



# 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 11 YEARS – GET THIS CLEANUP STARTED:** The Smurfit-Stone pulp mill closed in 2010. 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 a voluntary cleanup. As of 2021, and after years of EPA studies, no major cleanup activities have begun. It's time: we need meaningful cleanup progress at Smurfit.
- **THE WASTE IS TOXIC AND ON THE MOVE:** 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. The wastewater is gone, but much of this hazardous material is still in place, strewn across nearly 1,000-acres of settling basins, sludge ponds, and unlined dumps. Worse, the waste dumps sit in the historic floodplain of the Clark Fork River and are in direct contact with groundwater, which flows to the river. Enough is enough.
- **THE DUMPS MUST GO:** Of the pollution remaining on site, EPA's own data show that the area containing the sludge and waste dumps poses the greatest risk. There's no reason to delay any longer: it's time to move from IF to HOW to clean up these unlined, unpermitted, and unregulated dumps.
- **YOU CAN'T EAT THE FISH:** Based on fish tissue data collected near Smurfit that showed harmful levels of dioxin, furans, and PCBs, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has warned people to avoid consuming fish (all species; all size classes) in a 148-mile stretch of the Clark Fork: from the Bitterroot confluence to the Flathead River. This is completely unacceptable, but EPA has no plans to further investigate the sources or the extent of the problem (read more [here](#)). EPA needs to get to the bottom of the toxic fish issue, determine Smurfit's contribution, and find out how far downriver fish are contaminated.
- **THE SCIENCE IS LACKING:** From risk assessments to groundwater models, numerous EPA studies and documents will play a major role in determining the level and scope of cleanup at Smurfit. But to date the science behind these documents has been deeply flawed. CFC reviewers and nationally-recognized technical analysts have found the risk assessments to have inappropriate sampling methodologies and unsupported assumptions, among other problems (CFC comments and tech analysis [here](#)); and a groundwater modeling study to have misguided interpretations and premature and misleading conclusions (CFC comments [here](#)). EPA must do a better job of assessing risks – including the risk of berm failure – to ensure a safe and comprehensive cleanup.

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

### *A few reminders:*

- Personalizing = punch: Use your own words and experiences to have the greatest 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: The Clark Fork is on the mend only because people have spoken up to demand that it be restored and protected. *Your voice is the river's best protection.*

### EPA Contact Information:

Allie Archer, EPA Superfund Project Manager, [archer.allie@epa.gov](mailto:archer.allie@epa.gov), 406-457-5033

---

*Did you comment? Please let us know and/or share your comments at [info@clarkfork.org](mailto:info@clarkfork.org) – thanks!*