



Iron King Mine- Humboldt Smelter



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Iron King Mine-Humboldt Smelter Proposed for Superfund List

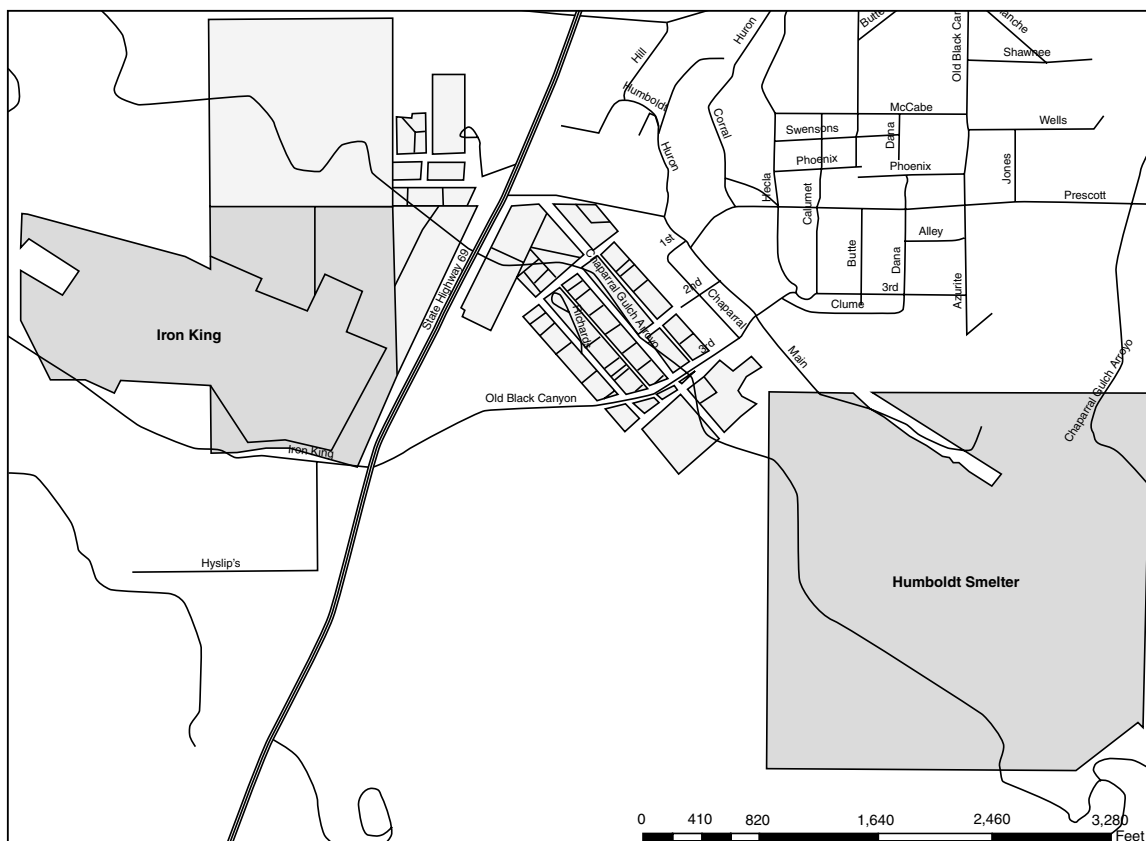
On March 19, 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed adding the Iron King Mine-Humboldt Smelter Site in Dewey-Humboldt, Yavapai County, Arizona, to EPA's National Priorities List (NPL), commonly called the Superfund List (see map below).

EPA identifies and ranks sites according to threats to nearby populations through actual or potential contamination of soils, groundwater, surface water or air. Placing the site on the NPL allows EPA to use federal resources to conduct cleanup activities at the site, including investigating the sources of contamination and determining what measures may be necessary to protect human health and the environment.

Included in this fact sheet is a short history of the site, information about future activities, and how you can become involved in the Superfund process.

What is the problem?

Due to past mining and smelting operations, arsenic, lead and other metals have contaminated soil, sediments, surface water and groundwater on-site at levels above background (meaning levels commonly found in the surrounding area).



Iron King Mine-Humboldt Smelter Site

What is Superfund?

Superfund is the commonly-used name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), a federal law enacted in 1980 and amended in 1986. CERCLA enables EPA to respond to hazardous waste sites that threaten public health and the environment.

