

# F A C T S H E E T



United States  
Department of Energy  
Grand Junction Office

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## Monticello Radioactive Contaminated Properties Site Delisting Process

The U.S. Department of Energy has completed the cleanup of the Monticello Radioactive Contaminated Properties Site, commonly referred to as the Monticello Vicinity Properties. The 424 residential and commercial properties in Monticello, Utah, may now be removed from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List. This fact sheet provides a description of the project and explains the delisting process.

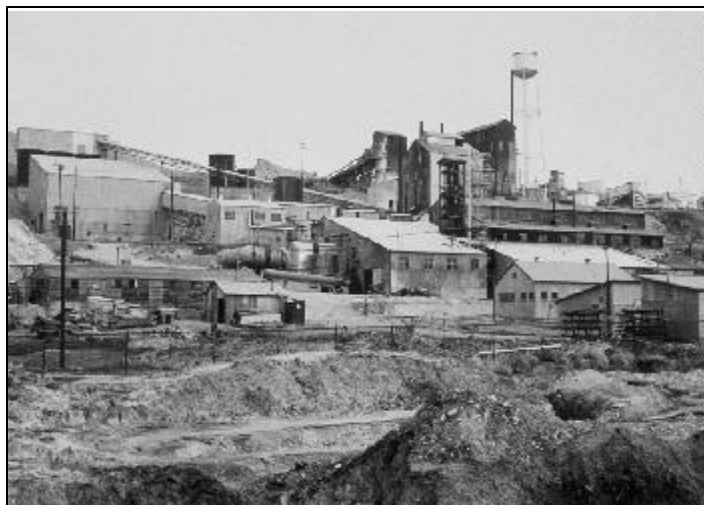
### Background

A uranium processing mill was operated in Monticello, Utah, from 1942 through 1959 to process both uranium and vanadium ores for the Federal Government, either under leases or through cost-type contracts. Mill operations were terminated in 1960, and the plant was dismantled in 1964.

Mill tailings, the radioactive sandlike material that remains after uranium has been extracted from the ore, were used throughout the city of Monticello for construction purposes. Limited amounts of tailings were used as fill for open lands; backfill around water, sewer, and electrical lines; and as sand mix in concrete, plaster, and mortar. Wind and water erosion also transported tailings from the millsite onto neighboring properties.

The main contaminants of concern include radium-226 and associated radon gas. The contaminants posed potential threats to human health and the environment resulting from exposure to radiation emanating from soils contaminated with uranium mill tailings and from radon gas inhalation.

In 1986, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed the Monticello Vicinity Properties Site on its



The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission mill at Monticello, Utah, operated from 1941 to end of 1959.

National Priorities List as the "Monticello Radioactive Contaminated Properties Site." The National Priorities List is EPA's list of top-priority sites that are eligible for cleanup under the Federal Superfund program. All sites under the Superfund program are regulated by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). All cleanup activities must satisfy the requirements of this Act.

Before the start of cleanup at any site on the National Priorities List, EPA tries to identify and locate entities that had responsibility for contributing to the creation of the waste. EPA first considers those entities to provide funding for the cleanup activities. If those entities are unable to provide funding, then Superfund money is used to fund the remediation. The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, the predecessor agency to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), was the primary recipient of products from this mill. Therefore, DOE has been responsible for funding and completing this remediation.

### Record of Decision

The Record of Decision for the Monticello Vicinity Properties Site was signed in 1989. The remedy selected by DOE, EPA, and the State of Utah was to remove radioactively contaminated material from the 424 properties, replacing it with clean material. Removed materials were temporarily relocated to the former millsite south of Monticello, Utah, and then transported with millsite tailings to the permanent repository located south of the millsite.

### Defining Site Boundary

To identify the properties to be included in the Monticello Vicinity Properties Site, every parcel of land within six geographical land sections encompassing the city limits was surveyed for soil contamination. Measurements were taken in habitable structures to determine the presence of radon. In 1997 and 1998, DOE also sent letters to all property owners within an 8-mile radius of

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the Monticello millsite requesting information about suspected millsite contamination on their properties. A total of 424 properties were identified as having contamination exceeding the regulatory cleanup standards and were "included" in the cleanup.

