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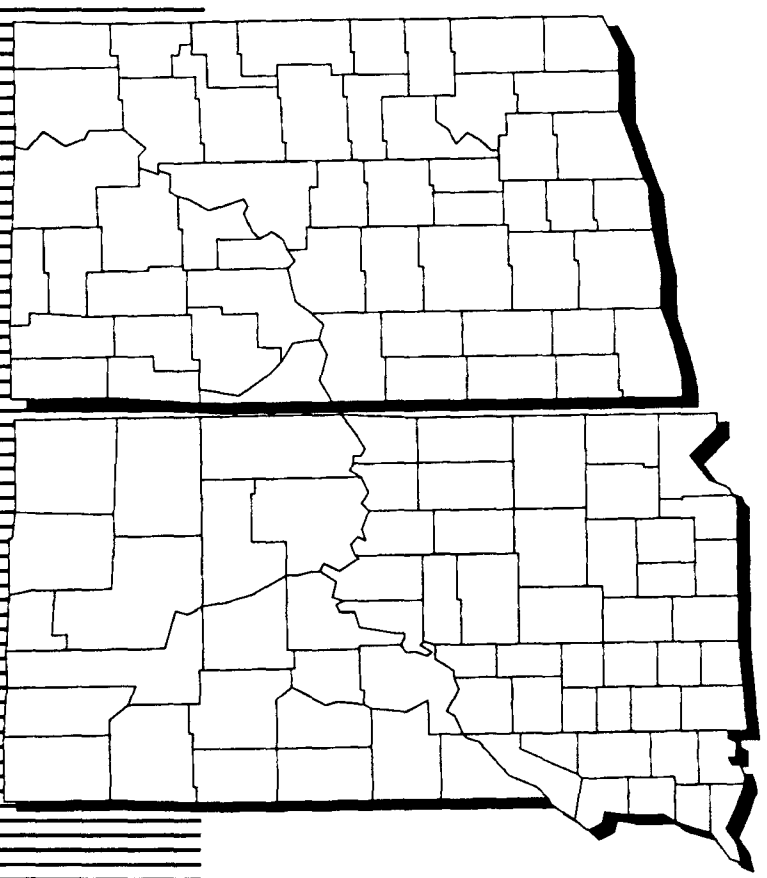
# National Priorities List Sites:

# NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA



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# NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST SITES:
## North and South Dakota

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Office of Emergency & Remedial Response
Office of Program Management
Washington, DC 20460

If you wish to purchase copies of any additional State volumes contact:

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
U.S. Department of Commerce
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
(703) 487-4650

The National Overview volume, **Superfund: Focusing on the Nation at Large (1991),** may be ordered as PB92-963253.

The complete set of the overview documents, plus the 49 state reports may be ordered as PB92-963253.

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# A Brief Overview

## WHY THE SUPERFUND PROGRAM?

As the 1970s came to a close, a series of headline stories gave Americans a look at the dangers of dumping industrial and urban wastes on the land. First there was New York's Love Canal. Hazardous waste buried there over a 25-year period contaminated streams and soil, and endangered the health of nearby residents. The result: evacuation of several hundred people. Then the leaking barrels at the Valley of the Drums in Kentucky attracted public attention, as did the dioxin-tainted land and water in Times Beach, Missouri.

In all these cases, human health and the environment were threatened, lives were disrupted, and property values were reduced. It became increasingly clear that there were large numbers of serious hazardous waste problems that were falling through the cracks of existing environmental laws. The magnitude of these emerging problems moved Congress to enact the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act in 1980. CERCLA — commonly known as Superfund — was the first Federal law established to deal with the dangers posed by the Nation's hazardous waste sites.

### After Discovery, the Problem Intensified

Few realized the size of the problem until the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began the process of site discovery and site evaluation. Not hundreds, but thousands of potential hazardous waste sites existed, and they presented the Nation with some of the most complex pollution problems it had ever faced.

Since the Superfund program began, hazardous waste has surfaced as a major environmental concern in every part of the United States. It wasn't just the land that was contaminated by past disposal practices. Chemicals in the soil were spreading into the groundwater (a source of drinking water for many) and into streams, lakes, bays, and wetlands. Toxic vapors contaminated the air at some sites, while improperly disposed or stored wastes threatened the health of the surrounding community and the environment at others.

### The EPA Identified More than 1,200 Serious Sites

The EPA has identified 1,245 hazardous waste sites as the most serious in the Nation. These sites comprise the National Priorities List; sites targeted for cleanup under Super-fund. But site discoveries continue, and the EPA estimates that, while some will be deleted after lengthy cleanups, this list, commonly called the NPL, will continue to grow by approximately 50 to 100 sites per year, potentially reaching 2,100 sites by the year 2000.

## THE NATIONAL CLEANUP EFFORT IS MUCH MORE THAN THE NPL

From the beginning of the program, Congress recognized that the Federal government could

not and should not address all environmental problems stemming from past disposal practices. Therefore, the EPA was directed to set priorities and establish a list of sites to target. Sites on the NPL (1,245) thus are a relatively small subset of a larger inventory of potential hazardous waste sites, but they do comprise the most complex and compelling cases. The EPA has logged more than 35,000 sites on its national inventory of potentially hazardous waste sites and assesses each site within one year of being logged.

## THE EPA IS MAKING PROGRESS ON SITE CLEANUP

The goal of the Superfund program is to tackle immediate dangers first and then move through the progressive steps necessary to eliminate any long-term risks to public health and the environment.

Superfund responds immediately to sites posing imminent threats to human health and the environment at both NPL sites and sites not on the NPL. The purpose is to stabilize, prevent, or temper the effects of a release of hazardous substances, or the threat of one, into the environment. These might include tire fires or transportation accidents involving the spill of hazardous chemicals. Because they reduce the threat a site poses to human health and the environment, immediate cleanup actions are an integral part of the Superfund program.

Immediate response to imminent threats is one of Superfund's most noted achievements. Where imminent threats to the public or environment were evident, the EPA has initiated or completed emergency actions that attacked the most serious threats of toxic exposure in more than 2,700 cases.

The ultimate goal for a hazardous waste site on the NPL is a permanent solution to an environmental problem that presents a serious threat to the public or the environment. This often requires a long-term effort. The EPA has aggressively accelerated its efforts to perform these long-term cleanups of NPL sites. More cleanups were started in 1987, when the Superfund law was amended, than in any previous year. By 1991, construction had started at more than four times as many sites as in 1986! Of the sites currently on the NPL, more than 500 — nearly half — have had construction cleanup activity. In addition, more than 400 more sites presently are in the investigation stage to determine the extent of site contamination and to identify appropriate cleanup remedies. Many other sites with cleanup remedies selected are poised for the start of cleanup construction activity. In measuring success by "progress through the cleanup pipeline," the EPA clearly is gaining momentum.

## THE EPA MAKES SURE CLEANUP WORKS

The EPA has gained enough experience in cleanup construction to understand that environmental protection does not end when the remedy is in place. Many complex technologies — like those designed to clean up groundwater — must operate for many years in order to accomplish their objectives.

The EPA's hazardous waste site managers are committed to proper operation and maintenance of every remedy constructed. No matter who has been delegated responsibility for monitoring the cleanup work, the EPA will assure that the remedy is carefully followed and that it continues to do its job.

Likewise, the EPA does not abandon a site even after the cleanup work is done. Every five years, the Agency reviews each site where residues from hazardous waste cleanup still remain to ensure that public and environmental

health are being safeguarded. The EPA will correct any deficiencies discovered and will report to the public annually on all five-year reviews conducted that year.

## CITIZENS HELP SHAPE DECISIONS

Superfund activities also depend upon local citizen participation. The EPA's job is to analyze the hazards and to deploy the experts, but the Agency needs citizen input as it makes choices for affected communities.

Because the people in a community where a Superfund site is located will be those most directly affected by hazardous waste problems and cleanup processes, the EPA encourages citizens to get involved in cleanup decisions. Public involvement and comment does influence EPA cleanup plans by providing valuable information about site conditions, community concerns, and preferences.

The State and U.S. Territories volumes and the companion National overview volume provide general Superfund background information and descriptions of activities at each NPL site. These volumes clearly describe what the problems are, what the EPA and others participating in site cleanups are doing, and how we, as a Nation, can move ahead in solving these serious problems.

## USING THE STATE AND NATIONAL VOLUMES TOGETHER

To understand the big picture on hazardous waste cleanup, citizens need to hear about both environmental progress across the country and the cleanup accomplishments closer to home. Citizens also should understand the challenges involved in hazardous waste cleanup and the decisions we must make, as a Nation, in finding the best solutions.

The National overview, *Superfund: Focusing on the Nation at Large (1991),* contains important information to help you understand the magnitude and challenges facing the Superfund program, as well as an overview of the National cleanup effort. The sections describe the nature of the hazardous waste problem nationwide, threats and contaminants at NPL sites and their potential effects on human health and the environment, vital roles of the various participants in the cleanup process, the Superfund program's successes in cleaning up the Nation's serious hazardous waste sites, and the current status of the NPL. If you did not receive this overview volume, ordering information is provided in the front of this book.

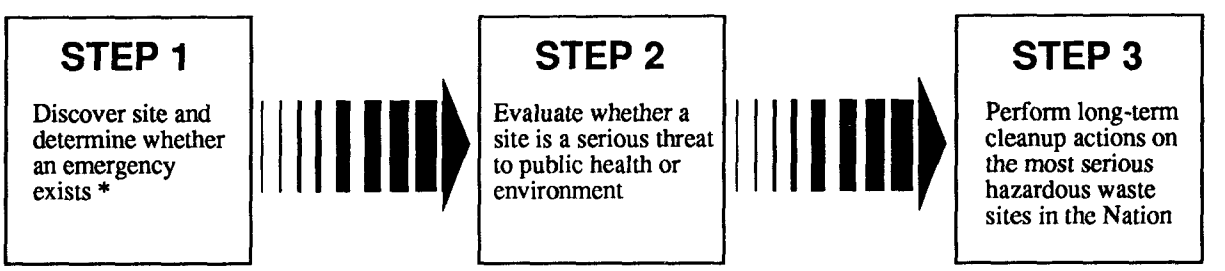
This volume compiles site summary fact sheets on each State or Territorial site being cleaned up under the Superfund program. These sites represent the most serious hazardous waste problems in the Nation and require the most complicated and costly site solutions yet encountered. Each book gives a "snapshot" of the conditions and cleanup progress that has been made at each NPL site. Information presented for each site is current as of April 1991. Conditions change as our cleanup efforts continue, so these site summaries will be updated annually to include information on new progress being made.

To help you understand the cleanup accomplishments made at these sites, this volume includes a description of the process for site discovery, threat evaluation, and long-term cleanup of Superfund sites. This description, *How Does the Program Work to Clean Up Sites?,* will serve as a reference point from which to review the cleanup status at specific sites. A glossary defining key terms as they apply to hazardous waste management and site cleanup is included as Appendix A in the back of this book.

# How Does the Program Work to Clean Up Sites?

The diverse problems posed by hazardous waste sites have provided the EPA with the challenge to establish a consistent approach for evaluating and cleaning up the Nation's most serious sites. To do this, the EPA has had to step beyond its traditional role as a regulatory agency to develop processes and guidelines for each step in these technically complex site cleanups. The EPA has established procedures to coordinate the efforts of its Washington, D.C. Headquarters program offices and its front-line staff in ten Regional Offices, with the State and local governments, contractors, and private parties who are participating in site cleanup. An important part of the process is that any time during cleanup, work can be led by the EPA or the State or, under their monitoring, by private parties who are potentially responsible for site contamination.

## THREE-STEP SUPERFUND PROCESS




** Emergency actions are performed whenever needed in this three-step process.*

The process for discovery of the site, evaluation of threat, and the long-term cleanup of Superfund sites is summarized in the following pages. The phases of each of these steps are highlighted within the description. The flow diagram above provides a summary of the three-step process.

Although this book provides a current "snapshot" of site progress made only by emergency actions and long-term cleanup actions at Superfund sites, it is important to understand the discovery and evaluation process that leads to identifying and cleaning up these most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous

waste sites in the Nation. The discovery and evaluation process is the starting point for this summary description of Superfund involvement at hazardous waste sites.

## STEP 1: SITE DISCOVERY AND EMERGENCY EVALUATION

### How does the EPA learn about potential hazardous waste sites?

*Site discovery* occurs in a number of ways. Information comes from concerned citizens. People may notice an odd taste or foul odor in their drinking water or see half-buried leaking barrels; a hunter may come across a field where waste was dumped illegally. There may be an explosion or fire, which alerts the State or local authorities to a problem. Routine investigations by State and local governments and required reporting and inspection of facilities that generate, treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste also help keep the EPA informed about actual or potential threats of hazardous substance releases. All reported sites or spills are recorded in the Superfund inventory (CERCLIS) for further investigation to determine whether they will require cleanup.

