



**Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Community Liaison Panel  
Minutes  
June 20, 2023  
North 40 Resort  
6 p.m.**

**CLP Members Attending:** Mayor Don Barnhart, Nino Berube, Christy Cummings Dawson, Montana Senator Carl Glimm, Steve Howke (U.S. Senator Ryan Zinke) Laura Katzman, Susan Nicosia, Mick Ruis, Jake Santee, (U.S. Senator Steve Daines), Paul Schauble, Shannon Stringer, Kathy Wright, Steve Wright, Smith Works (U.S. Senator Jon Tester), Bev York.

**CFAC Representatives:** Cheryl Driscoll, and John Stroiazzo, CFAC;  
Drew Baris and Laura Rosner (remote), Roux Associates.

**Agency Representatives:** Dick Sloan, MDEQ (remote).

**Media:** Chris Peterson, *Hungry Horse*.

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

**Minutes:** Mary A. Green.

The regular meeting of the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Community Liaison Panel (CLP) was Tuesday, June 20, 2023. Mary Green facilitated and began the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

All present introduced him- or herself. Dick Sloan and Laura Rosner were welcomed as remote participants.

Mary highlighted the goals of the meeting:

- to provide a forum where the community can gain an understanding of the USEPA's proposed plan for site remediation, and
- to provide an opportunity for the community to ask questions about that.

Mary said the evening is not intended to provide a process to rehash former discussions or to discuss historical matters that relate to site operations. Those subjects have been discussed during previous meetings and do not fit into this process as it moves forward. However, Mary said if subject matters discussed in previous meetings are important to an individual, he or she should make certain to attend the USEPA's formal meeting on June 28, 2023. That event is part of the process by which the agency gathers formal comments related to the proposed plan. The plan is out for public comment. The comment process is noted in one of the evening's handouts.

Mary reviewed the multiple handouts:

- Meeting evaluation
- Agenda
- EPA Overview of the Proposed Plan (includes public comment period information)
- EPA Proposed Plan
- CFAC Project Newsletter

Mary said an additional handout will follow the presentation. It is the slide deck to be shared during Laura's presentation. [A copy of all materials is attached to this set of minutes.]

The agenda was reviewed. Mary reviewed the Team Agreement, which was noted at the bottom of the agenda, as well as posted at the front of the room. She asked all members to be respectful of the agreement, which the group created in 2015 during its first meeting.

Before the start of the discussion, Mary reminded the group that members, those who are seated at the table, are provided the first opportunity to share thoughts and ask questions. Guests then are invited after members speak. This is to recognize the efforts and commitment members make to participating.

### **CFAC Project Update**

John Stroiazzo introduced the discussion by speaking briefly about the work that has occurred during the last 10 years to move the process to a stage where the proposed plan could be developed. The process included 24 remedial options that were evaluated for consideration that would address six areas within the site boundary that were shown to require remedial work.

During this time, John said there have been changes in the USEPA's team, which began with Mike Cirian, who retired in 2021. Ken Champagne then became remedial project manager until he moved into a different position. Amanda Bartley has served since that time and will be changing positions in the coming weeks. Matthew Dorrington is assuming the role as remedial project manager. Supporting them in the communications portion has been Robert Mohler, Beth Archer and now, Missy Haniewicz. SKEO is an agency contractor in placed to answer technical questions from the community. Dick Sloan is the project manager for the Montana Department of

## Environmental Quality.

John said as part of the work, Aluminum City sampling continues for eight homes. The sampling is conducted twice each year. The most recent was two weeks ago; those results are expected in the near future. To date, all results have shown no detection or issues of concern.

John invited members to contact him or Mary if anyone would like to tour the site. John can be contacted at [john.stroiazzo@glencore-us.com](mailto:john.stroiazzo@glencore-us.com). Mary can be contacted at [mgreen@magc.info](mailto:mgreen@magc.info) or 304-932-7673.

He spoke about the initial work in which there was much activity at the site with the removal of the buildings and the investigative portion of the work. This included sampling soil, groundwater, surface water, sediment, and porewater. The process then rolled into what is known as the Feasibility Study, which examines remedial options and evaluates them to identify the highest-ranking remedial alternative. John noted that USEPA's Preferred Alternatives correspond to the highest-ranking remedial alternatives in the Feasibility Study, with some modifications.

These reports were used by the agency to create the presented proposed plan--the focus of Laura's presentation, which followed:

- A recap of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS)
- USEPA's Proposed Plan
- Document Overview
- Overview of USEPA's Preferred Site-Wide Alternative
- Deep Dive into USEPA's Preferred Alternative for Landfills/Groundwater
- Next Steps and Public Comment

Laura introduced herself and explained that she has worked on the project since 2015 with Roux, which has conducted environmental assessment work for Superfund sites since its founding in 1981.

