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Comments are In: EPA is Listening

The public comment period on EPA’s Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Upper Basin closed November 23. EPA received hundreds of comments. It will take time for the agency to consider and respond to all of them.

EPA takes each comment seriously. The agency is aware that the cleanup is complex, and is a topic which is deeply important to local citizens.

EPA Regional Administrator Dennis McLerran is engaged and listening, too. He has heard input at meetings with the Basin Commission and with local elected officials. The agency has received comments both in favor of and against the plan. EPA will consider changes to the cleanup plan in response to public input.

EPA is considering what changes need to be made to the cleanup plan in response to community concerns.

How Comments are Handled

All comments are entered into an electronic database. Comments are logged individually and in categories. This process ensures that each comment is accounted for and helps with an orderly and thorough response. The agency will prepare a document called a “Response to Comments.”

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 See Page 12

EPA Listens to Cleanup Plan Comments

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It will include both a response to each comment and a summary response to each issue.

The Response to Comments will be issued to the public at the same time as the ROD (Record of Decision) Amendment. The ROD Amendment is the final decision document. It will describe the selected cleanup alternative. The documents will be completed some time in 2011. The public will be able to request a copy of these documents, once completed, from EPA. The documents also will be available on EPA's web site.



Community members tour the Upper Basin, seeing problem areas and completed cleanups.

It will take some time before people making comments get a response back from EPA.

Originally the comment period was set to close on August 25. However, in response to public request, EPA granted a 90 day extension, for a total comment period of 135 days.

Community Participation

Since the Proposed Plan came out on July 12, 2010, community members have participated in many EPA-sponsored events. In August, EPA hosted a public meeting and open house (see Basin Bulletin August 2010), attended by well over 200 people.

Citizens were clear that the Proposed Plan was long and complicated, and that many people had questions.

In response, EPA hosted two more open houses, created more education material to summarize elements of the plan, and hosted a bus tour of the Upper Basin. Other local events have been held, as well.

Nearly 50 people went on the bus tour. The tour visited areas slated for cleanup and sites where cleanup is already done. Participants got to learn first hand about contamination issues and ask questions. Many people commented that it was time well spent and that they learned important information about cleanup issues.

For more on the Proposed Plan and ROD Amendment, visit <http://go.usa.gov/igD>.

Or contact Project Managers:

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Adaptive Management: Planning and Implementing Cleanup Work, Involving the Community

Another document that will come out at the same time as the ROD is currently called the “**Adaptive Management Plan.**” This document will lay out the methods for planning projects under the ROD, involving the community, and adjusting the cleanup based on what is learned.

It is in development now with input from the Basin Commission’s Upper Basin Project Focus Team. Keeping in mind that changes to the cleanup plan are likely, the Adaptive Management Plan will be developed concurrently with the ROD.

With such a large and complex site, all physical and contaminant conditions cannot be fully known. There is also uncertainty as to how effective the cleanup actions will be, how long they will take to complete, and how many will be required to achieve the overall cleanup goals. Uncertainty is unavoidable, and project management must account for this reality. This technical framework will outline how work priorities will be set and how those uncertainties will be managed so that the cleanup can be the most effective.

Adaptive management is not simply “learning by doing” or “adjusting to the unexpected.” Rather, it is a systematic, deliberate, defined way of achieving a desired outcome. It uses a six-step framework for making management decisions. The six steps are:

1. Assess the Problem – complete;
2. Design the Adaptive Management Plan – underway;
3. Implement the Adaptive Management Plan – through a ROD Amendment;
4. Monitor the action;
5. Evaluate Monitoring Results;
6. Adjust the Plan in Response to Monitoring Results.

The Adaptive Management Plan lays out a logical and transparent way to prioritize cleanup work and will also identify the opportunities for community input. The process includes these activities:

- Develop cleanup site priority rankings (sorting the list of actions in the ROD Amendment)
- Identify cleanup site groupings (into geographic areas to make the cleanup efficient)
- Lay out the schedule for the individual cleanups (over a 1 and 5 year schedule)
- Forecast how effective the cleanups will be in meeting the cleanup goals

The results of this prioritization work are put into

The Adaptive Management Plan lays out a logical and transparent way to prioritize cleanup work.

