

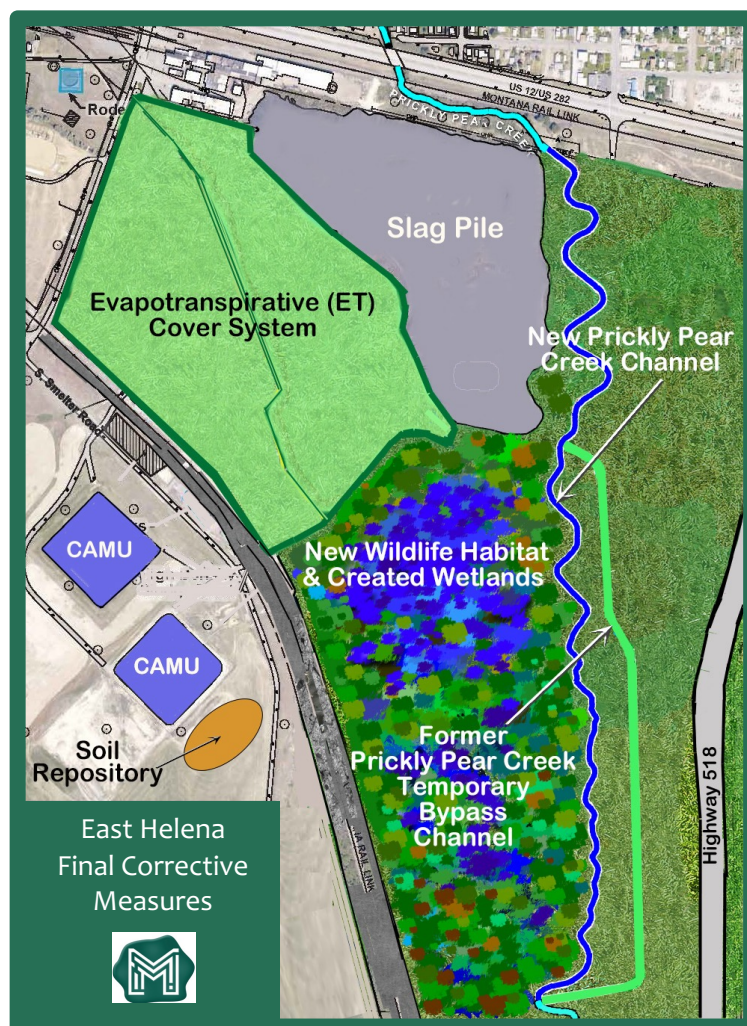
2025 Site Update

Environmental Challenges

More than a century of lead smelting left extensive contamination in soil and groundwater at the former ASARCO Smelter in East Helena. Soils contaminated with lead, arsenic, and other metals posed a threat to people and wildlife. Precipitation leached contaminants into groundwater and mobilized surface soil contaminants into stormwater runoff. Surface waters from Prickly Pear Creek and manmade lakes raised groundwater levels under the former smelter and the slag pile, adding contaminants to groundwater and causing arsenic and selenium plumes to migrate off-site.

Montana Environmental Trust Group (METG) has substantially completed cleanup measures at the former smelter.

- METG constructed a 62-acre evapotranspiration cover – one of the nation's largest – over the former smelter plant area that prevents direct exposure to contaminated soils and contaminant leaching into groundwater. Stormwater is stored in or shed clean from the ET cover.
- METG moved Prickly Pear Creek (PPC) away from the former smelter and slag pile and drained the manmade lakes, which lowered groundwater levels and reduced the transport of contaminated groundwater off-site. This award-winning project created 100 acres of new floodplain and 50 acres of new wetland and habitat. PPC now flows in a meandering 1.25-mile channel through a restored 242-acre area that supports diverse wildlife.
- Removing the failing smelter dam eliminated a major barrier to fish migration between PPC headwaters and Lake Helena.
- Groundwater contamination was further reduced by removing areas of highly contaminated soils that are now safely stored under the ET cover or in the corrective action management units (CAMUs).