The elements of the presentation included reviews and discussion about various pieces of the project. Laura began by showing a site map that outlined the site boundary, the location of Aluminum City, the Flathead River, and Columbia Falls. Her presentation explored:

- Remedial Investigation Portion of the RI/FS
- Feasibility Study Portion of the RI/FS
- Overview of the USEPA Proposed Plan
- USEPA Preferred Alternative
  - Legacy Landfills Impacting Groundwater
  - South Ponds and River Area
  - Legacy Landfills Not Impacting Groundwater
  - Soils
  - North Ponds
- Deep Dive Discussion about Landfills and Groundwater
  - Landfill Caps

- Slurry Walls
- Groundwater Extraction and Treatment, if needed
- Protection of Columbia Falls and Aluminum City Water Supply
- Protection of Human Health and the Environment
- The EPA Rejection of Landfill Excavation as Risky and Unnecessary
- EPA Status and Next Steps
- Public Comment Process Underway

Laura said data from multiple rounds under varying conditions were collected, specifically:

- More than 1,000 soil samples
- 400 groundwater samples from 77 wells
- 200 surface water samples
- 70 sediment samples
- 40 porewater samples
- 100 offsite samples
- 165 Aluminum City well samples

Laura said the plan is not final until the agency completes the public comment period. Dick said the two agencies will review all comments received and the Record of Decision (ROD) will include a written response to those.

During the discussion portion, comments included:

Question: Will the extraction wells be put into place during the construction phase of the slurry wall?

Answer: The design of the slurry wall and the associated extraction wells will be done after the ROD is put into place. The specifics are determined by gathering details about the soil and other characteristics of the area where the wall will be placed. Drew Baris (Roux) said that putting wells in place during construction is likely.

Question: Is the five-year review the only method used to determine if the remedial process is working?

Answer: Drew explained that the five-year review is one element to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedy. He said there also will be a monitoring plan. He explained the objective of that plan and said because of that ongoing monitoring, information about how the remedy is working will be known sooner than every five years.

Question: Why would you put wells within the slurry walls and pump and treat groundwater that could create other types of waste and environmental issues?

Answer: The pumping process would not be used unless it is needed, as noted in EPA's Plan. If pumping does occur, it would be needed on an infrequent

basis because of the slurry wall being in place. The treatment process would be designed to ensure proper management of any wastes generated during treatment.

Question: There has been a slurry wall collapsed in California.

Answer: There is a formal process that will determine how the wall is designed. It takes into account all matters related to site-specific conditions and what is required of the slurry wall. This will include the proper design, installation and monitoring to ensure it is protective of human health and the environment. The USEPA has evaluated the performance of slurry walls at numerous sites and determined them to be effective when properly designed and constructed. It was noted that slurry walls are also designed to withstand earthquakes, and example that was shared is the slurry wall constructed below the twin towers that remained intact following the September 11 attacks.

Statement: It would be good to respond during the design phase to say here is what is being done to address concerns.

Question: Isn't putting the soil in a landfill just creating a problem?

Answer: A newly engineered repository or a repository with a new cap will contain the impacted soils.

Question: When do we start talking about reuse?

Answer: Reuse would come after the ROD, since that outlines what will be done to remediate the site. The ROD is a key milestone and will not have a firm decision or understanding until that comes out. We need to wait and see what that entails. We will know more after the work plan is created.

Cheryl spoke about the future of the panel and how the group should look to the future and how it can help with addressing community concerns and questions about the project.

Dick said there will be a remedial design workplan created, which then get implemented along with three steps of review. Those reviews are conducted at completion of the 30%, 60% and 90% design phases. He said the first two phases are where input can be most meaningful.

Dick said goals for the project are getting the project completed in a timely and right manner. Once the work plan is in place for the cleanup, the site becomes a construction site. For community interest in understanding design reviews that will follow that 30/60/90 percent process, he said SKEO could potentially be a helpful resource to the community as it works to understand the contents.

The goal is to have the ROD out by the end of the year. It then will go into a formal process that includes the agencies, CFAC and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Upon further discussion, the panel agreed it would like to meet and discuss how the group will move forward as the project progresses. Members agreed that should occur after the ROD is in place, which Dick indicated is expected to be in early 2024.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mary reminded the members to stay in contact and if issues or concerns are heard, they are asked to let the CFAC team know. Those interested in taking a site tour should contact John and Mary.

Members were asked to complete their meeting evaluations and leave them face down on the table. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:                    To Be Determined**