“**Implementation Plans.**” The plans will lay out specific work activities proposed to take place over the near term. The plans will include fairly detailed information about what is proposed to be cleaned up, when, how, and for what cost. The plans will not be

static documents but adjusted as the cleanup proceeds to reflect information learned from the actions taken. The plans also may be adjusted based on the availability of funds and other resources needed to implement cleanup.

The development of the Implementation Plans is a critical opportunity for public involvement. Community members will be asked to review and comment on One-Year and Five-Year Implementation Plans. Also, the Upper Basin Project Focus Team may host public workshops to get input on the development of the Implementation Plans.

The cleanup work identified in these one- and five-year plans will be included in the Basin Commission work plans. The Implementation Plans will be adopted only after stakeholder and community input has been considered.

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Adaptive Management: Involving the Community

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The Adaptive Management Plan will lay out how cleanup priorities will be set, with the public's input.

The concept of Implementation Plans was the topic of a public session held last June. Nearly 70 people attended and shared their views about the cleanup and about work planning.

On December 7, members of the Upper Basin Project Focus Team shared their knowledge and opinions about the list of source areas included in the Proposed Plan, to help refine the list of cleanup sites.

EPA will use the information collected during this meeting and from the public comment period to consider adjustments to the list of cleanup sites

that will appear in the ROD Amendment. EPA continues to welcome input about how to best involve community members in plans for the cleanup work:

- How do you want to be informed?
- What information would you like to provide?
- What should the public's involvement in developing the Implementation Plans look like?
- What else should EPA consider?

To share your ideas, contact Bill Adams at adams.bill@epa.gov (206) 553-2806, or (800) 424-4372.

Asarco Settlement Dollars at Work

As part of the Asarco bankruptcy settlement in December 2009, the Asarco Successor Coeur d'Alene Custodial and Work Trust (the Trust) was established. The Trust will do Superfund cleanup work in areas contaminated by historical mining practices in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. Dan Silver serves as the Trustee. Last month, Silver announced his hiring of Dan Meyer to be the first full-time employee. Meyer will start January 1, 2011. Most recently, Meyer has served as the Remediation Program Manager for the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, responsible for cleaning up residential and commercial properties in the Bunker Hill Superfund Site.

"I am delighted that Dan Meyer has agreed to serve as the lead manager for the Trust activities

in the Basin," Silver said in announcing Meyer's hire. "Dan has an extensive history with the mining community, the regulatory agencies, and local community leaders. He is known for getting work done in a fiscally responsible way. And he has a demonstrated record for collaboration and achievement under arduous circumstances."

Silver noted that Meyer's first job will be to establish a Trust office in the Upper Coeur d'Alene Basin. Over the next few years, the Trust will be ramping up its remediation activities. The Trust plans to hire local engineering and construction firms in 2011 to begin priority cleanup work identified in EPA decision documents, including the upcoming Upper Basin Record of Decision Amendment and Implementation Plan.

EPA Completes Five Year Review of Bunker Hill Superfund Site

EPA completed its third five year review report for the entire Bunker Hill Superfund Site on November 18. The agency is required to conduct these reviews every five years where contaminants remain on-site.

The purpose of the review is to evaluate the overall performance of the cleanup actions and to make sure the cleanup is protecting human health and the environment. During the review, cleanup actions were evaluated at the site's three "operable units:" the Bunker Hill "Box" populated areas, the Box non-populated areas, and the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

Overall, EPA has found that cleanup actions are functioning as expected and are protecting human health and the environment in most locations where actions have been taken.

High house dust lead levels are occurring in homes in the Basin and a limited number of homes in the Box, which require follow-up actions. The five year review report identifies a number of issues related to the cleanup work and recommended follow-up actions to ensure the work remains protective over the long term.

In April 2010, EPA invited the public to share concerns about the site and information to help with the review. The agency extends its thanks to the individuals and organizations that provided information.