### What happens if there is an imminent danger?

As soon as a potential hazardous waste site is reported, the EPA determines whether there is an emergency requiring an immediate cleanup action. If there is, they act as quickly as possible to remove or stabilize the imminent threat. These short-term emergency actions range from building a fence around the contaminated area to keep people away, or temporarily relocating residents until the danger is addressed, to providing bottled water to residents while their local drinking water supply is being cleaned up or physically removing wastes for safe disposal.

*However, emergency actions can happen at any time an imminent threat or emergency warrants them.* For example, if leaking barrels are found when cleanup crews start digging in the ground or if samples of contaminated soils or air show that there may be a threat of fire or explosion, an immediate action is taken.

## STEP 2: SITE THREAT EVALUATION

### If there isn't an imminent danger, how does the EPA determine what, if any, cleanup actions should be taken?

Even after any imminent dangers are taken care of, in most cases, contamination may remain at the site. For example, residents may have been supplied with bottled water to take care of their immediate problem of contaminated well water, but now it's time to determine what is contaminating the drinking water supply and the best way to clean it up. The EPA may determine that there is no imminent danger from a site, so any long-term threats need to be evaluated. In either case, a more comprehensive investigation is needed to determine if a site poses a serious, but not imminent, danger and whether it requires a long-term cleanup action.

Once a site is discovered and any needed emergency actions are taken, the EPA or the State collects all available background information not only from their own files, but also from local records and U.S. Geological Survey maps. This information is used to identify the site and to perform a preliminary assessment of its potential hazards. This is a quick review of readily available information to answer the questions:

- Are hazardous substances likely to be present?

- How are they contained?
- How might contaminants spread?
- How close is the nearest well, home, or natural resource area such as a wetland or animal sanctuary?
- What may be harmed — the land, water, air, people, plants, or animals?

Some sites do not require further action because the preliminary assessment shows that they do not threaten public health or the environment. But even in these cases, the sites remain listed in the Superfund inventory for record-keeping purposes and future reference. Currently, there are more than 35,000 sites maintained in this inventory.

### If the preliminary assessment shows a serious threat may exist, what's the next step?

Inspectors go to the site to collect additional information to evaluate its hazard potential. During this *site inspection,* they look for evidence of hazardous waste, such as leaking drums and dead or discolored vegetation. They may take some samples of soil, well water, river water, and air. Inspectors analyze the ways hazardous materials could be polluting the environment, such as runoff into nearby streams. They also check to see if people (especially children) have access to the site.

### How does the EPA use the results of the site inspection?

Information collected during the site inspection is used to identify the sites posing the most serious threats to human health and the environment. This way, the EPA can meet the requirement that Congress gave them to use Superfund monies only on the worst hazardous waste sites in the Nation.

To identify the most serious sites, the EPA developed the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). The HRS is the scoring system the EPA uses to assess the relative threat from a release or a potential release of hazardous substances from a site to surrounding groundwater, surface water, air, and soil. A site score is based on the likelihood that a hazardous substance will be released from the site, the toxicity and amount of hazardous substances at the site, and the people and sensitive environments potentially affected by contamination at the site.

Only sites with high enough health and environmental risk scores are proposed to be added to the NPL. That's why 1,245 sites are on the NPL, but there are more than 35,000 sites in the Superfund inventory. Only NPL sites can have a long-term cleanup paid for from Superfund, the national hazardous waste trust fund. Superfund can, and does, pay for emergency actions performed at any site, whether or not it's on the NPL.

### Why are sites proposed to the NPL?

Sites proposed to the NPL have been evaluated through the scoring process as the most serious problems among uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the U.S. In addition, a site will be proposed to the NPL if the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry issues a health advisory recommending that people be moved away from the site. The NPL is updated at least once a year, and it's only after public comments are considered that these proposed worst sites officially are added to the list.

Listing on the NPL does not set the order in which sites will be cleaned up. The order is influenced by the relative priority of the site's health and environmental threats compared to other sites, and such factors as State priorities, engineering capabilities, and available tech-

nologies. Many States also have their own list of sites that require cleanup; these often contain sites that are not on the NPL and are scheduled to be cleaned up with State money. And, it should be noted again that any emergency action needed at a site can be performed by the Superfund, whether or not a site is on the NPL.

A detailed description of the current progress in cleaning up NPL sites is found in the section of the 1991 National overview volume entitled *Cleanup Successes: Measuring Progress.*

**How do people find out whether the EPA considers a site a national priority for cleanup under the Superfund Program?**

All NPL sites, where Superfund is responsible for cleanup, are described in the State and Territorial volumes. The public also can find out whether other sites, not on the NPL, are being addressed by the Superfund program by calling their Regional EPA office or the Superfund Hotline at the numbers listed in this book.

## STEP 3: LONG-TERM CLEANUP ACTIONS

**After a site is added to the NPL, what are the steps to cleanup?**

The ultimate goal for a hazardous waste site on the NPL is a permanent, long-term cleanup. Since every site presents a unique set of challenges, there is no single all-purpose solution. A five-phase "remedial response" process is used to develop consistent and workable solutions to hazardous waste problems across the Nation:

1. *Remedial Investigation*: investigate in detail the extent of the site contamination
2. *Feasibility Study*: study the range of possible cleanup remedies
3. *Record of Decision or ROD*: decide which remedy to use
4. *Remedial Design*: plan the remedy
5. *Remedial Action*: carry out the remedy

This remedial response process is a long-term effort to provide a permanent solution to an environmental problem that presents a serious threat to the public or environment.

The first two phases of a long-term cleanup are a combined *remedial investigation and feasibility study* (RI/FS) that determine the nature and extent of contamination at the site and identify and evaluate cleanup alternatives. These studies may be conducted by the EPA or the State or, under their monitoring, by private parties.

Like the initial site inspection described earlier, a remedial investigation involves an examination of site data in order to better define the problem. However, the remedial investigation is much more detailed and comprehensive than the initial site inspection.

A remedial investigation can best be described as a carefully designed field study. It includes extensive sampling and laboratory analyses to generate more precise data on the types and quantities of wastes present at the site, the type of soil and water drainage patterns, and specific human health and environmental risks.

The result of the remedial investigation is information that allows the EPA to select the cleanup strategy that is best suited to a particular site or to determine that no cleanup is needed.

Placing a site on the NPL does not necessarily mean that cleanup is needed. It is possible for

a site to receive an HRS score high enough to be added to the NPL, but not ultimately require cleanup actions. Keep in mind that the purpose of the scoring process is to provide a preliminary and conservative assessment of *potential* risk. During subsequent site investigations, the EPA may find either that there is no real threat or that the site does not pose significant human health or environmental risks.

### How are cleanup alternatives identified and evaluated?

The EPA or the State or, under their monitoring, private parties identify and analyze specific site cleanup needs based on the extensive information collected during the remedial investigation. This analysis of cleanup alternatives is called a *feasibility study*.

Since cleanup actions must be tailored exactly to the needs of each individual site, more than one possible cleanup alternative is always considered. After making sure that all potential cleanup remedies fully protect human health and the environment and comply with Federal and State laws, the advantages and disadvantages of each cleanup alternative are compared carefully. These comparisons are made to determine their effectiveness in the short and long term, their use of permanent treatment solutions, and their technical feasibility and cost.

To the maximum extent practicable, the remedy must be a permanent solution and must use treatment technologies to destroy principal site contaminants. Remedies such as containing the waste on site or removing the source of the problem (like leaking barrels) often are considered effective. Often, special pilot studies are conducted to determine the effectiveness and feasibility of using a particular technology to clean up a site. Therefore, the combined remedial investigation and feasibility study can take between 10 and 30 months to complete, depending on the size and complexity of the problem.

### Does the public have a say in the final cleanup decision?

Yes. The Superfund law requires that the public be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed cleanup plan. Their concerns are considered carefully before a final decision is made.

The results of the remedial investigation and feasibility study, which also point out the recommended cleanup choice, are published in a report for public review and comment. The EPA or the State encourages the public to review the information and take an active role in the final cleanup decision. Fact sheets and announcements in local papers let the community know where they can get copies of the study and other reference documents concerning the site. Local information repositories, such as libraries or other public buildings, are established in cities and towns near each NPL site to ensure that the public has an opportunity to review all relevant information and the proposed cleanup plans. Locations of information repositories for each NPL site described in this volume are given in Appendix B.

The public has a minimum of 30 days to comment on the proposed cleanup plan after it is published. These comments can be written or given verbally at public meetings that the EPA or the State are required to hold. Neither the EPA nor the State can select the final cleanup remedy without evaluating and providing written answers to specific community comments and concerns. This "responsiveness summary" is part of the EPA's write-up of the final remedy decision, called the Record of Decision, or ROD.

The ROD is a public document that explains the cleanup remedy chosen and the reason it

was selected. Since sites frequently are large and must be cleaned up in stages, a ROD may be necessary for each contaminated resource or area of the site. This may be necessary when contaminants have spread into the soil, water, and air and affect such sensitive areas as wetlands, or when the site is large and cleaned up in stages. This often means that a number of remedies, using different cleanup technologies, are needed to clean up a single site.

### If every cleanup action needs to be tailored to a site, does the design ofthe remedy need to be tailored, too?

Yes. Before a specific cleanup action is carried out, it must be designed in detail to meet specific site needs. This stage of the cleanup is called the *remedial design.* The design phase provides the details on how the selected remedy will be engineered and constructed.

Projects to clean up a hazardous waste site may appear to be like any other major construction project but, in fact, the likely presence of combinations of dangerous chemicals demands special construction planning and procedures. Therefore, the design of the remedy can take anywhere from six months to two years to complete. This blueprint for site cleanup includes not only the details on every aspect of the construction work, but a description of the types of hazardous wastes expected at the site, special plans for environmental protection, worker safety, regulatory compliance, and equipment decontamination.

### Once the design is completed, how long does it take to actually clean up the site, and how much does it cost?

The time and cost for performing the site cleanup, called the *remedial action*, are as varied as the remedies themselves. In a few cases, the only action needed may be to remove drums of hazardous waste and to decontaminate them, an action that takes limited time and money. In most cases, however, a remedial action may involve different and expensive cleanup measures that can take a long time.

For example, cleaning polluted groundwater or dredging contaminated river bottoms can take several years of complex engineering work before contamination is reduced to safe levels. Sometimes the selected cleanup remedy described in the ROD may need to be modified because of new contaminant information discovered or difficulties that were faced during the early cleanup activities. Taking into account these differences, each remedial cleanup action takes an average of 18 months to complete and ultimately costs an average of $26 million to complete all necessary cleanup actions at a site .

### Once the cleanup action is completed, is the site automatically "deleted" from the NPL?

No. The deletion of a site from the NPL is anything but automatic. For example, cleanup of contaminated groundwater may take up to 20 years or longer. Also, in some cases, *long-term monitoring* of the remedy is required to ensure that it is effective. After construction of certain remedies, operation and maintenance (e.g., maintenance of ground cover, groundwater monitoring, etc.), or continued pumping and treating of groundwater may be required to ensure that the remedy continues to prevent future health hazards or environmental damage and ultimately meets the cleanup goals specified in the ROD. Sites in this final monitoring or operational stage of the cleanup process are designated as "construction complete."

It's not until a site cleanup meets all the goals and monitoring requirements of the selected

remedy that the EPA can officially propose the site for *deletion* from the NPL, and it's not until public comments are taken into consideration that a site actually can be deleted from the NPL. All sites deleted from the NPL and sites with completed construction are included in the progress report found later in this book.

### Can a site be taken off the NPL if no cleanup has taken place?

Yes. But only if further site investigation reveals that there are no threats present at the site and that cleanup activities are not necessary. In these cases, the EPA will select a "no action" remedy and may move to delete the site when monitoring confirms that the site does not pose a threat to human health or the environment.

In other cases, sites may be "removed" from the NPL if new information concerning site cleanup or threats show that the site does not warrant Superfund activities.

A site may be removed if a revised HRS scoring, based on updated information, results in a score below the minimum for NPL sites. A site also may be removed from the NPL by transferring it to other appropriate Federal cleanup authorities, such as RCRA, for further cleanup actions.

Removing sites for technical reasons or transferring sites to other cleanup programs preserves Superfund monies for the Nation's most pressing hazardous waste problems where no other cleanup authority is applicable.

### Can the EPA make parties responsible for the contamination pay?

Yes. Based on the belief that "the polluters should pay," after a site is placed on the NPL, the EPA makes a thorough effort to identify and find those responsible for causing contamination problems at a site. Although the EPA is willing to negotiate with these private parties and encourages voluntary cleanup, it has the authority under the Superfund law to legally force those potentially responsible for site hazards to take specific cleanup actions. All work performed by these parties is closely guided and monitored by the EPA and must meet the same standards required for actions financed through the Superfund.

Because these enforcement actions can be lengthy, the EPA may decide to use Superfund monies to make sure a site is cleaned up without unnecessary delay. For example, if a site presents an imminent threat to public health and the environment or if conditions at a site may worsen, it could be necessary to start the cleanup right away. Those responsible for causing site contamination are liable under the law (CERCLA) for repaying the money the EPA spends in cleaning up the site.