Shown are the ET cover, two closed corrective action management units (CAMUs), the new Prickly Pear Creek (PPC) Channel, the former PPC Temporary Bypass Channel, and the new soil repository.

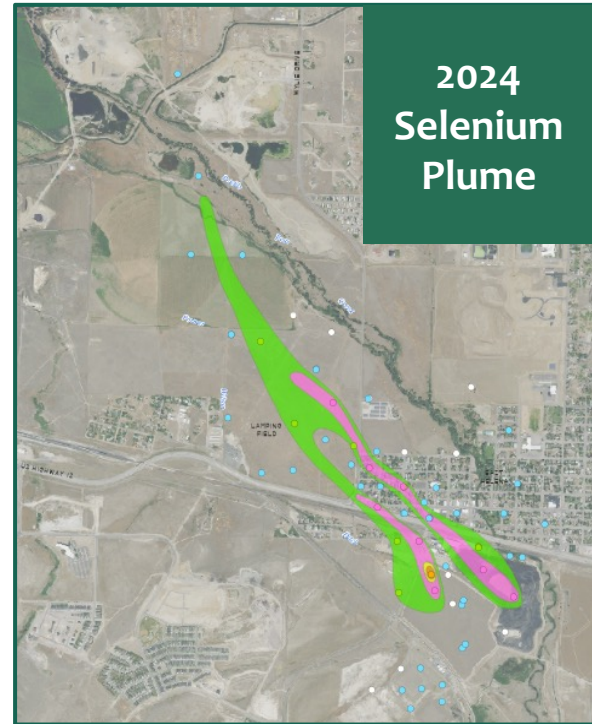
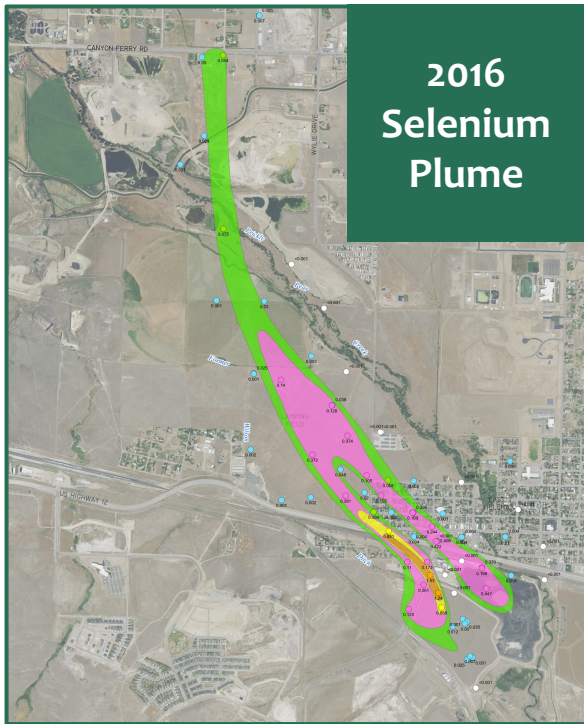
Montana Environmental Trust Group (METG)

METG is the court-appointed Trustee of the Montana Environmental Custodial Trust. METG is responsible for remediating and facilitating beneficial, community-supported reuse of former ASARCO lands, under EPA oversight and for the benefit of the United States and the State of Montana.

2025 Cleanup and Redevelopment Updates and Results

Cleanup activities have led to average arsenic and selenium concentrations dropping by more than 50% on the Smelter site since 2010. The off-site selenium plume has receded by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile since 2016.

The last remaining cleanup measure entails grading and capping the 16-million-ton slag pile. METG has continued pursuing slag removal, as unfumed slag contains metals with recovery value. Due to transshipping issues, the multi-year slag recycling project was paused in 2024 after almost 145,000 tons were crushed and transported off-site. In 2025, METG continues to pursue slag purchasers and expects to resume the sale and recycling of slag. Unfumed slag removal will eliminate the last major source of selenium loading to groundwater at the Site.



The selenium plume has receded 4,000 feet since 2016—and 2,300 feet since 2022 alone.

