

**The US Department of the Interior's Central Hazardous Materials Fund (CHF) 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary – Fulfilling the Promise; Restoring Our Lands**

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The Department of the Interior manages over 500 million acres of public lands for the American people. Some of these lands were contaminated by past practices before they were acquired by the Department, while others have been used in the past for mining operations where tailing and milling activities left waste behind. To address contamination on Department managed lands, the Central Hazardous Materials Fund or CHF was established by Congress in 1995 to provide funding to address these sites. Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Executive Order 12580, the Department and associated bureaus conduct studies and cleanups as the lead regulator. Many of the CHF contaminated sites are abandoned hardrock mines and mill sites. These sites are leftover from past operations from 1872 Mining Act claims on public lands. Over the years, the program has developed a budget process that is inclusive of all the land managing bureaus, prioritizes funding for high risk sites, established an internal controls process to ensure funds are being used appropriately, and seek cost recovery where viable potentially responsible parties are available. The CHF working with bureaus including the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and US Geological Survey have addressed 102 CHF sites over the life of the program with 40 sites moved to inactive status. Work continues on the remaining sites with new sites being added as they are identified.