Whenever possible, the EPA and the Department of Justice use their legal enforcement authorities to require responsible parties to pay for site cleanups, thereby preserving Superfund resources for emergency actions and for sites where no responsible parties can be identified.

# How to Use the State Book

The site fact sheets presented in this book are comprehensive summaries that cover a broad range of information. The fact sheets describe hazardous waste sites on the NPL and their locations, as well as the conditions leading to their listing ("Site Description"). The summaries list the types of contaminants that have been discovered and related threats to public and ecological health ("Threats and Contaminants"). "Cleanup Approach" presents an overview of the cleanup activities completed, underway, or planned. The fact sheets conclude with a brief synopsis of how much progress has been made in protecting public health and the environment. The summaries also pinpoint other actions, such as legal efforts to involve polluters responsible for site contamination and community concerns.

The fact sheets are arranged in alphabetical order by site name. Because site cleanup is a dynamic and gradual process, all site information is accurate as of the date shown on the bottom of each page. Progress always is being made at NPL sites, and the EPA periodically will update the site fact sheets to reflect recent actions and will publish updated State volumes. The following two pages show a generic fact sheet and briefly describe the information under each section.

## HOW CAN YOU USE THIS STATE BOOK?

You can use this book to keep informed about the sites that concern you, particularly ones close to home. The EPA is committed to involving the public in the decision making process associated with hazardous waste cleanup. The Agency solicits input from area residents in communities affected by Superfund sites. Citizens are likely to be affected not only by hazardous site conditions, but also by the remedies that combat them. Site cleanups take many forms and can affect communities in different ways. Local traffic may be rerouted, residents may be relocated, temporary water supplies may be necessary.

Definitive information on a site can help citizens sift through alternatives and make decisions. To make good choices, you must know what the threats are and how the EPA intends to clean up the site. You must understand the cleanup alternatives being proposed for site cleanup and how residents may be affected by each one. You also need to have some idea of how your community intends to use the site in the future, and you need to know what the community can realistically expect once the cleanup is complete.

The EPA wants to develop cleanup methods that meet community needs, but the Agency only can take local concerns into account if it understands what they are. Information must travel both ways in order for cleanups to be effective and satisfactory. Please take this opportunity to learn more, become involved, and assure that hazardous waste cleanup at "your" site considers your community's concerns.

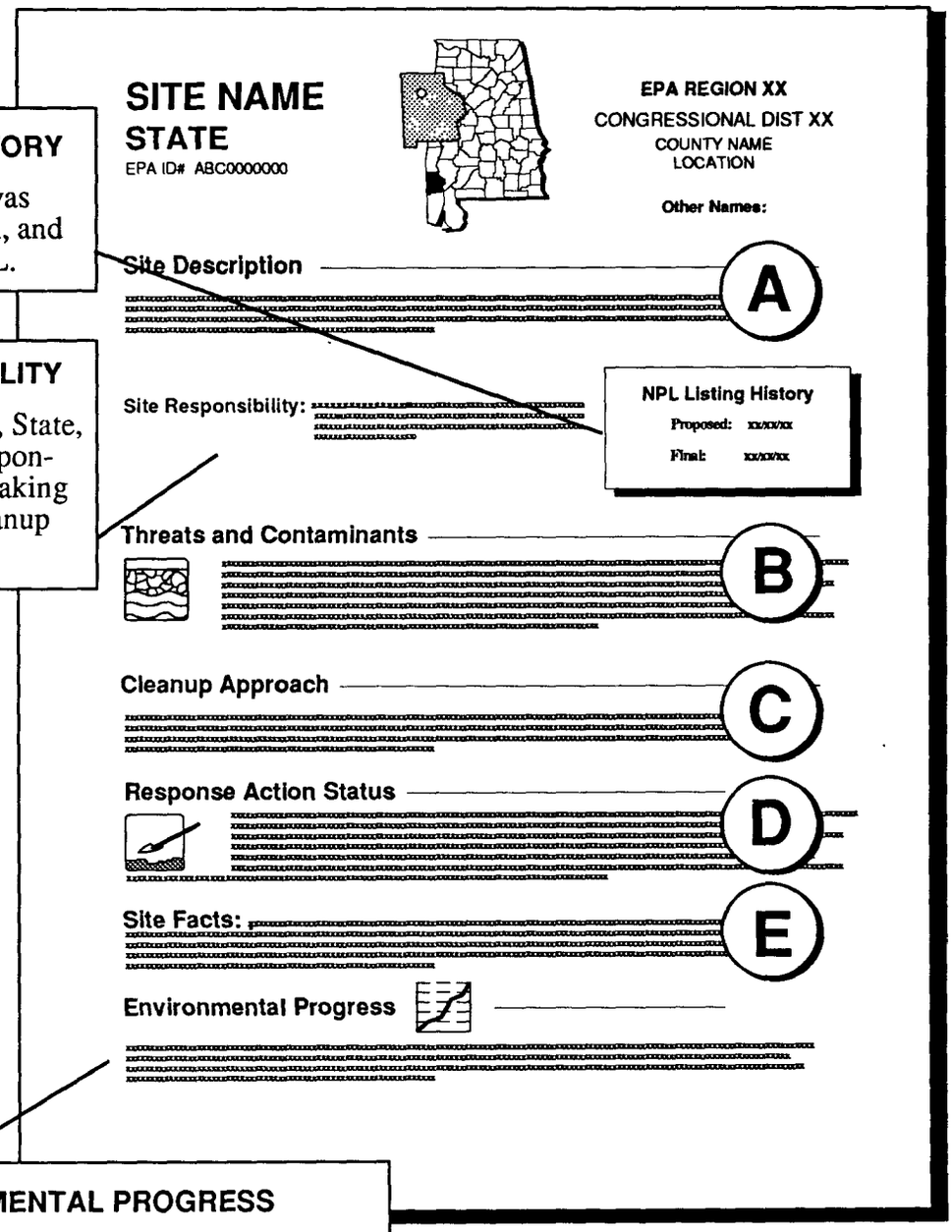
# THE VOLUME

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**

Dates when the site was Proposed, made Final, and Deleted from the NPL.

**SITE RESPONSIBILITY**

Identifies the Federal, State, and/or potentially responsible parties that are taking responsibility for cleanup actions at the site.




**ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS**

A summary of the actions to reduce the threats to nearby residents and the surrounding environment; progress towards cleaning up the site and goals of the cleanup plan are given here.

A

### SITE DESCRIPTION

This section describes the location and history of the site. It includes descriptions of the most recent activities and past actions at the site that have contributed to the contamination. Population estimates, land usages, and nearby resources give readers background on the local setting surrounding the site.

B

### THREATS AND CONTAMINANTS

The major chemical categories of site contamination are noted, as well as which environmental resources are affected. Icons representing each of the affected resources (may include air, groundwater, surface water, soil, and contamination to environmentally sensitive areas) are included in the margins of this section. Potential threats to residents and the surrounding environments arising from the site contamination also are described.

C

### CLEANUP APPROACH

This section contains a brief overview of how the site is being cleaned up.

D

### RESPONSE ACTION STATUS

Specific actions that have been accomplished or will be undertaken to clean up the site are described here. Cleanup activities at NPL sites are divided into separate phases, depending on the complexity and required actions at the site. Two major types of cleanup activities often are described: initial, immediate, or emergency actions to quickly remove or reduce imminent threats to the community and surrounding areas; and long-term remedial phases directed at final cleanup at the site. Each stage of the cleanup strategy is presented in this section of the summary. Icons representing the stage of the cleanup process (initial actions, site investigations, EPA selection of the cleanup remedy, engineering design phase, cleanup activities underway, and completed cleanup) are located in the margin next to each activity description.

E

### SITE FACTS

Additional information on activities and events at the site are included in this section. Often details on legal or administrative actions taken by the EPA to achieve site cleanup or other facts pertaining to community involvement with the site cleanup process are reported here.

# THE VOLUME

The "icons," or symbols, accompanying the text allow the reader to see at a glance which environmental resources are affected and the status of cleanup activities at the site.

## Icons in the Threats and Contaminants Section

Contaminated *Groundwater* resources in the Contaminated *Groundwater* in the vicinity or underlying the site. (Groundwater is often used as a drinking water source.)

Contaminated *Surface Water and Sediments* on or near the site. (These include lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers.)

Contaminated *Air* in the vicinity of the site. (Air pollution usually is periodic and involves contaminated dust particles or hazardous gas emissions.)

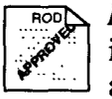
Contaminated *Soil and Sludges* on or near the site. (This contamination category may include bulk or other surface hazardous wastes found on the site.)

Threatened or contaminated *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* in the vicinity of the site. (Examples include wetlands and coastal areas or critical habitats.)

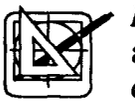
## Icons in the Response Action Status Section

*Initial Actions* have been taken or are underway to eliminate immediate threats at the site.

*Site Studies* at the site to determine the nature and extent of contamination are planned or underway.




*Remedy Selected* indicates that site investigations have been concluded, and the EPA has selected a final cleanup remedy for the site or part of the site.

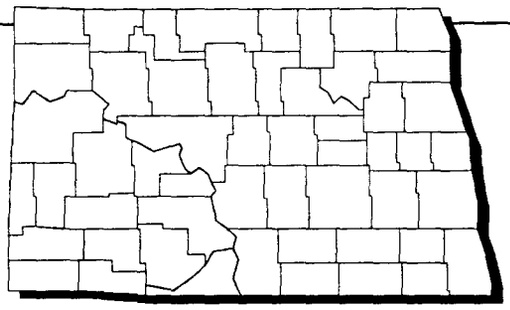


*Remedy Design* means that engineers are preparing specifications and drawings for the selected cleanup technologies.

*Cleanup Ongoing* indicates that the selected cleanup remedies for the contaminated site, or part of the site, currently are underway.

*Cleanup Complete* shows that all cleanup goals have been achieved for the contaminated site or part of the site.

*Environmental Progress* summarizes the activities taken to date to protect human health and to clean up site contamination.



# The State of North Dakota

The State of North Dakota is located on the northern United States border with Canada, within EPA Region 8. Region 8 includes six northern central states extending from the central plains to the Rocky Mountains. North Dakota covers 70,702 square miles and consists of the Missouri Plateau of the Great Plains in the west, and the Central Lowland in the east, which comprises the Red River Valley and the rolling Drift Plain. Currently ranked 47th in U.S. populations, according to the 1990 Census, North Dakota experienced a two percent decrease in population since 1980 and has approximately 638,800 residents. Principal state industries include agriculture, mining, tourism, and manufacturing of farm equipment and processed foods.

## How Many NPL Sites Are in the State of North Dakota?

| | |
|---|---|
| Proposed | 0 |
| Final | 2 |
| Deleted | 0 |
| | 2 |

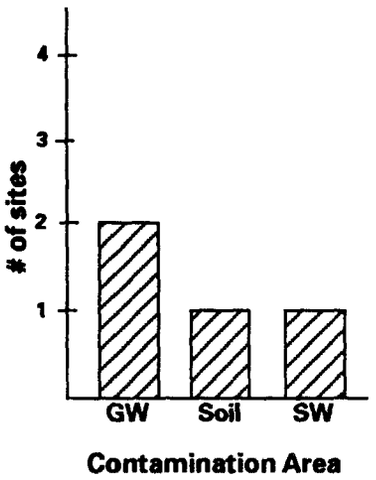
## Where Are the NPL Sites Located?

| | |
|---|---|
| Congressional District 1 | 2 sites |

## What Type of Sites are on the NPL in the State of North Dakota?

| # of sites | type of sites |
|---|---|
| 1 | Municipal Landfill |
| 1 | Agriculture |

## How are Sites Contaminated and What Are the Principal* Chemicals?



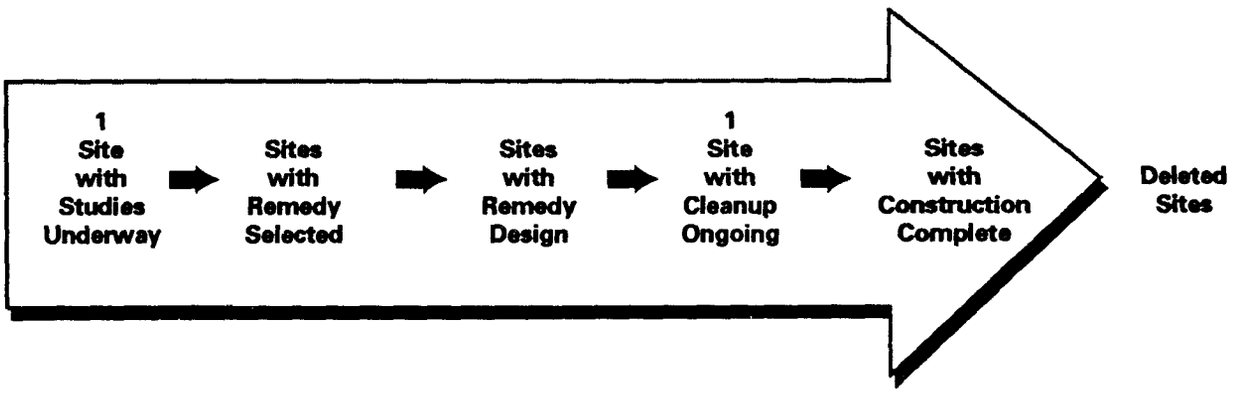
**Groundwater**: Heavy metals (inorganics), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pesticides and radiation.

