This is expected to begin in November. Mike Cirian added that this is critical to ensure samples are credible.
- By the end of November, data tables and maps will be completed.
- The second round of water sampling is expected to be conducted in December 2016.
- From then until February 2017, Roux will be reviewing the data to prepare the draft summary report for Phase 1.

In response to questions, discussions by group:

- Sampling of dry wells was done at 12 feet in some places, Mike Cirian explained to Shannon Stringer. This was done to collect data that will aid in the understanding if there is risk to human health.
- Work inside the plant is not part of Phase 1. Once the buildings are removed, that will be discussed.
- Cory added there will be conformation sampling done in the future on concrete and sampling beneath the foundations.
- Nino said the river is flowing around the South Ponds (which were constructed by damming a river channel) and needs to be returned to its original flow channel as was seen in the 1950s. Nino questioned how the sheet pile project (a CFAC project completed this summer to reinforce the dam on the South Ponds) was completed, due to the many regulatory restrictions on construction activity near rivers. Steve Wright said if Nino wanted, he would be happy to explain after the meeting, how and why this project was approved by the Corps of Engineers and Flathead county officials. [Since the meeting, Nino visited the site with Steve. He was able to tour the South Pond area, see the sheet pile project, and hear how the project was permitted with the Corp of Engineers and Flathead County departments. Morrison Maierle, a consulting professional engineering firm with offices in Kalispell, managed the project.]

### Demolition Update

John Stroiazzo provided the update. He said Calbag continues to work on removal of materials from the site. Much work has been completed and the focus at this time is the aluminum pot. The pot consists of the anode and cathode. Anode removal was completed in October. This is a milestone for the project. John explained there are 358 cathodes remaining at the plant. (Following the meeting, it was noted that it should have been 451; John did say 358 and corrected the number afterwards.)

Cathode removal is next and involves careful planning because hazardous waste is involved. Cathodes will be removed by following the MDEQ approved plan. Preparing for this will take four to five weeks. Once started, this portion of the work will take about one year. Trucks transporting the cathode material (spent potliner) offsite to an out-of-state hazardous waste landfill must be covered. After completion of cathode removal, the community will start to see physical changes at the site, as potline buildings are demolished. Additionally, the lab building has been removed and the change house is being demolished.

John spoke about Calbag's work to evaluate asbestos. To execute the work, there are very detailed plans that outline how asbestos must be managed. When concrete is crushed, it must be tested and must meet certain requirements. There are detailed plans that must be followed.

### Aluminum City Well Testing

Steve Wright said six quarterly sampling rounds have been conducted. The last one was done in September. Another round will be conducted in December. There have been no issues. This information is shared with the residents and the agency.

### General Project Questions

Future Site Use - When asked about the future use of the site, Mike Cirian said CFAC will tell the agency about the type of future use for the site. When asked about the company's vision, John said it is important to understand site conditions first—extent and nature. He added that former owners of the site will be asked to become involved in the project work, including Atlantic Richfield (ARCO).

There being no further business, Mary asked members to complete their meeting evaluation forms. She said the next meeting is expected to be in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:            To Be Determined**