EPA responds to a hazardous waste site by identifying those that are responsible for contaminating it, then requiring them to perform cleanup activities, with EPA oversight. If EPA is unsuccessful in identifying responsible parties willing to perform cleanup activities, EPA may use Superfund monies to perform the cleanup itself.

The Superfund cleanup process begins with the identification of a potential site. After a preliminary screening of contamination information and potentially impacted populations, the site is proposed for the NPL.

An in-depth cleanup investigation is then performed, followed by an analysis of ways to address the contamination. EPA then identifies the preferred cleanup remedy and shares this in a public meeting which is accompanied by a comment period. After all public comments are reviewed, EPA documents the selected remedy in a legal document called a Record of Decision (ROD).

Following the ROD, EPA designs, constructs, tests, operates and/or performs the necessary cleanup activities. The public is encouraged to share its issues and concerns throughout the Superfund process (see figure below).

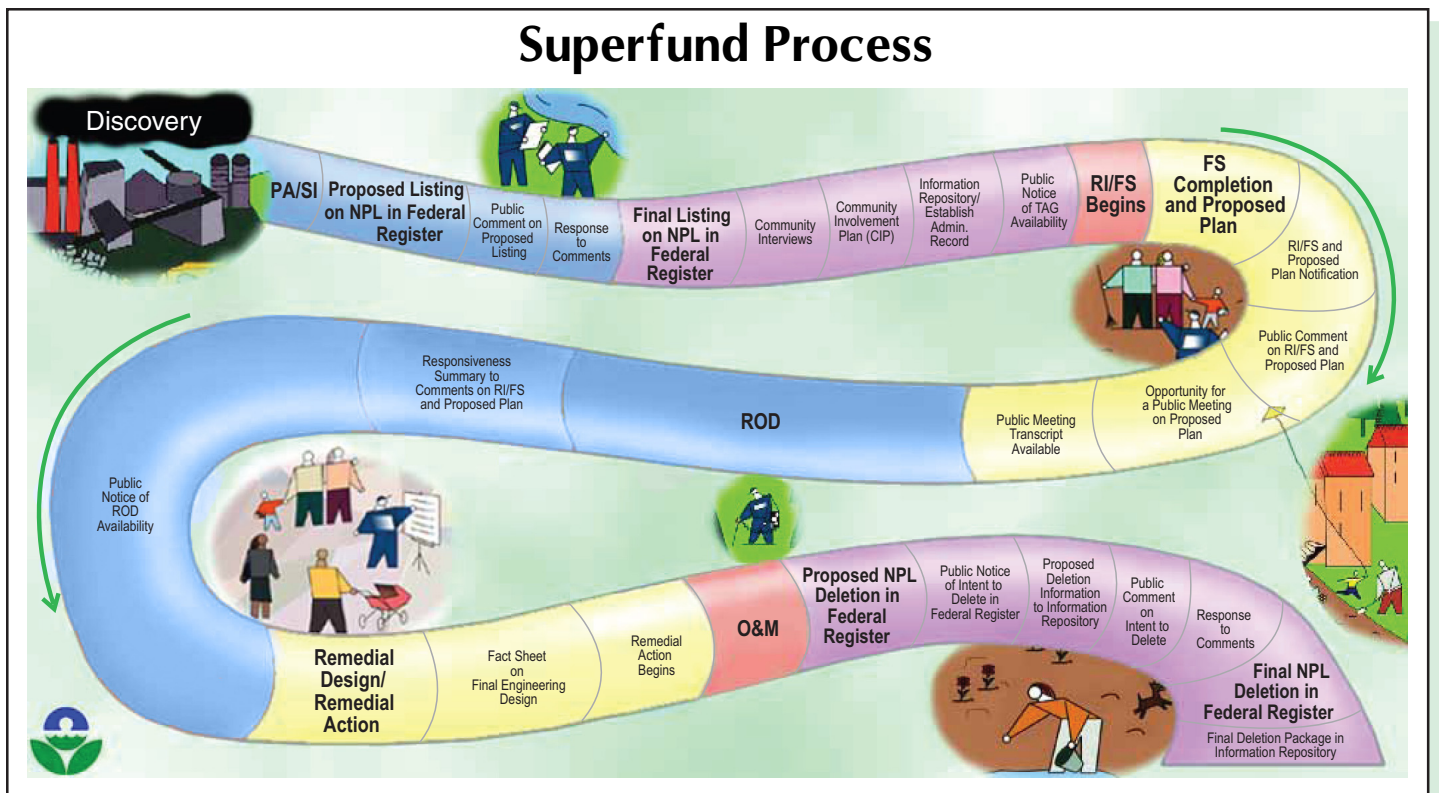
Site Description

The Iron King area includes property along Iron King Road, west of Highway 69, and the Humboldt Smelter area includes property at the east end of Main Street. The two areas are approximately 1/2 mile apart and are owned by separate property owners.