**Soil**: Pesticides and herbicides.

**Surface Water**: Heavy metals (inorganics), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

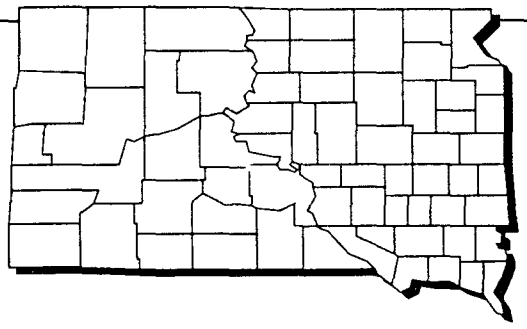
*Appear at 50% or more sites

## Where are the Sites in the Superfund Cleanup Process?†




In addition to activities described above, initial actions have been taken at 2 sites as interim cleanup measures.

†Cleanup status reflects phase of site activities rather than administrative accomplishments.



# The State of South Dakota

The State of South Dakota is located in the north central United States within EPA Region 8. Region 8 includes six north central states extending from the central plains to the Rocky Mountains. South Dakota covers 77,116 square miles consisting of the Prairie Plains in the east, the rolling hills of the Great Plains in the west, and the Blank hills in the southwest corner of the state. Currently ranked 45th in U.S. populations, according to the 1990 Census, South Dakota experienced less than one percent increase in population since 1980 and has approximately 696,000 residents. Principal state industries include agriculture, services, and manufacturing. South Dakota produces food and kindred products, machinery, and electric and electronic equipment.

## How Many NPL Sites Are in the State of South Dakota?

| | |
|---|---|
| Proposed | 0 |
| Final | 3 |
| Deleted | 0 |
| | 3 |

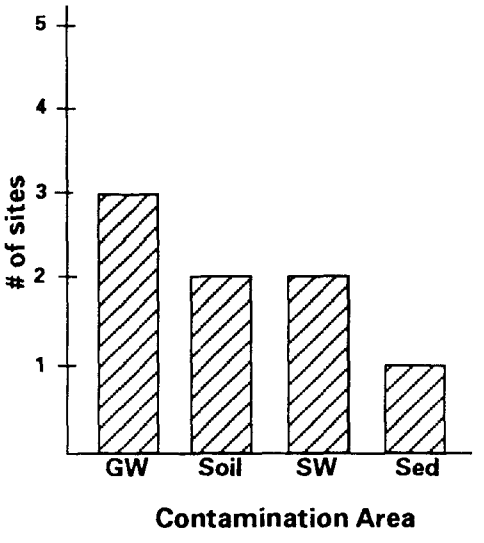
## Where Are the NPL Sites Located?

| | |
|---|---|
| Congressional District 1 | 3 sites |

## What Type of Sites are on the NPL in the State of South Dakota?

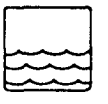
| # of sites | type of sites |
|---|---|
| 1 | Mining |
| 1 | Federal Facility |
| 1 | Disposal Pit |

## How Are Sites Contaminated and What Are the Principal* Chemicals?



**Groundwater:** Heavy metals (inorganics), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pesticides, radiation and other inorganics.

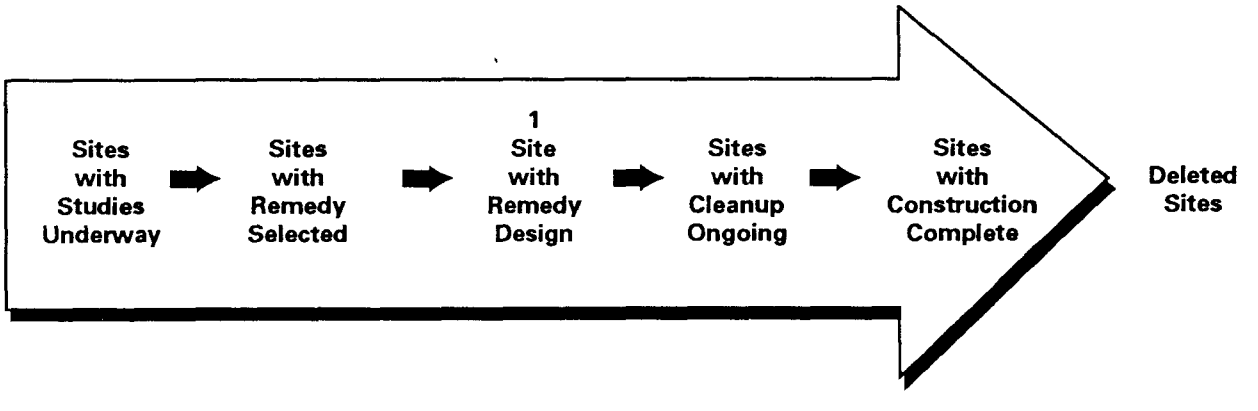
**Soil:** Heavy metals (inorganics).



**Surface Water and Sediments:** Heavy metals (inorganics), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), creosotes (inorganics), and pesticides, radiation and other inorganics.

*Appear at 33% or more sites

## Where Are the Sites in the Superfund Cleanup Process?†




In addition to the activities described above, initial actions have been taken on 1 site as interim cleanup measures.

†Cleanup status reflects phases of site activities rather than administrative accomplishments.

# Progress To Date

The following Progress Report lists all sites currently on, or deleted from, the NPL and briefly summarizes the status of activities for each site at the time this report was prepared. The steps in the Superfund cleanup process are arrayed across the top of the chart, and each site's progress through these steps is represented by an arrow (⇨) indicating the current stage of cleanup.

Large and complex sites often are organized into several cleanup stages. For example, separate cleanup efforts may be required to address the source of the contamination, hazardous substances in the groundwater, and surface water pollution, or to clean up different areas of a large site. In such cases, the chart portrays cleanup progress at the site's *most advanced* stage, reflecting the status of site activities rather than administrative accomplishments.

- An arrow in the "Initial Response" category indicates that an emergency cleanup or initial action has been completed or currently is underway. Emergency or initial actions are taken as an interim measure to provide immediate relief from exposure to hazardous site conditions or to stabilize a site to prevent further contamination.

- A final arrow in the "Site Studies" category indicates that an investigation to determine the nature and extent of the contamination at the site currently is ongoing.

- A final arrow in the "Remedy Selection" category means that the EPA has selected the final cleanup strategy for the site. At the few sites where the EPA has determined that initial response actions have eliminated site contamination, or that any remaining contamination will be naturally dispersed without further cleanup activities, a "No Action" remedy is selected. In these cases, the arrows are discontinued at the "Remedy Selection" step and resume in the "Construction Complete" category.

- A final arrow at the "Remedial Design" stage indicates that engineers currently are designing the technical specifications for the selected cleanup remedies and technologies.

- A final arrow in the "Cleanup Ongoing" column means that final cleanup actions have been started at the site and currently are underway.

- A final arrow in the "Construction Complete" category is used only when all phases of the site cleanup plan have been performed, and the EPA has determined that no additional construction actions are required at the site. Some sites in this category currently may be undergoing long-term operation and maintenance or monitoring to ensure that the cleanup actions continue to protect human health and the environment.

- A check in the "Deleted" category indicates that the site cleanup has met all human health and environmental goals and that the EPA has deleted the site from the NPL.

Further information on the activities and progress at each site is given in the site "Fact Sheets" published in this volume.

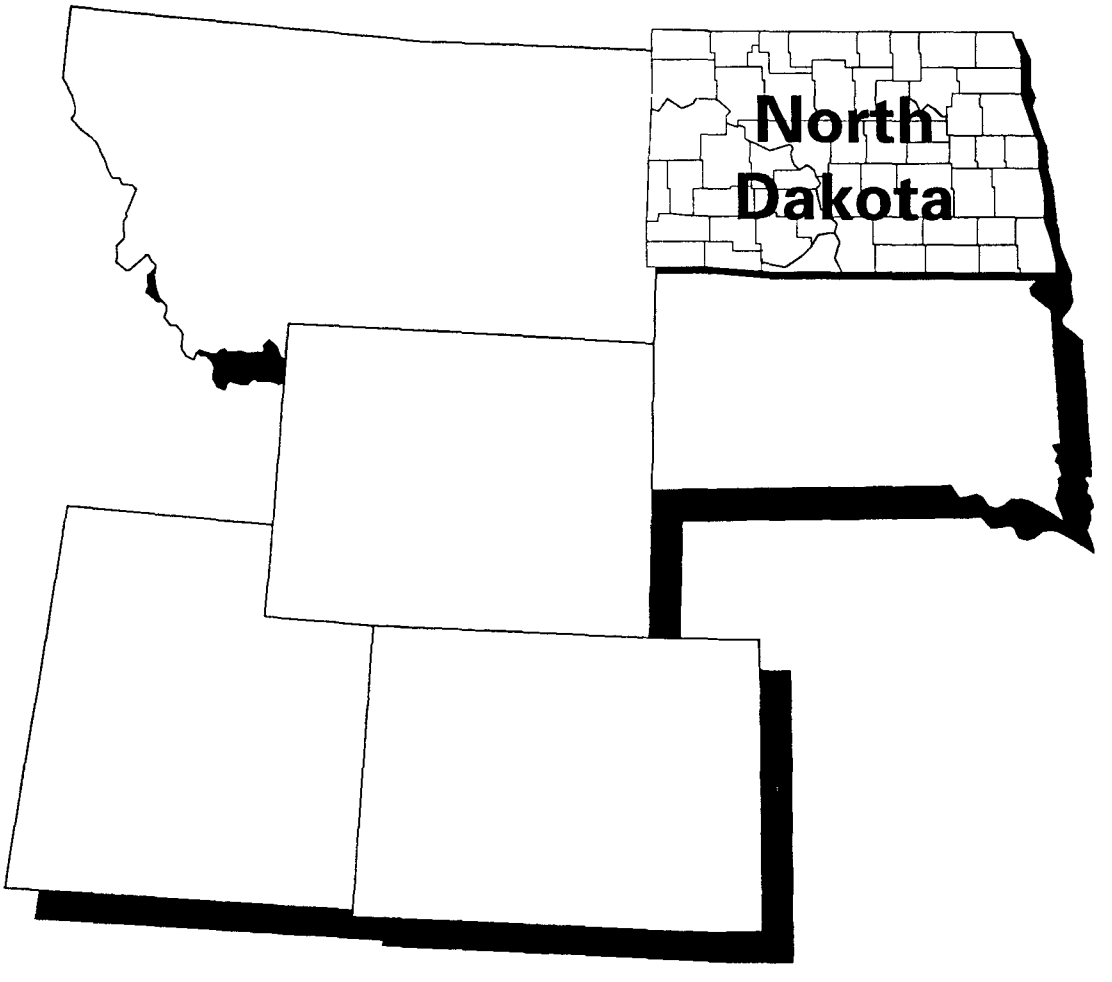
# Progress Toward Cleanup at NPL Sites in the State of North Dakota

| Page | Site Name | County | NPL | Date | Initial Response | Site Studies | Remedy Selected | Remedy Design | Cleanup Ongoing | Construction Complete | Deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | ARSENIC TRIOXIDE SITE | RICHLAND/ RANSOM/SARGENT | Final | 09/08/83 | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | | |
| 27 | MINOT LANDFILL | WARD | Final | 03/31/89 | ⇨ | ⇨ | | | | | |

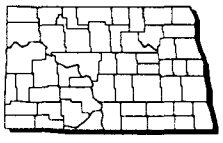
# Progress Toward Cleanup at NPL Sites in the State of South Dakota

| Page | Site Name | County | NPL | Date | Initial Response | Site Studies | Remedy Selected | Remedy Design | Cleanup Ongoing | Construction Complete | Deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE | MEADE/ PENNINGTON | Final | 08/30/90 | | | | | | | |
| 33 | WHITEWOOD CREEK | LAWRENCE MEADE/BUTTE | Final | 09/08/83 | | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | | | |
| 35 | WILLIAMS PIPE LINE CO. DISPOSAL PIT | MINNEHAHA | Final | 08/30/90 | | | | | | | |

# Summary of Site Activities




## EPA REGION 8



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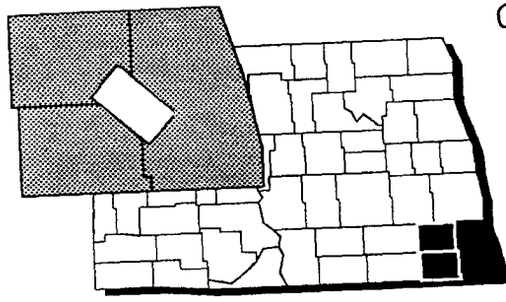
| | |
|---|---|
| EPA Region 8 Superfund Community Relations Office | (303) 294-1100 |
| EPA Region 8 Superfund Office | (303) 293-1720 |
| EPA Superfund Hotline | (800) 424-9346 |
| EPA Headquarters Public Information Center | (202) 260-2080 |
| North Dakota Superfund Office | (701) 221-5166 |

# ARSENIC TRIOXIDE SITE

## NORTH DAKOTA

EPA ID# NDD980716963



**EPA REGION 8**

CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 01

20 townships in Richland, Ransom, and Sargent Counties

## Site Description

The Arsenic Trioxide Site consists of 20 townships covering approximately 500 square miles of land. Heavy grasshopper infestations of agricultural crops in the 1930s resulted in widespread and frequent applications of arsenic-based pesticides. In 1979, it was discovered that the public and private water supplies for the City of Lidgerwood exceeded the maximum contaminant level for arsenic. Naturally occurring arsenic in shale found in the area also may have contributed to the contamination problem. Approximately 4,500 people reside in the area. In 1970, the residents of 278 homes in Lidgerwood that used private wells were considered to be at a health risk due to arsenic exposure. Presently, groundwater is used for agricultural and domestic purposes.

