



# Tell EPA: “Clean Smurfit Now!”

## Background Information and Talking Points

*The shuttered Smurfit-Stone mill site is currently a vast industrial wasteland, leaking toxic contaminants into groundwater and the Clark Fork River. Rivers don't wait: Clean Smurfit Now.*

- **IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS – LET'S GET THIS CLEANUP STARTED:** The Smurfit-Stone pulp mill closed in 2009. In 2015 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Potentially Responsible Parties, or “PRPs” (the entities determined to be liable for cleanup) entered into an agreement that allowed the PRPs to avoid Superfund designation at the site by committing to pursue cleanup voluntarily. As of 2020, and after years of EPA studies, no major cleanup activities have begun at what has become a languishing industrial wasteland right in the Clark Fork River floodplain.
- **THE WASTE IS TOXIC AND ON THE MOVE:** The hazardous waste still lingering on the Smurfit site sits in an active floodplain, where those industrial toxics come into direct contact with groundwater that flows to the river.
- **... AND THERE'S A LOT OF IT:** In its 53 years of operation Smurfit-Stone produced 300 billion gallons of wastewater, 800,000 tons of sludge, 5.3 million cubic yards of mill waste, and 1.6 million tons of dioxin-generating bleached pulp. Aside from the wastewater, much of this hazardous material is still in place, strewn across nearly 1,000-acres of settling basins, sludge ponds, and unlined and un-permitted dumps.
- **THE DUMPS MUST GO:** Of the pollution remaining on site, EPA's own data show that a 140-acre area comprised of sludge and waste dumps poses the greatest risk. And not all of the drums buried there have even been fully investigated. While necessary studies continue here and elsewhere on the site, we know enough to begin cleaning up the wastes in these dumps now. *They are unlined, unpermitted, unregulated, and leaking.*
- **SERIOUSLY, IT'S TIME:** According to EPA, we are currently in the third year of the second step of an eight-phase Superfund process, with actual cleanup still possibly more than a decade away. As highly hazardous industrial toxics continue to pollute groundwater and the river *every day*, this pace is unacceptable. And the river will get in there ... some day. It won't wait. We must begin NOW to clean up Smurfit-Stone.

## Thanks for speaking up for the Clark Fork River!

### *A few reminders:*

- Personalizing = punch: *Every comment counts*, but using your own words and incorporating your own experiences will have an even greater impact.
- To multiply is to amplify: Share your action, and encourage others to join you in your call to *Clean Smurfit Now*.
- You're more powerful than you realize: A decade ago Missoulians broke an EPA record for most comments ever received in a Superfund process. That tidal wave of public sentiment ultimately led to the removal of Milltown Dam and restoration of the Clark Fork-Blackfoot confluence. *Your voice is the river's best protection.*

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