You can find copies of the five year review report at locations listed on page 9 and online at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/basin/coeur+d'alene+basin> or <http://go.usa.gov/iYg>

Soil Repository Updates

Three repositories were open to receive remedial action and Institutional Controls Program (ICP) waste in the 2010 field season. Big Creek Repository (BCR) serves the Upper Basin. It is located between the communities of Osburn and Kellogg. East Mission Flats Repository (EMF), located near Cataldo, serves communities in the Lower Basin. Page Repository serves ICP users between Elizabeth Park and Pinehurst. Northwind, Inc., which runs the day-to-day operations of the BCR and EMF repositories, hired 17 local and nine nearby community residents in 2010.

Big Creek Repository expansion design should be completed for EPA review in December 2010. The final design report should be out by March 2011. If all goes well, disposal at the north side expansion area could begin in the 2011 construction season. The north-side expansion will allow an additional 130,000 cubic yards of capacity for the yard cleanup program, other remedial action waste, and ICP program soil waste. The expansion will extend Big Creek

Repository's active life for another three to five years. Measures to address citizen concerns are built into the design of the expansion. Some examples are reducing visual impacts from the Coeur d'Alene Trail, continued groundwater monitoring, stream channel setbacks, and addressing traffic patterns.

East Mission Flats Repository at Dredge Road and Canyon Road is fully constructed and operational. Property cleanup contractors will use the I-90/Dredge Road access on the west end of the repository. This routing plan significantly decreases truck traffic on Canyon Road. The east side of the repository will remain open for ICP users this winter. Citizens performing activities under the ICP can get a gate key from Panhandle Health District ((208) 783-0707) to access either the Big Creek or the East Mission Flats repositories.

DEQ is gathering site characterization data for development of two new repositories in the Upper Basin.

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Soil Repository Updates

The **Osburn tailings impoundment** (at Nuchols Gulch) and the **Star tailings impoundment** (at Woodland Park) were identified through a two-year public process as the most suitable locations for additional repositories. The site characterization field work should be complete by spring 2011. DEQ will use the results of the field work for repository design. DEQ is doing repository design at the Osburn site first. The Star repository design will follow once the Osburn design is completed and will depend on site acquisition.

The first report for the Osburn site will be the 30% Design Report. This report will outline major features including the repository footprint, operational areas, waste placement areas, site access, and others. The Osburn 30% Design Report is scheduled for early fall of 2011. The public will be invited to review the 30%-design report and provide comments for consideration in the final design. This presents an opportunity for citizens to see how citizen concerns and values expressed during the public process are reflected in the design phase.

The **Page Repository** located in Page off of County Highway 10 accepts ICP waste from the Bunker Hill Box. Contaminated soils generated within the Box include public works projects, homeowner projects, and building contractor

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projects. To accommodate long-term future community development activities in the Box (Elizabeth Park to West Kingston area), another 2.6 million cubic yards of ICP repository capacity will be needed. DEQ has evaluated 26 repository and technology alternatives for future ICP waste management in the Box.

DEQ has narrowed that list of alternatives to eight, which it presented to the Bunker Hill Task Force, and to elected county and city officials at the November Task Force Meeting. DEQ received suggestions and comments from the Task Force, elected officials, and citizens on alternatives for the Box long-term ICP repository location. These suggestions and comments will help DEQ and EPA in making a decision on location of the long-term ICP repository.

Work on the **Community Fill Policy** is also ongoing. The Panhandle Health District and local elected officials have expressed a desire to use contaminated materials excavated from construction and maintenance activities as fill, to help establish developable land. In response, EPA and DEQ have agreed to evaluate and develop a policy that establishes the appropriate precautions, practices and documentation requirements that would allow such activities to be conducted in a manner consistent with cleanup objectives of the OU 3 ROD, as well as the RODs for OU 1 and OU 2.



Local residents attended Open Houses in October to share concerns and learn more about proposed cleanup sites.

2010 Residential Property Cleanups, Year in Review

The Basin Property Remediation Program (Property Cleanup Program) replaces metals-contaminated yards in communities from Mullan to Rose Lake.

As of mid-November, the total number of properties cleaned up this year was 320, which is an average year for the program. Contractor bids were competed in February for a new three-year term of work. Stewart Contracting (officially “United Mine Services”) and Ferguson Contracting were awarded the contracts for the yard cleanup work.