**Site Responsibility:** The site is being addressed through a combination of Federal and State actions.

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**

Proposed Date: 10/23/81

Final Date: 09/08/83

## Threats and Contaminants

The groundwater is contaminated with arsenic as a result of the use of arsenic-based pesticides. People who drink from private wells in the area could be adversely affected. Public water supplies in several small cities are being addressed, including the cities of Lidgerwood and Wyndmere.

## Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in three stages: initial actions and two long-term remedial phases focusing on the cleanup of the rural areas water system and treatment of the water supplies of Lidgerwood and Wyndmere.

### Response Action Status

**Initial Actions:** In 1986, 10,000 square feet of contaminated surface area were covered with clay. Individual water treatment units were installed in 116 private homes, and five residences were hooked up to a rural water supply system. Also, an abandoned bait station was cleaned up. In 1988 and 1989, the City of Lidgerwood's water treatment plant was repaired, and the filter sand was changed. A design to modify this treatment plant has been approved by the State.

**Rural Areas Water System:** Based on the results of the site investigation, the EPA has elected to expand the hookup of homes to the existing rural water treatment and distribution system in Richland and to evaluate institutional controls on well use and well drilling. Construction of this phase of the cleanup plan will begin in late 1991.

**Lidgerwood/Wyndmere:** Based on the results of the site investigation, the EPA assisted the City of Lidgerwood with its efforts to improve the water treatment plant. Construction to improve the Lidgerwood water treatment plant began in 1989 and was completed in early 1991. The EPA also provided funds to the City of Wyndmere to increase its water treatment plant's capability to handle periods of high demand. Site work was completed in 1991 at the Wyndmere water treatment system. Treated water now is being pumped to city water users. The treatment plant's operating procedures and equipment were monitored for 1 year, under State request, to ensure that the treatment plant consistently operates as designed and produces high quality, colorless drinking water. In 1990, the City of Lidgerwood, the North Dakota State Department of Health, and the EPA conducted an inspection of the treatment plant and completed minor modifications as part of the now completed cleanup activities.

**Site Facts:** In 1982, a Cooperative Agreement was awarded to the North Dakota State Department of Health to conduct a remedial investigation. In 1985, the State of North Dakota was awarded a second Cooperative Agreement to conduct an investigation into the nature and extent of site contamination as well as the most effective methods to clean up the site.

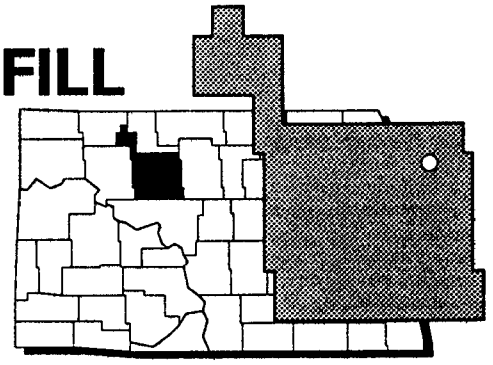
## Environmental Progress

The EPA and the State have installed water treatment facilities and provided waterline hookups to affected residences. Construction of both city water treatment plants has been completed and is currently providing residents with safe drinking water. Additional activities are continuing to provide waterline hookups to all affected residences.

# MINOT LANDFILL

## NORTH DAKOTA

EPA ID# NDD980959548



**EPA REGION 8**

CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 01

Ward County

Minot

**Other Names:**
**Old Minot Landfill**

## Site Description

The 45-acre Minot Landfill was privately owned but was operated by the City of Minot from 1962 to 1971. The landfill received refuse from several nearby industries from 1962 to 1970. While the exact composition of the disposal materials is not known, available sources indicate that oily wastes, spent battery casings, calcium carbide, lime sludge from acetylene production, and wastes from the construction of nearby missile sites are probable elements of the wastes. Runoff from the site area flows toward the Souris River, a source of drinking water for the City of Minot, which has a population of approximately 33,000 people. Additional residential and commercial development has been proposed for the area. The nearest home and business are approximately 750 feet from the site.

**Site Responsibility:** This site is being addressed through Federal and Municipal actions.

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**

Proposed Date: 06/24/88

Final Date: 03/31/89

## Threats and Contaminants

Hazardous compounds detected in on-site groundwater include barium, arsenic, and manganese. Two monitoring wells downgradient of the burial cells contain various volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Soils contain chlorinated organic pesticides and inorganic contaminants similar to those in the groundwater. Surface water analysis showed the presence of zinc, toluene, benzene compounds, and xylene. Potential risks may exist for individuals who touch or ingest the contaminated groundwater or leachate. The Souris River may be threatened by runoff from the site.

## Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in two stages: an initial action and a long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

### Response Action Status

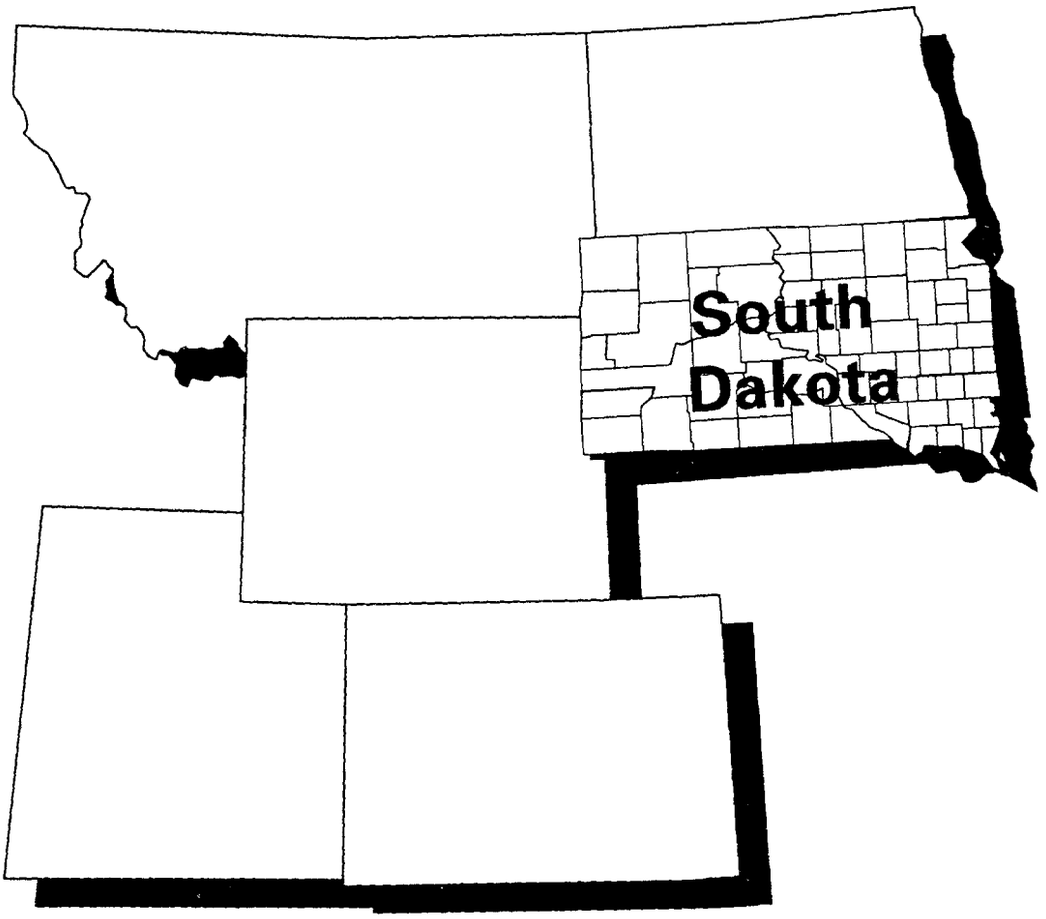
**Initial Action:** The City of Minot installed a fence around the landfill in early 1990. The City also introduced surface erosion control measures at the site to halt pesticides and metal contamination in the landfill from seeping to the surface.

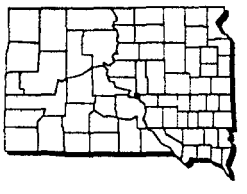
**Entire Site:** The EPA started an investigation in 1990 to determine the extent of the groundwater contamination and to identify alternative technologies to clean up the groundwater and areas surrounding the site. Cleanup is scheduled to begin in 1993, after the scheduled completion of the site investigation.

## Environmental Progress

The installation of a fence has restricted access to the site and reduced the potential for exposure to hazardous substances at the Minot Landfill site. Surface erosion control measures have been completed to prevent the possible migration of contaminants to the Souris River while further cleanup investigations are underway.

# Summary of Site Activities





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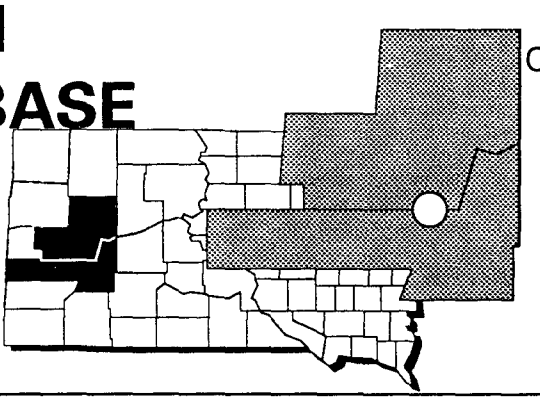
| EPA Superfund Hotline | (800) 424-9346 |
| EPA Headquarters Public Information Center | (202) 260-2080 |
| South Dakota Superfund Office | (605) 773-3296 |

# ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE

## SOUTH DAKOTA

EPA ID# SD2571924644



**EPA REGION 8**

CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 01

Meade and Pennington Counties

11 miles northeast of Rapid City

## Site Description

The 4,858-acre Ellsworth Air Force Base was established in 1942 and is now the site of the 44th Strategic Missile Wing of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). Activities at the base generate a variety of chlorinated solvents, waste oils contaminated with solvents, pesticides, and other hazardous wastes that the Department of Defense (DoD) disposed of at various areas on the base throughout its history of operations. The EPA has identified 5 contaminated areas at the base. Of these, four are unlined landfills, and one is the burn pit for the Fire Protection Training area. The DoD has identified an additional 13 contaminated areas on site. Between 1987 and 1988, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers monitored the groundwater on site and found that wells downslope from two landfills and the burn pit are contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals. Approximately 1,600 people obtain drinking water from wells within 3 miles of the site. The nearest surface water intake is approximately 6,400 feet from the site.

**Site Responsibility:** This site is being addressed through Federal actions.

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**

Proposed Date: 10/26/89

Final Date: 08/30/90

## Threats and Contaminants

Groundwater, soil, and surface water on site are contaminated with VOCs and heavy metals including arsenic and chromium. People who drink contaminated surface water or groundwater could be exposed to site-related contaminants. An off-site drinking water well also is contaminated.

## Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in a two stages: an immediate action and a long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

### Response Action Status

**Immediate Action:** Contamination of an off-site drinking water well was discovered in 1991. The Air Force is providing bottled water to the affected residents until cleanup actions are completed.

**Entire Site:** The DoD will begin a study of the nature and extent of contamination at the site in 1992. Historical remote sensing photographs have identified numerous previously unidentified contamination sources. The study is scheduled to be completed in 1994. Based on this study, the EPA plans to select the final cleanup methods to address site contamination by 1994.

**Site Facts:** Ellsworth Air Force Base is participating in the Installation Restoration Program, a specially funded program established by the DoD in 1978 to identify, investigate, and control the migration of hazardous contaminants at military and other DoD facilities.