METG has sold, donated, or transferred 1,663 acres of the $\pm 2,000$ acres it acquired from ASARCO in 2009. Of the 372 acres still owned by METG, only 20 acres are available for sale. The other remaining land is: under contract for sale to Helena Area Habitat for Humanity; slated for donation to the City of East Helena; or will be held in perpetuity for long-term stewardship. Implementing the ongoing and planned reuses will require private sector investment of more than \$2 billion over the next 15 years.

On August 7, 2025, METG and its project partners – City of East Helena, Prickly Pear Land Trust, East Helena Public Schools, Habitat for Humanity, Oakland Companies, and EPA – received the **prestigious national Phoenix Award** for the cleanup and revitalization of the former ASARCO smelter.



Project partners at the National Brownfields Training Conference in Chicago, accepting the Phoenix Award

East Helena Redevelopment Progress



Town Pump (26,000 sf Commercial Center)



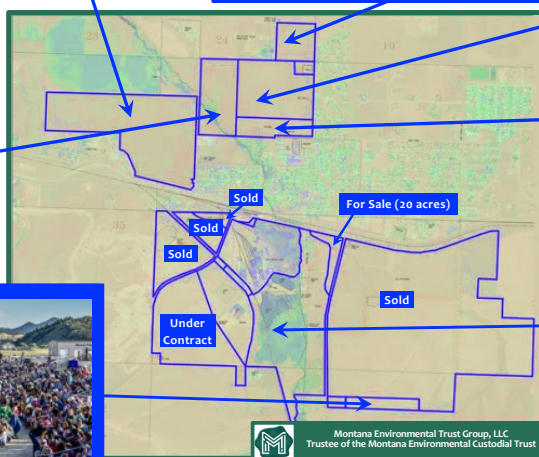
East Helena High School



319-Home Highland Meadows Subdivision



The Grove (Greenway Trail)



Montana Environmental Trust Group, LLC
Trustee of the Montana Environmental Custodial Trust



Prickly Pear Elementary School



Prickly Pear Park (Greenway Trail)



East Helena Valley Rodeo Arena



Redevelopments Completed to Date

- ✓ Prickly Pear Elementary School and East Helena High School
- ✓ 26,000-square-foot Town Pump store
- ✓ Majority of 319-home Highland Meadows Subdivision
- ✓ The Grove and Prickly Pear Park
- ✓ Intermodal transportation center
- ✓ Expanded manufacturing center
- ✓ New East Helena Rodeo Arena

Redevelopment Plans

- ✓ ±5,500 new, diverse homes (including ±1,500 affordable)
- ✓ Light manufacturing (including incubator space)
- ✓ 70-acre commercial center (retail, office, hotel, banks, etc.)
- ✓ New schools, parks, and open space
- ✓ Expected private sector investments - \$2 billion

METG East Helena Land Sales and Donations

Purchaser or Grantee*	New Use	Acres
East Helena Public Schools	Prickly Pear Elementary School	50*
Town Pump	Mixed Use/Commercial Development	254
Oakland Companies	319-Home Highland Meadows Subdivision	100
East Helena Public Schools	East Helena High School	35
American Chemet	Expanded Manufacturing Plant and Office	13
Power Townsend	Light Manufacturing Center	26
Habitat for Humanity	257-Home Residential Subdivision	72
Oakland Companies	Commercial and 1000+ Residential Homes	731
Montana Propane	Intermodal Distribution Center	3
Prickly Pear Land Trust	Greenway Trail	322*
City of East Helena**	Roads, Utilities, City Services, and Rodeo Arena	57*
Total East Helena Land Sales and Donations As Of 11/9/2023:		1,663

If you have questions, please contact:

METG: Cindy Brooks

cb@g-etg.com, 617-448-9762

EPA: Bridget Williams

williams.bridget@epa.gov, 406-594-8792

Visit: mtenvironmentaltrust.org



LEARN MORE



Prickly Pear Park opened to the public in 2025, providing access to Prickly Pear Creek and a diverse wildlife habitat.