Together the companies cleaned up a preliminary total surface area equivalent to about 55 football fields and employed 113 Silver Valley area workers, and another 14 from adjoining communities. The year’s work was paid for through federal stimulus money and money provided by the federal government through a cooperative agreement between EPA and DEQ.

The state of Idaho contributed the usual 10% match of the federal contribution. As of mid-November, TerraGraphics Environmental Inc., on behalf of DEQ, has met with 270 property owners to discuss remediation needs and sampled 296 properties to determine plans for next year’s property cleanups. TerraGraphics had a crew of 38 Silver Valley area residents on board, with 43 support positions outside the immediate area.

Thank You

From DEQ – Kellogg

*To the citizens of the Silver Valley,
Contractors, and Local Representatives:*

*We thank you for working with us to complete
a busy construction season.*

*Thank you for keeping in touch about your
concerns and questions.*

Have a Happy Holiday!

Wallace Yard and Spur Lines: Cleanup Nearly Complete

Cleanup at the **Wallace Yard and Spur Lines** is wrapping up. Located in Wallace, Idaho, and in Ninemile and Canyon Creek Canyons, this former rail yard and its spur lines were contaminated with heavy metals from historical mining operations. A settlement was approved last spring for the cleanup. The settlement was approved in federal court among the Union Pacific Railroad, BNSF Railway, Inc., and the State of Idaho and the United States on behalf of EPA.

The cleanup will help reduce risk to people and wildlife. Wallace Yard will be available for reuse, subject to private property transactions and local planning. Contaminated areas were capped with 12” of clean gravel and, in some places, asphalt. In some areas, such as at the Wallace Visitor Center, contaminants were removed before the clean cap and landscape vegetation was placed. Across from the Visitor Center, a large durable gravel cap was placed in the truck parking area. In a visible area north of I-90 where more cleanup took place,

workers preserved large existing trees and other smaller vegetation.

About 12 miles of the old spur lines were cleaned up. Cleanup work included combinations of removal of contaminants, clean capping, vegetation, and access barriers. Also, two former railroad segments now provide asphalt/gravel access roads to residents living along Yellow Dog Road and West Fork Ninemile Creek. Construction is nearly complete on all areas except the former Hercules Mill site. That site will be completed in 2011. Additional work will likely need to be done in the spring to complete the spur lines.

The railroads are funding the full cost of cleanup and long-term maintenance. To see the Consent Decree and other project documents, visit yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/wallace/. For more information, contact Ed Moreen, EPA Project Manager in Coeur d’Alene, at ☎ (208) 664-4588.

Coming Soon

EPA to Hire Basin-Based Outreach Person

EPA will soon advertise for a full-time **Community Information Specialist**. Based in Kellogg, this outreach person will be accessible to citizens and can help build local relationships. The goal is to improve communications about the Superfund cleanup. Duties will focus on outreach, community education, meeting logistics, and serving as a liaison for community concerns. The position will report to EPA, and work closely with EPA Community Involvement Coordinators and DEQ.

The position will be advertised to the public. Applicants will need to meet certain qualifications.

For example, the position is geared towards retired individuals who are looking to contribute their expertise to the federal government. Under this hiring program, applicants must be at least 55 years of age or older. Relevant education and experience will be considered. Stay tuned for more information.

Planning for Lower Basin Cleanup

While cleanup is well underway in other parts of the Basin, planning for future cleanup work in the Lower Basin continues. Some cleanup actions have already been taken in the Lower Basin. They include doing a farm-to-wetlands conversion project, paving boat ramp parking lots, improving boat ramps, and stabilizing riverbanks. Cleanup activities in the Lower Basin require significant advance planning. This is due to, among other things, concerns about flooding, recontamination, and the complexities of some actions like riverbed sediment removal.

to measure and model sediment transport and river system hydraulics in the Lower Basin. Data will be used to:

- Document current trends;
- Define contaminant source areas;
- Refine the sediment budget;
- Build a simulation model, and describe conditions against which to predict the effects of potential cleanups;
- Document success of cleanups completed; and
- Select future cleanups.

“Lower Basin” refers to the area of the Coeur d’Alene River west of Cataldo to the mouth of the Coeur d’Alene River as it runs into Lake Coeur d’Alene at Harrison.