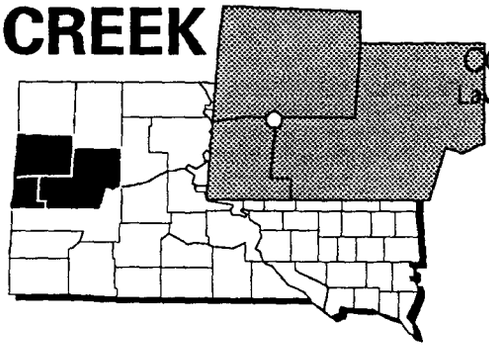
## Environmental Progress

The provision of bottled water has reduced the threat of exposure to contaminants from the Ellsworth Air Force Base site while studies and cleanup activities are being planned.

# WHITEWOOD CREEK

## SOUTH DAKOTA

EPA ID# SDD980717136



**EPA REGION 8**

CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 01

Lawrence, Meade, and Butte Counties

Along an 18-mile stretch of the Whitewood Creek flood plain

## Site Description

The Whitewood Creek site contains approximately 22 million tons of mining-related wastes such as mine tailings containing toxic metals. Since the 1870s, millions of tons of mine waste have been discharged from gold mining operations and deposited along the Whitewood Creek flood plain. Wastes continued to be discharged to Whitewood Creek until 1977, when the only mine in the area that still followed this practice closed. The EPA has detected arsenic in shallow groundwater in amounts above the standards set for drinking water. Whitewood Creek contains low amounts of site-related contaminants, and local residents use it to water livestock and for fishing. Approximately 280 people live within a mile of the site, on either side of the creek. The site lies adjacent to the town of Whitewood.

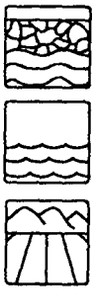
**Site Responsibility:** This site is being addressed through Federal, State, and potentially responsible parties' actions.

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**

Proposed Date: 10/23/81

Final Date: 09/08/83

## Threats and Contaminants



Groundwater, surface water, and soils contain heavy metals including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, selenium, and cyanide. Soils also are contaminated with sulfates. People could potentially be exposed to site-related contaminants by drinking or touching contaminated groundwater, surface water, or soil. In 1974 and 1975, approximately 50 Holstein cattle from a dairy operation next to Whitewood Creek died of unknown causes. Later, a study conducted by the South Dakota State University showed that the cattle had died of arsenic poisoning, caused by eating corn contaminated with mining wastes.

## Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in a single long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

### Response Action Status

**Entire Site:** In 1990, the EPA selected a remedy to clean up the site which includes: (1) removing and covering the contaminated soil at the existing residential properties; (2) continuing the monitoring of Whitewood Creek surface water quality; and (3) establishing institutional controls to limit future uses of contaminated areas. The institutional controls involve continuing the ban on water wells in the 100-year flood plain, zoning regulations to prohibit development in the tailings deposits areas, and an educational program informing future buyers of the condition of the properties within the site area. The engineering design for the soil removal and capping began in late 1990 and is expected to be completed in 1992. Cleanup actions are expected to begin in late 1991.

**Site Facts:** By 1977, Homestake Mining Company was the only operator continuing to discharge wastes into Whitewood Creek when other milling operations ceased. In 1982, the EPA, the South Dakota Department of Water and Natural Resources, and Homestake Mining Company entered into an agreement to conduct a study of the site. The study investigated the quality of surface waters, groundwater, soils, sediments, and vegetation in the site area and selected aquatic life of Whitewood Creek. A Consent Decree was signed in early 1991, in which Homestake agreed to pay past cleanup costs incurred by the EPA, conduct the cleanup activities, and to pay any future costs incurred by the EPA or the State.

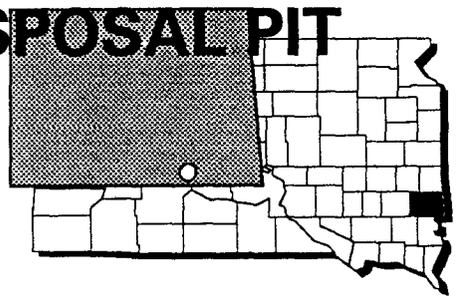
## Environmental Progress

After adding this site to the NPL, the EPA performed preliminary investigations and determined that no immediate actions were required at the Whitewood Creek site while planned cleanup activities are being finalized and conducted.

# WILLIAMS PIPE LINE COMPANY DISPOSAL PIT

## SOUTH DAKOTA

EPA ID# SDD000823559



**EPA REGION 8**
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 01
Minnehaha County
Sioux Falls

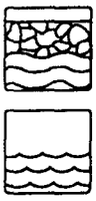
## Site Description

The 50-acre Williams Pipe Line Company Disposal Pit site operated as a disposal pit in the 1970s for leaded stillbottoms and storage tank sludge. The facility was an unlined pit where the company disposed of metals, oily wastes, pesticides, and solvents. The company burned the wastes in the pit periodically until the 1970s. The pit now is dry and covered with a plastic sheet. From 1986 to 1987, the EPA tested the sediments in the pit for contaminants and determined that they contained volatile organic compounds (VOCs), heavy metals, pesticides, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The EPA found that groundwater near the pit is contaminated with pesticides and heavy metals. Approximately 33,500 people live within 3 miles of the site. Approximately 100,000 people in the Sioux Falls area obtain drinking water from two sets of public wells that are within 3 miles of the site. The site is directly west of a housing development and is 2 miles west of the Big Sioux River and Skunk River.

**Site Responsibility:** This site is being addressed through Federal, State, and potentially responsible parties' actions.

**NPL LISTING HISTORY**
Proposed Date: 10/26/89
Final Date: 08/30/90

## Threats and Contaminants



Groundwater underlying the disposal pit contains pesticides and lead. Sediments in the pit are contaminated with various heavy metals, VOCs, PAHs, and pesticides. People in the site vicinity who use or come into direct contact with contaminated groundwater or sediments could be exposed to hazardous chemicals.

## Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in a single long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

### Response Action Status

**Entire Site:** A study into the nature and extent of contamination at the site is scheduled to begin in 1991. The EPA will use the results of this study to select cleanup technologies to address contaminated groundwater and sediments at the site.

**Site Facts:** An Administrative Order was signed by Williams Pipe Line in early 1991, requiring the company to conduct the site study. Williams Pipe Line has been conducting a cleanup of a petroleum release under a State Order. Efforts under this State Order will be evaluated as part of the site study scheduled to begin later in 1991.

## Environmental Progress

The EPA performed preliminary studies and determined that no immediate actions are required at the Williams Pipe Line Company Disposal Pit site while investigations and cleanup activities are being planned.

# Glossary: Terms Used in the Fact Sheets

# Terms Used in the NPL Book

*This glossary defines terms used throughout the NPL Volumes. The terms and abbreviations contained in this glossary apply specifically to work performed under the Superfund program in the context of hazardous waste management. These terms may have other meanings when used in a different context.*

**Acids:** Substances, characterized by low pH (less than 7.0), that are used in chemical manufacturing. Acids in high concentration can be very corrosive and react with many inorganic and organic substances. These reactions possibly may create toxic compounds or release heavy metal contaminants that remain in the environment long after the acid is neutralized.

**Administrative Order On Consent:** A legal and enforceable agreement between the EPA and the parties potentially responsible for site contamination. Under the terms of the Order, the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) agree to perform or pay for site studies or cleanups. It also describes the oversight rules, responsibilities, and enforcement options that the government may exercise in the event of non-compliance by potentially responsible parties. This Order is signed by PRPs and the government; it does not require approval by a judge.

**Administrative Order [Unilateral]:** A legally binding document issued by the EPA, directing the parties potentially responsible to perform site cleanups or studies (generally, the EPA does not issue Unilateral Orders for site studies).

**Aeration:** A process that promotes breakdown of contaminants in soil or water by exposing them to air.

**Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR):** The Federal agency within the U.S. Public Health Service charged with carrying out the health-related responsibilities of CERCLA.

**Air Stripping:** A process whereby volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) are removed from contaminated material by forcing a stream of air through it in a pressurized vessel. The contaminants are evaporated into the air stream. The air may be further treated before it is released into the atmosphere.

**Ambient Air:** Any unconfined part of the atmosphere. Refers to the air that may be inhaled by workers or residents in the vicinity of contaminated air sources.

**Aquifer:** An underground layer of rock, sand, or gravel capable of storing water within cracks and pore spaces, or between grains. When water contained within an aquifer is of sufficient quantity and quality, it can be tapped and used for drinking or other purposes. The water contained in the aquifer is called groundwater. A sole source aquifer supplies 50% or more of the drinking water of an area.

**Artesian (Well):** A well made by drilling into the earth until water is reached, which, from internal pressure, flows up like a fountain.

# GLOSSARY

**Attenuation:** The naturally occurring process by which a compound is reduced in concentration over time through adsorption, degradation, dilution, and/or transformation.

**Background Level:** The amount of a substance typically found in the air, water, or soil from natural, as opposed to human, sources.

**Baghouse Dust:** Dust accumulated in removing particulates from the air by passing it through cloth bags in an enclosure.

**Bases:** Substances characterized by high pH (greater than 7.0), which tend to be corrosive in chemical reactions. When bases are mixed with acids, they neutralize each other, forming salts.

**Berm:** A ledge, wall, or a mound of earth used to prevent the migration of contaminants.

**Bioaccumulate:** The process by which some contaminants or toxic chemicals gradually collect and increase in concentration in living tissue, such as in plants, fish, or people, as they breathe contaminated air, drink contaminated water, or eat contaminated food.

**Biological Treatment:** The use of bacteria or other microbial organisms to break down toxic organic materials into carbon dioxide and water.

**Bioremediation:** A cleanup process using naturally occurring or specially cultivated microorganisms to digest contaminants and break them down into non-hazardous components.

**Bog:** A type of wetland that is covered with peat moss deposits. Bogs depend primarily on moisture from the air for their water source, are usually acidic, and are rich in plant residue [see Wetland].

**Boom:** A floating device used to contain oil floating on a body of water or to restrict the potential overflow of waste liquids from containment structures.

**Borehole:** A hole that is drilled into the ground and used to sample soil or groundwater.

**Borrow Pit:** An excavated area where soil, sand, or gravel has been dug up for use elsewhere.

**Cap:** A layer of material, such as clay or a synthetic material, used to prevent rainwater from penetrating and spreading contaminated materials. The surface of the cap generally is mounded or sloped so water will drain off.

**Carbon Adsorption:** A treatment system in which contaminants are removed from groundwater and surface water by forcing water through tanks containing activated carbon, a specially treated material that attracts and holds or retains contaminants.

**Carbon Disulfide:** A degreasing agent formerly used extensively for parts washing. This compound has both inorganic and organic properties, which increase cleaning efficiency. However, these properties also cause chemical reactions that increase the hazard to human health and the environment.

**Carbon Treatment:** [see Carbon Adsorption].

**Cell:** In solid waste disposal, one of a series of holes in a landfill where waste is dumped, compacted, and covered with layers of dirt.

**CERCLA:** [see Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act].

**Characterization:** The sampling, monitoring, and analysis of a site to determine the

extent and nature of toxic releases. Characterization provides the basis for acquiring the necessary technical information to develop, screen, analyze, and select appropriate cleanup techniques.

**Chemical Fixation:** The use of chemicals to bind contaminants, thereby reducing the potential for leaching or other movement.

**Chromated Copper Arsenate:** An insecticide/herbicide formed from salts of three toxic metals: copper, chromium, and arsenic. This salt is used extensively as a wood preservative in pressure-treating operations. It is highly toxic and water-soluble, making it a relatively mobile contaminant in the environment.

**Cleanup:** Actions taken to eliminate a release or threat of release of a hazardous substance. The term "cleanup" sometimes is used interchangeably with the terms remedial action, removal action, response action, or corrective action.

**Closure:** The process by which a landfill stops accepting wastes and is shut down, under Federal guidelines that ensure the protection of the public and the environment.

**Comment Period:** A specific interval during which the public can review and comment on various documents and EPA actions related to site cleanup. For example, a comment period is provided when the EPA proposes to add sites to the NPL. There is minimum 3-week comment period for community members to review and comment on the remedy proposed to clean up a site.

**Community Relations:** The EPA effort to establish and maintain two-way communication with the public. Goals of community relations programs include creating an understanding of EPA programs and related actions, assuring public input into decision-making processes related to affected communities, and making certain that the Agency is aware of, and responsive to, public concerns. Specific community relations activities are required in relation to Superfund cleanup actions [see Comment Period].

**Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA):** Congress enacted the CERCLA, known as Superfund, in 1980 to respond directly to hazardous waste problems that may pose a threat to the public health and the environment. The EPA administers the Superfund program.

**Confluence:** The place where two bodies of water, such as streams or rivers, come together.

**Consent Decree:** A legal document, approved and issued by a judge, formalizing an agreement between the EPA and the parties potentially responsible for site contamination. The decree describes cleanup actions that the potentially responsible parties are required to perform and/or the costs incurred by the government that the parties will reimburse, as well as the roles, responsibilities, and enforcement options that the government may exercise in the event of non-compliance by potentially responsible parties. If a settlement between the EPA and a potentially responsible party includes cleanup actions, it must be in the form of a Consent Decree. A Consent Decree is subject to a public comment period.

