NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

****NPL Site****

September 2023

FANSTEEL METALS/FMRI | Muskogee, Oklahoma
Muskogee County

Site Location:

Fansteel Metals/FMRI facility is located on 75 acres along the Arkansas River about 2.5 miles northeast of Muskogee, Muskogee County, Oklahoma at 10 Tantalum Place.

Site History:

Fansteel Metals/FMRI operated from 1957 to 1989, the facility produced tantalum and columbium metals from uranium ore, thorium ore, and tin slag feedstock by using an acid digestion process. Radioactive residues from the operations were disposed in onsite acidic ponds.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Groundwater underlying the facility is contaminated with metals, radionuclides and trichloroethene. The surface water, waste pond sludge, and soil are contaminated with metals, thorium and uranium radionuclides. Radiation surface contamination in some areas is up to 45 times background levels.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

The facility is located within historical boundaries of Cherokee Nation land and is adjacent to historical Muskogee Creek Nation land.

Operation of a groundwater and surface water collection and treatment system is necessary to manage contaminated water at the facility. When bankruptcy funding is exhausted in 2024 and the water treatment system stops functioning, contaminated surface water and groundwater would likely contaminate the Arkansas River. The Arkansas River is used as a fishery. In addition, there is a Wildlife Management Area and Waterfowl Refuge located within the Target Distance Limit

Response Activities (to date):

The site was scheduled to be decommissioned under Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) authority; however, the NRC licensee filed for bankruptcy and is no longer viable.

The EPA conducted an emergency response action in August 2018 to address the threat to human health and the environment by removing thousands of lab chemicals and over 3,000 gallons ammonium hydroxide at the site

Need for NPL Listing:

The state of Oklahoma has designated this site as their single top-priority to be listed on the NPL with support from the Cherokee and Muskogee Creek tribes. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated but are not viable at this time due to the extent of the contamination and complexity of the site. The EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.