Supplemental Standards may be applied when the activities required to clean up the property would be cost prohibitive relative to the health benefit or cause excessive environmental damage. One private property, portions of the city street and utility easements, and state highway rights of way within the City were approved for the application of Supplemental Standards. Appropriate institutional controls (i.e., restrictions on land access and usage) and long-term monitoring have been implemented for these properties.



*The Harry Randall house in Monticello was one of the first properties to be remediated.*

## Remediation

DOE initiated cleanup activities in 1984 with the remediation of the Harry Randall house and the Montgomery Wards store. Remediation of the last property was completed in December 1998. Soil sampling and analysis confirmed compliance with standards, and radon measurements were taken in all habitable structures following cleanup. Radon detection devices were installed in structures for 3 months to 1 year to determine radon concentrations. This follow-up monitoring ensured that remedial action was successful in reducing radon concentrations. An independent verification contractor performed confirmatory sampling on 10 percent of the properties as well.

## Documentation

After cleanup and verification, DOE prepared a Property Completion Report for each property. Each report included the location and quantity of assessed contamination, location and quantity of removed contamination, radon measurement results (if applicable), and certification that the property meets cleanup standards. A Property Completion Report, along with a letter indicating acceptance of the report by EPA and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, was sent to the owner of each remediated property.

Copies of all Property Completion Reports are available at the Monticello City Offices, 17 North First East Street, Monticello, Utah.

## Site Delisting

The Monticello Vicinity Properties Site Close Out Report documents (1) completion of all removal actions in accordance with the Record of Decision and (2) establishment of required institutional controls and long-term monitoring programs. EPA approved the Close Out Report on September 2, 1999. The delisting process, which removes the Site from the National Priorities List, has been initiated by EPA.

The delisting process requires EPA, with the concurrence of the State of Utah, to determine if any of the following criteria has been met: (1) DOE has implemented all response actions required; (2) all appropriate fund-financed responses under CERCLA have been implemented, and no further response actions by DOE are appropriate; or (3) the remedial investigation has shown that the release poses no significant threat to public health or the environment. If one criterion is met, no further remedial measures are necessary. DOE has received concurrence from EPA and the State of Utah to begin the delisting process.

## Delisting Process

DOE has prepared a delisting docket package containing all pertinent information that supports the deletion recommendation. The docket is available to the public at the Monticello City Offices. The public has an opportunity to review this docket during the 30-day public comment period that follows publication of the Proposal to Delete and the Direct Final Rule in the *Federal Register*.

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*The Montgomery Ward store (shown here) and the Harry Randall house were the first properties remediated under the Monticello Vicinity Properties Project.*

The Proposal to Delete informs the public of EPA's intention to delist a site from the National Priorities List. This notice contains general information about the site, telephone numbers and addresses for EPA regional staff members and other points of contact, and deletion criteria and procedures. The Direct Final Rule states that all appropriate response actions have been implemented and remedial actions conducted at the site to date remain protective of public health and the environment. The Direct Final Rule includes an effective date; the names and telephone numbers of EPA, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, and DOE points of contact; and supplemental site information.

EPA publishes the Direct Final Rule in accordance with the final notice procedure that allows both a Direct Final Rule and a Proposal to Delete to be published concurrently to streamline the process. A notice is published in local newspapers announcing EPA's intent to delete the Site from the National Priorities List and the dates for the 30-day public comment period. A news release detailing the intended deletion of the site is prepared and distributed also.

The Direct Final Rule will be effective 60 days from the date of publication, unless EPA receives significant adverse or critical comments within 30 days of the date of publication. If such comments are received by EPA, EPA will publish a timely withdrawal of the Direct Final Rule in the *Federal Register* and inform the public that the Rule will not take effect.

## Deletion Timeline Summary

**September 2, 1999** — EPA approved *Close Out Report for Monticello, Utah, Vicinity Properties National Priorities List Site*.

**December 30, 1999** — EPA published Proposal to Delete in *Federal Register*.

**December 30, 1999** — EPA published Direct Final Rule in *Federal Register*.



*Contaminated materials required the use of heavy equipment for remediation of the Montgomery Ward store in Monticello.*