**Consent Order:** [see Administrative Order on Consent].

**Containment:** The process of enclosing or containing hazardous substances in a structure, typically in a pond or a lagoon, to prevent the migration of contaminants into the environment.

**Contaminant:** Any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological material or substance whose quantity, location, or nature produces undesirable health or environmental effects.

**Contingency Plan:** A document setting out an organized, planned, and coordinated course of action to be followed in case of a fire, explosion, or other accident that releases toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, or radioactive materials into the environment.

**Cooperative Agreement:** A contract between the EPA and the States, wherein a State agrees to manage or monitor certain site cleanup responsibilities and other activities on a cost-sharing basis.

**Cost Recovery:** A legal process by which potentially responsible parties can be required to pay back the Superfund program for money it spends on any cleanup actions [see Potentially Responsible Parties].

**Cover:** Vegetation or other material placed over a landfill or other waste material. It can be designed to reduce movement of water into the waste and to prevent erosion that could cause the movement of contaminants.

**Creosotes**: Chemicals used in wood preserving operations and produced by distillation of tar, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons [see PAHs and PNAs]. Contaminating sediments, soils, and surface water, creosotes may cause skin ulcerations and cancer through prolonged exposure.

**Culvert:** A pipe used for drainage under a road, railroad track, path, or through an embankment.

**Decommission:** To revoke a license to operate and take out of service.

**Degradation:** The process by which a chemical is reduced to a less complex form.

**Degrease:** To remove grease from wastes, soils, or chemicals, usually using solvents.

**De minimis:** This legal phrase pertains to settlements with parties who contributed small amounts of hazardous waste to a site. This process allows the EPA to settle with small, or *de minimis* contributors, as a single group rather than as individuals, saving time, money, and effort.

**Dewater:** To remove water from wastes, soils, or chemicals.

**Dike:** A low wall that can act as a barrier to prevent a spill from spreading.

**Disposal:** Final placement or destruction of toxic, radioactive, or other wastes; surplus or banned pesticides or other chemicals; polluted soils; and drums containing hazardous materials. Disposal may be accomplished through the use of approved secure landfills, surface impoundments, land farming, deep well injection, or incineration.

**Downgradient:** A downward hydrologic slope that causes groundwater to move toward lower elevations. Therefore, wells *downgradient* of a contaminated groundwater source are prone to receiving pollutants.

**Effluent:** Wastewater, treated or untreated, that flows out of a treatment plant, sewer, or industrial outfall. Generally refers to wastes discharged into surface waters.

**Emission:** Pollution discharged into the atmosphere from smokestacks, other vents, and surface areas of commercial or industrial facilities.

**Emulsifiers:** Substances that help in mixing materials that do not normally mix; e.g., oil and water.

**Endangerment Assessment:** A study conducted to determine the risks posed to public health or the environment by contamination at NPL sites. The EPA or the State conducts the study when a legal action is to be taken to direct the potentially responsible parties to clean up a site or pay for the cleanup. An endangerment assessment supplements an investigation of the site hazards.

**Enforcement:** EPA, State, or local legal actions taken against parties to facilitate settlements; to compel compliance with laws, rules, regulations, or agreements; and/or to obtain penalties or criminal sanctions for violations. Enforcement procedures may vary, depending on the specific requirements of different environmental laws and related regulatory requirements. Under CERCLA, for example, the EPA will seek to require potentially responsible parties to clean up a Superfund site or pay for the cleanup [see Cost Recovery].

**Erosion:** The wearing away of land surface by wind or water. Erosion occurs naturally from weather or surface runoff, but can be intensified by such land-related practices as farming, residential or industrial development, road building, or timber-cutting. Erosion may spread surface contamination to off-site locations.

**Estuary (estuarine):** Areas where fresh water from rivers and salt water from nearshore ocean waters are mixed. These areas may include bays, mouths of rivers, salt marshes, and lagoons. These water ecosystems shelter and feed marine life, birds, and wildlife.

**Evaporation Ponds:** Areas where sewage sludge or other watery wastes are dumped and allowed to dry out.

**Feasibility Study:** The analysis of the potential cleanup alternatives for a site. The feasibility study usually starts as soon as the remedial investigation is underway; together, they are commonly referred to as the RI/FS [see Remedial Investigation].

**Filtration:** A treatment process for removing solid (particulate) matter from water by passing the water through sand, activated carbon, or a man-made filter. The process is often used to remove particles that contain contaminants.

**Flood Plain:** An area along a river, formed from sediment deposited by floods. Flood plains periodically are innundated by natural floods, which can spread contamination.

**Flue Gas:** The air that is emitted from a chimney after combustion in the burner occurs. The gas can include nitrogen oxides, carbon oxides, water vapor, sulfur oxides, particles, and many chemical pollutants.

**Fly Ash:** Non-combustible residue that results from the combustion of flue gases. It can include nitrogen oxides, carbon oxides, water vapor, sulfur oxides, as well as many other chemical pollutants.

**French Drain System:** A crushed rock drain system constructed of perforated pipes, which is used to drain and disperse wastewater.

**Gasification (coal):** The conversion of soft coal into gas for use as a fuel.

**Generator:** A facility that emits pollutants into the air or releases hazardous wastes into water or soil.

**Good Faith Offer:** A voluntary offer, generally in response to a Special Notice letter, made by a potentially responsible party, consisting of a written proposal demonstrating a potentially responsible party's qualifications

and willingness to perform a site study or cleanup.

**Groundwater:** Underground water that fills pores in soils or openings in rocks to the point of saturation. In aquifers, groundwater occurs in sufficient quantities for use as drinking and irrigation water and other purposes.

**Groundwater Quality Assessment:** The process of analyzing the chemical characteristics of groundwater to determine whether any hazardous materials exist.

**Halogens:** Reactive non-metals, such as chlorine and bromine. Halogens are very good oxidizing agents and, therefore, have many industrial uses. They are rarely found by themselves; however, many chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), some volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and dioxin are reactive because of the presence of halogens.

**Hazard Ranking System (HRS):** The principal screening tool used by the EPA to evaluate relative risks to public health and the environment associated with abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. The HRS calculates a score based on the potential of hazardous substances spreading from the site through the air, surface water, or groundwater and on other factors such as nearby population. The HRS score is the primary factor in deciding if the site should be on the NPL.

**Hazardous Waste:** By-products of society that can pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment when improperly managed. It possesses at least one of four characteristics (ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity), or appears on special EPA lists.

**Hot Spot:** An area or vicinity of a site containing exceptionally high levels of contamination.

**Hydrogeology:** The geology of groundwater, with particular emphasis on the chemistry and movement of water.

**Impoundment:** A body of water or sludge confined by a dam, dike, floodgate, or other barrier.

**Incineration:** A group of treatment technologies involving destruction of waste by controlled burning at high temperatures, e.g., burning sludge to reduce the remaining residues to a non-burnable ash that can be disposed of safely on land, in some waters, or in underground locations.

**Infiltration:** The movement of water or other liquid down through soil from precipitation (rain or snow) or from application of wastewater to the land surface.

**Influent:** Water, wastewater, or other liquid flowing into a reservoir, basin, or treatment plant.

**Injection Well:** A well into which waste fluids are placed, under pressure, for purposes of disposal.

**Inorganic Chemicals:** Chemical substances of mineral origin, not of basic carbon structure.

**Installation Restoration Program:** The specially funded program established in 1978 under which the Department of Defense has been identifying and evaluating its hazardous waste sites and controlling the migration of hazardous contaminants from those sites.

**Intake:** The source from where a water supply is drawn, such as from a river or water body.

**Interagency Agreement:** A written agreement between the EPA and a Federal agency that has the lead for site cleanup activities,

setting forth the roles and responsibilities of the agencies for performing and overseeing the activities. States often are parties to interagency agreements.

**Interim (Permit) Status:** Conditions under which hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, that were operating when regulations under the RCRA became final in 1980, are temporarily allowed by the EPA to continue to operate while awaiting denial or issuance of a permanent permit. The facility must comply with certain regulations to maintain interim status.

**Lagoon:** A shallow pond or liquid waste containment structure. Lagoons typically are used for the storage of wastewaters, sludges, liquid wastes, or spent nuclear fuel.

**Landfarm:** To apply waste to land and/or incorporate waste into the surface soil, such as fertilizer or soil conditioner. This practice commonly is used for disposal of composted wastes and sludges.

**Landfill**: A disposal facility where waste is placed in or on land. *Sanitary* landfills are disposal sites for non-hazardous solid wastes. The waste is spread in layers, compacted to the smallest practical volume, and covered with soil at the end of each operating day. Secure *chemical* landfills are disposal sites for hazardous waste. They are designed to minimize the chance of release of hazardous substances into the environment [see Resource Conservation and Recovery Act].

**Leachate [n]:** The liquid that trickles through or drains from waste, carrying soluble components from the waste. **Leach, Leaching [v.t.]:** The process by which soluble chemical components are dissolved and carried through soil by water or some other percolating liquid.

**Leachate Collection System:** A system that gathers liquid that has leaked into a landfill or other waste disposal area and pumps it to the surface for treatment.

**Liner:** A relatively impermeable barrier designed to prevent leachate (waste residue) from leaking from a landfill. Liner materials include plastic and dense clay.

**Long-term Remedial Phase:** Distinct, often incremental, steps that are taken to solve site pollution problems. Depending on the complexity, site cleanup activities can be separated into several of these phases.

**Marsh:** A type of wetland that does not contain peat moss deposits and is dominated by vegetation. Marshes may be either fresh or saltwater and tidal or non-tidal [see Wetland].

**Migration:** The movement of oil, gas, contaminants, water, or other liquids through porous and permeable soils or rock.

**Mill Tailings:** [See Mine Tailings].

**Mine Tailings:** A fine, sandy residue left from mining operations. Tailings often contain high concentrations of lead, uranium, and arsenic or other heavy metals.

**Mitigation:** Actions taken to improve site conditions by limiting, reducing, or controlling toxicity and contamination sources.

**Modeling:** A technique using a mathematical or physical representation of a system or theory that tests the effects that changes on system components have on the overall performance of the system.

**Monitoring Wells:** Special wells drilled at specific locations within, or surrounding, a hazardous waste site where groundwater can be sampled at selected depths and studied to obtain such information as the direction in

which groundwater flows and the types and amounts of contaminants present.

**National Priorities List (NPL):** The EPA's list of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-term cleanup under Superfund. The EPA is required to update the NPL at least once a year.

**Neutrals:** Organic compounds that have a relatively neutral pH, complex structure and, due to their organic bases, are easily absorbed into the environment. Naphthalene, pyrene, and trichlorobenzene are examples of neutrals.

**Nitroaromatics:** Common components of explosive materials, which will explode if activated by very high temperatures or pressures; 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT) is a nitroaromatic.

**Notice Letter:** A General Notice Letter notifies the parties potentially responsible for site contamination of their possible liability. A Special Notice Letter begins a 60-day formal period of negotiation during which the EPA is not allowed to start work at a site or initiate enforcement actions against potentially responsible parties, although the EPA may undertake certain investigatory and planning activities. The 60-day period may be extended if the EPA receives a good faith offer within that period.

**On-Scene Coordinator (OSC):** The predesignated EPA, Coast Guard, or Department of Defense official who coordinates and directs Superfund removal actions or Clean Water Act oil- or hazardous-spill corrective actions.

**Operation and Maintenance:** Activities conducted at a site after a cleanup action is completed to ensure that the cleanup or containment system is functioning properly.

**Organic Chemicals/Compounds:** Chemical substances containing mainly carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen.

**Outfall:** The place where wastewater is discharged into receiving waters.

**Overpacking:** Process used for isolating large volumes of waste by jacketing or encapsulating waste to prevent further spread or leakage of contaminating materials. Leaking drums may be contained within oversized barrels as an interim measure prior to removal and final disposal.

**Pentachlorophenol (PCP):** A synthetic, modified petrochemical that is used as a wood preservative because of its toxicity to termites and fungi. It is a common component of creosotes and can cause cancer.

**Perched (groundwater):** Groundwater separated from another underlying body of groundwater by a confining layer, often clay or rock.

**Percolation:** The downward flow or filtering of water or other liquids through subsurface rock or soil layers, usually continuing downward to groundwater.

**Petrochemicals:** Chemical substances produced from petroleum in refinery operations and as fuel oil residues. These include fluoranthene, chrysene, mineral spirits, and refined oils. Petrochemicals are the bases from which volatile organic compounds (VOCs), plastics, and many pesticides are made. These chemical substances often are toxic to humans and the environment.

**Phenols:** Organic compounds that are used in plastics manufacturing and are by-products of petroleum refining, tanning, textile, dye, and resin manufacturing. Phenols are highly poisonous.

**Physical Chemical Separation:** The treatment process of adding a chemical to a substance to separate the compounds for further treatment or disposal.

**Pilot Testing:** A small-scale test of a proposed treatment system in the field to determine its ability to clean up specific contaminants.

**Plugging:** The process of stopping the flow of water, oil, or gas into or out of the ground through a borehole or well penetrating the ground.

