The combination of floods and dioxin contamination had devastated the people of Times Beach, Missouri. The town, originally a popular spot to build summer homes, was heavily contaminated with dioxins, chemicals found in the herbicide Agent Orange which was used during the Vietnam War. The roads turned purple and animals began dying. In 1982 a leaked EPA document was published and alerted Times Beach officials that their town may be contaminated with hazardous substances. Under pressure, the EPA conducted an analysis on the soil. The town was devastated by a large flood shortly before the EPA’s results confirmed toxic levels of dioxin. The CDC recommended the town not be re inhabited, and the EPA announced they would be using Superfund money to buy out all the homes. Eventually an incinerator was constructed and the contaminated materials were burned and buried. Today the area has been renovated into the Route 66 State Park, and further EPA testing has declared the park safe. The story of the disaster in Times Beach must not be forgotten, as it not only serves as a cautionary tale about chemical contamination, but also teaches an important lesson on environmental justice.

**Health Effects of Dioxin**

- Dioxins are pollutants that persist in the environment for a very long time
- This family of chemicals is produced as an industrial by-product
- Dioxin is absorbed into fat tissue and can stay in the body for a prolonged period of time
- Newborns and developing fetuses are most affected by dioxin
- Short-term effects of dioxin exposure include: skin lesions and altered liver function
- Long-term effects of dioxin are linked to immune system impairment and disruption of the nervous, endocrine, and reproductive systems
- Chronic exposure to dioxin has been linked with several types of cancers

**Resolution**

- In February 1983 a representative from the EPA met with residents to announce a buy-out of their homes
- The first offers were not made until August which many considered low
- Residents utilized the heavy media coverage in the town to fight for fair prices
- The EPA came back with higher offers that many accepted
- Residents that held out too long had their homes condemned
- By the 1990s Times Beach was no longer inhabited
- In 1995 an incinerator was built that burned over 250,000 tons of dioxin-contaminated material from the state
- Times Beach contained over 50% of the dioxin in Missouri
- Cleanup was finished in 1997 at a total cost of around $200 million dollars
- Times Beach has been renovated and is now Route 66 State Park
- Only one original building remains which now serves as the park’s visitor center
- In 2012 the EPA returned to the site and testing determined that there was no significant risks for park visitors or workers

**Bibliography**

- Dioxins and Their Effects on Human Health.
- "Dioxins and Their Effects on Human Health." Times Beach.
- "Laws & Regulations." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Superfund" Act.
- "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)." Times Beach Missouri.
- "EPA Can Now Require Restrictions Against All Chemical Substances except for Those in Foods, Cosmetics, Pesticides and Drugs." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Environmental Justice." Times Beach Missouri.
- "The Times Beach Story (Marilyn Leistner)." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Impacts and Legislation." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Abstract." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Resolution." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Background." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Effects on Residents." Times Beach Missouri.
- "Health Effects of Dioxin." Times Beach Missouri.