Iron King Area

The Iron King area covers approximately 153 acres. The majority of this area is covered by tailings and waste rock piles. There are five retention ponds, at least five mine shafts, a glory hole, and areas of stained soil.

The Iron King Mine was an active mine from 1904 until 1969. The mine was expanded in 1936 to remove lead, gold, silver, zinc, and copper from under ground. A 140-ton mill was erected to crush ore and was expanded to 225-ton capacity in 1938. A cyanide processing plant was added to the site in 1940 to treat the mill tailings to enhance precious metal recovery. Waste rock and tailings were deposited in large piles adjacent to actual mine property boundaries. Recently, the mine tailings from the site have been used to create fertilizer.



Humboldt Smelter Area

The Humboldt Smelter occupies approximately 182 acres. This area is covered in approximately 763,800 square feet of yellow-orange tailings, 1,041,200 square feet of grey smelter ash, and 456,000 square feet of slag.

The Humboldt Smelter operated from the late 1800s until the early 1960s. The original smelter burned down in 1904 and a smelter that processed 1,000-tons of ore per day was rebuilt in 1906.

Past Activity

In 2006, a removal of contaminated soil from four residential properties was conducted by a contractor on behalf of the Ironite Products Company under EPA oversight.

Current Activity

A 60-day public comment period is underway to receive community input on EPA's proposal to add the site to the National Priorities List. Public comments must be post-marked by May 19, 2008. Please send comments, identified by FDMS Docket Number EPA-HQ-SFUND-2008-0086 by one of the following methods:

- Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>
- e-mail comments to superfund.docket@epa.gov
- mail comments (no faxes or tapes) to:

Docket Coordinator, Headquarters
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
CERCLA Docket Office
(Mail Code 5305T)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Future Activity

EPA plans two important activities in the coming months.

A Remedial Investigation (RI) will be conducted to further assess the nature and extent of arsenic, lead and other potential contaminants in soil, water and air at the site. This investigation will help EPA determine possible cleanup actions for the site.

EPA will hold a community meeting to discuss the Superfund program, upcoming site activities, and opportunities for community involvement. Community interviews will also be held at a future date to develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). Further community activities will be scheduled as events unfold at the site.

Community Involvement Process

EPA policy and Superfund law establish a strong program of public participation in the site cleanup process. The purpose of the Community Involvement program is to help community members become involved in the decision-making process by developing two-way communication between the affected community and EPA. It focuses on answering the community's questions about the cleanup effort, providing information to the community about site activities, and incorporating community issues and concerns into Agency decisions.

A CIP will be developed to organize the way EPA provides cleanup information and access to the decision-making process to the community. During community interviews with local residents, elected officials and other interested parties, EPA gathers a list of issues and questions the community is concerned about so that they may be considered during the cleanup process, and particularly when a cleanup remedy is proposed.

Throughout the process, there will be a number of public meetings and a formal comment period when EPA's preferred cleanup method is identified. These meetings and comment period will be announced through fact sheets and through public notices advertised in the Prescott Valley Tribune and the Daily Courier.

An EPA CIC is assigned to work with the Iron King Mine/Humboldt Smelter community on this site. The CIC is available to answer questions, maintain the mailing list and coordinate community involvement activities. Contact information can be found on the back page.

Technical Assistance Grant Available

EPA offers a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) to a community affected by a Superfund site which funds activities to help the community participate in decision making. An initial grant up to \$50,000 is available to a qualified non-profit community group so they can contract with an independent technical advisor to interpret site documents and help the community understand technical information about their site. Contact the CIC for more information.

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Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns, please contact either of the following individuals:

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You may also call these individuals toll-free at (800) 231-3075.
Please leave a message and your call will be returned.

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