**Plume:** A body of contaminated groundwater flowing from a specific source. The movement of the groundwater is influenced by such factors as local groundwater flow patterns, the character of the aquifer in which groundwater is contained, and the density of contaminants [see Migration].

**Pollution:** Generally, the presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired health or environmental effects.

**Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons or Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs):** PAHs, such as pyrene, are a group of highly reactive organic compounds found in motor oil. They are a common component of creosotes and can cause cancer.

**Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs):** A group of toxic chemicals used for a variety of purposes including electrical applications, carbonless copy paper, adhesives, hydraulic fluids, microscope immersion oils, and caulking compounds. PCBs also are produced in certain combustion processes. PCBs are extremely persistent in the environment because they are very stable, non-reactive, and highly heat resistant. Chronic exposure to PCBs is believed to cause liver damage. It also is known to bioaccumulate in fatty tissues. PCB use and sale was banned in 1979 with the passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

**Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PNAs):** PNAs, such as naphthalene, and biphenyls, are a group of highly reactive organic compounds that are a common component of creosotes, which can be carcinogenic.

**Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC):** A plastic made from the gaseous substance vinyl chloride. PVC is used to make pipes, records, raincoats, and floor tiles. Health risks from high concentrations of vinyl chloride include liver cancer and lung cancer, as well as cancer of the lymphatic and nervous systems.

**Potable Water:** Water that is safe for drinking and cooking.

**Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs):** Parties, including owners, who may have contributed to the contamination at a Superfund site and may be liable for costs of response actions. Parties are considered PRPs until they admit liability or a court makes a determination of liability. PRPs may sign a Consent Decree or Administrative Order on Consent to participate in site cleanup activity without admitting liability.

**Precipitation:** The removal of solids from liquid waste so that the solid and liquid portions can be disposed of safely; the removal of particles from airborne emissions. Electrochemical precipitation is the use of an anode or cathode to remove the hazardous chemicals. Chemical precipitation involves the addition of some substance to cause the solid portion to separate.

**Preliminary Assessment:** The process of collecting and reviewing available information about a known or suspected waste site or release to determine if a threat or potential threat exists.

**Pump and Treat:** A groundwater cleanup technique involving the extracting of contaminated groundwater from the subsurface and the removal of contaminants, using one of several treatment technologies.

**Radionuclides:** Elements, including radium and uranium-235 and -238, which break down and produce radioactive substances due to their unstable atomic structure. Some are man-made, and others are naturally occurring in the environment. Radon, the gaseous form of radium, decays to form alpha particle radiation, which cannot be absorbed through skin. However, it can be inhaled, which allows alpha particles to affect unprotected tissues directly and thus cause cancer. Radiation also occurs naturally through the breakdown of granite stones.

**RCRA:** [See Resource Conservation and Recovery Act].

**Recharge Area:** A land area where rainwater saturates the ground and soaks through the earth to reach an aquifer.

**Record of Decision (ROD):** A public document that explains which cleanup alternative(s) will be used to clean up sites listed on the NPL. It is based on information generated during the remedial investigation and feasibility study and consideration of public comments and community concerns.

**Recovery Wells:** Wells used to withdraw contaminants or contaminated groundwater.

**Recycle:** The process of minimizing waste generation by recovering usable products that might otherwise become waste.

**Remedial Action (RA):** The actual construction or implementation phase of a Superfund site cleanup following the remedial design [see Cleanup].

**Remedial Design:** A phase of site cleanup, where engineers design the technical specifications for cleanup remedies and technologies.

**Remedial Investigation:** An in-depth study designed to gather the data necessary to determine the nature and extent of contamination at a Superfund site, establish the criteria for cleaning up the site, identify the preliminary alternatives for cleanup actions, and support the technical and cost analyses of the alternatives. The remedial investigation is usually done with the feasibility study. Together they are customarily referred to as the RI/FS [see Feasibility Study].

**Remedial Project Manager (RPM):** The EPA or State official responsible for overseeing cleanup actions at a site.

**Remedy Selection:** The selection of the final cleanup strategy for the site. At the few sites where the EPA has determined that initial response actions have eliminated site contamination, or that any remaining contamination will be naturally dispersed without further cleanup activities, a "No Action" remedy is selected [see Record of Decision].

**Removal Action:** Short-term immediate actions taken to address releases of hazardous substances [see Cleanup].

**Residual:** The amount of a pollutant remaining in the environment after a natural or technological process has taken place, e.g., the sludge remaining after initial wastewater treatment, or particulates remaining in air after the air passes through a scrubbing, or other, process.

**Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA):** A Federal law that established a regulatory system to track hazardous substances from the time of generation to disposal. The law requires safe and secure

procedures to be used in treating, transporting, storing, and disposing of hazardous substances. RCRA is designed to prevent new, uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.

**Retention Pond:** A small body of liquid used for disposing of wastes and containing overflow from production facilities. Sometimes retention ponds are used to expand the capacity of such structures as lagoons to store waste.

**Riparian Habitat:** Areas adjacent to rivers and streams that have a high density, diversity, and productivity of plant and animal species relative to nearby uplands.

**Runoff:** The discharge of water over land into surface water. It can carry pollutants from the air and land and spread contamination from its source.

**Scrubber:** An air pollution device that uses a spray of water or reactant or a dry process to trap pollutants in emissions.

**Sediment:** The layer of soil, sand, and minerals at the bottom of surface waters, such as streams, lakes, and rivers, that absorbs contaminants.

**Seeps:** Specific points where releases of liquid (usually leachate) form from waste disposal areas, particularly along the lower edges of landfills.

**Seepage Pits:** A hole, shaft, or cavity in the ground used for storage of liquids, usually in the form of leachate, from waste disposal areas. The liquid gradually leaves the pit by moving through the surrounding soil.

**Septage:** Residue remaining in a septic tank after the treatment process.

**Sinkhole:** A hollow depression in the land surface in which drainage collects; associated with underground caves and passages that facilitate the movement of liquids.

**Site Characterization:** The technical process used to evaluate the nature and extent of environmental contamination, which is necessary for choosing and designing cleanup measures and monitoring their effectiveness.

**Site Inspection:** The collection of information from a hazardous waste site to determine the extent and severity of hazards posed by the site. It follows, and is more extensive than, a preliminary assessment. The purpose is to gather information necessary to score the site, using the Hazard Ranking System, and to determine if the site presents an immediate threat that requires a prompt removal action.

**Slag:** The fused refuse or dross separated from a metal in the process of smelting.

**Sludge:** Semi-solid residues from industrial or water treatment processes that may be contaminated with hazardous materials.

**Slurry Wall:** Barriers used to contain the flow of contaminated groundwater or subsurface liquids. Slurry walls are constructed by digging a trench around a contaminated area and filling the trench with an impermeable material that prevents water from passing through it. The groundwater or contaminated liquids trapped within the area surrounded by the slurry wall can be extracted and treated.

**Smelter:** A facility that melts or fuses ore, often with an accompanying chemical change, to separate the metal. Emissions from smelters are known to cause pollution.

**Soil Gas:** Gaseous elements and compounds that occur in the small spaces between particles of soil. Such gases can move through

or leave the soil or rock, depending on changes in pressure.

**Soil Vapor Extraction:** A treatment process that uses vacuum wells to remove hazardous gases from soil.

**Soil Washing:** A water-based process for mechanically scrubbing soils in-place to remove undesirable materials. There are two approaches: dissolving or suspending them in the wash solution for later treatment by conventional methods, and concentrating them into a smaller volume of soil through simple particle size separation techniques [see Solvent Extraction].

**Stabilization:** The process of changing an active substance into inert, harmless material, or physical activities at a site that act to limit the further spread of contamination without actual reduction of toxicity.

**Solidification/Stabilization:** A chemical or physical reduction of the mobility of hazardous constituents. Mobility is reduced through the binding of hazardous constituents into a solid mass with low permeability and resistance to leaching.

**Solvent:** A substance capable of dissolving another substance to form a solution. The primary uses of industrial solvents are as cleaners for degreasing, in paints, and in pharmaceuticals. Many solvents are flammable and toxic to varying degrees.

**Solvent Extraction:** A means of separating hazardous contaminants from soils, sludges, and sediment, thereby reducing the volume of the hazardous waste that must be treated. It generally is used as one in a series of unit operations. An organic chemical is used to dissolve contaminants as opposed to water-based compounds, which usually are used in soil washing.

**Sorption:** The action of soaking up or attracting substances. It is used in many pollution control systems.

**Stillbottom:** Residues left over from the process of recovering spent solvents.

**Stripping:** A process used to remove volatile contaminants from a substance [see Air Stripping].

**Sumps:** A pit or tank that catches liquid runoff for drainage or disposal.

**Superfund:** The program operated under the legislative authority of the CERCLA and Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) to update and improve environmental laws. The program has the authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health, welfare, or the environment. The "Superfund" is a trust fund that finances cleanup actions at hazardous waste sites.

**Surge Tanks:** A holding structure used to absorb irregularities in flow of liquids, including liquid waste materials.

**Swamp:** A type of wetland that is dominated by woody vegetation and does not accumulate peat moss deposits. Swamps may be fresh or saltwater and tidal or non-tidal [see Wetlands].

**Thermal Treatment:** The use of heat to remove or destroy contaminants from soil.

**Treatability Studies:** Testing a treatment method on contaminated groundwater, soil, etc., to determine whether and how well the method will work.

**Trichloroethylene (TCE):** A stable, colorless liquid with a low boiling point. TCE has many industrial applications, including use as

a solvent and as a metal degreasing agent. TCE may be toxic to people when inhaled, ingested, or through skin contact and can damage vital organs, especially the liver [see Volatile Organic Compounds].

**Unilateral [Administrative] Order:** [see Administrative Order].

**Upgradient:** An upward hydrologic slope; demarks areas that are higher than contaminated areas and, therefore, are not prone to contamination by the movement of polluted groundwater.

**Vacuum Extraction:** A technology used to remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from soils. Vacuum pumps are connected to a series of wells drilled to just above the water table. The wells are sealed tightly at the soil surface, and the vacuum established in the soil draws VOC-contaminated air from the soil pores into the well, as fresh air is drawn down from the surface of the soil.

**Vegetated Soil Cap:** A cap constructed with graded soils and seed for vegetative growth, to prevent erosion [see Cap].

**Vitrification:** The process of electrically melting wastes and soils or sludges to bind the waste in a glassy, solid material more durable than granite or marble and resistant to leaching.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs):** VOCs are manufactured as secondary petrochemicals. They include light alcohols, acetone, trichloroethylene, perchloroethylene, dichloroethylene, benzene, vinyl chloride, toluene, and methylene chloride. These potentially toxic chemicals are used as solvents, degreasers, paints, thinners, and fuels. Because of their volatile nature, they readily evaporate into the air, increasing the potential exposure to humans. Due to their low water solubility, environmental persistence, and widespread industrial use, they are commonly found in soil and groundwater.

**Waste Treatment Plant:** A facility that uses a series of tanks, screens, filters, and other treatment processes to remove pollutants from water.

**Wastewater:** The spent or used water from individual homes or industries.

**Watershed:** The land area that drains into a stream or other water body.

**Water Table:** The upper surface of the groundwater.

**Weir:** A barrier to divert water or other liquids.

**Wetland:** An area that is regularly saturated by surface or groundwater and, under normal circumstances, is capable of supporting vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands are critical to sustaining many species of fish and wildlife. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, and bogs. Wetlands may be either coastal or inland. Coastal wetlands have salt or brackish (a mixture of salt and fresh) water, and most have tides, while inland wetlands are non-tidal and freshwater. Coastal wetlands are an integral component of estuaries.

**Wildlife Refuge:** An area designated for the protection of wild animals, within which hunting and fishing are either prohibited or strictly controlled.

# Information Repositories for NPL Sites in North and South Dakota

# Information Repositories for NPL Sites in the States of North & South Dakota

Repositories are established for all NPL sites so that the public can obtain additional information related to site activities. Some sites may have more than one repository location, however, the primary site repository is listed below. All public access information pertaining to the site will be on file at these repositories. The quantity and nature of the documentation found in the repositories depends on the extent of activity and cleanup progress for each site and may include some or all of the following: community relations plans, announcements for public meetings, minutes from public meetings, fact sheets detailing activities at sites, documents relating to the selection of cleanup remedies, press releases, locations of other public information centers, and any other documents pertaining to site activities.

**North Dakota**

| Site Name | Site Repository |
|---|---|
| ARSENIC TRIOXIDE SITE | North Dakota State Library, Liberty Memorial Building, 604 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505 |
| MINOT LANDFILL | Minot Public Library, 516 Second Avenue, SW, Minot, ND 58701 |

**South Dakota**

| Site Name | Site Repository |
|---|---|
| ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE | Not Established |
| WHITEWOOD CREEK | Rapid City Public Library, 610 Quincy Street, Rapid City, SD 57701 |
| WILLIAMS PIPELINE CO. DISPOSAL PIT | Sioux Falls Public Library, 201 North Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57102 |

* U.S. G.P.O.:1992-311-893:60439