EPA released the Enhanced Conceptual Site Model (ECSM) in August. The ECSM shows that contaminated sediment continues to be transported throughout the South Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River, including some of its tributaries, and delivered to its main stem and flood plains. The ECSM shows that the greater part of lead-contaminated sediments is now stored, mobilized, transported, and deposited in the Lower Basin or Lake Coeur d’Alene during flood events. The ECSM has helped to determine the data needed

For the most part, specific plans for additional Lower Basin cleanups have been slowed down due to the concerns noted above, including flooding and potential recontamination of cleaned up areas. However, EPA is using the results of the ECSM and investing more resources to better understand the Lower Basin. Now that new information is available, EPA is reviewing Lower Basin remedies previously selected in the 2002 Operable Unit 3 ROD to determine whether the selected actions should be modified or supplemented. The Lower Basin work will likely include review of select remedial actions identified in the 2001 Operable Unit 3 Feasibility Study Report with a view to EPA’s anticipated issuance of a ROD Amendment for the Lower Basin at a future date.

For more information, contact Ed Moreen, EPA Project Manager in Coeur d’Alene, at ☎ (208) 664-4588.

Opportunities to Get Involved

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission

Executive Director:

Terry Harwood

(208) 783-2528

www.basincommission.com

Next Meeting: February 16, 2011 (tentative)

Citizens Coordinating Council (CCC)

Contact: Jerry Boyd

(509) 455-6000

www.basincommission.com/ccc.asp

Submissions: To make a submission to the *Basin Bulletin*, please contact Andrea Lindsay or Debra Sherbina (*see contact info on the front page*)

Subscriptions: You're invited to join our mailing or e-mail list. The link to the Basin Bulletin can be e-mailed to you at the time of publication. For additions or corrections to the e-mail or hard copy mailing list, contact Andrea Lindsay or Debra Sherbina at:

- U.S. EPA, ETPA-081, Suite 900
- 1200 Sixth Avenue,
- Seattle, WA 98101-1128

or at their phone and e-mail, as noted on the front page of the *Bulletin*.

The Basin Bulletin is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency three times a year. The Basin Bulletin offers updates about activities related to Superfund cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. For mailing list changes, to send comments about this newsletter, to contact the editors, or to submit articles for consideration, call Andrea Lindsay or Debra Sherbina at the phone numbers provided. Mention of trade names, products, or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying, official EPA approval, endorsement, or recommendation.

Documents

Select documents about the cleanup can be found at:

North Idaho College Library

Molstead Library

1000 Garden Avenue

Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

(208) 769-3355

Wallace Public Library

415 River Street

Wallace, ID 83873

(208) 752-4571

Spokane Public Library

906 West Main Avenue

Spokane, WA 99201

(208) 444-5336

EPA Field Office

1910 Northwest Boulevard, Suite 208

Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

(208) 664-4588

EPA Seattle Office

Superfund Record Center

1200 Sixth Avenue

Seattle, WA 98101

(206) 553-4494 or (800) 424-4372

St. Maries Library

822 W. College Avenue

St. Maries, ID 83861

(208) 245-3732

Kellogg Public Library

16 West Market Avenue

Kellogg, ID 83837

(208) 786-7231



Communications Project Focus Team (PFT) Update

By Jeri DeLange, Communications PFT Chair

Over the last few months, the Basin Commission's **Communications PFT** has been focusing its outreach efforts to help citizens "Get Involved, Get Informed, and Be Heard." The group has produced a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet regarding public commenting. Tips for making effective public comment are listed on the back of the sheet. Copies have been made available to the public at local community open houses, Basin Commission related meetings, the Basin Commission office in Kellogg, and online at www.basincommission.com (under NEWS).

The Citizens Coordinating Council (CCC) also held a mini-workshop on this topic at the last CCC meeting in October. It was facilitated by Vera Williams, CCC Vice-Chair, on behalf of a joint effort by the CCC and Communications

PFT. Based on suggestions made at the CCC meeting, it may be presented again at other venues.

The Communications PFT will also continue working on finalizing a CCC survey questionnaire. After the results are tabulated next year, the information will be used to help increase public participation in the Basin Commission process and to help develop communications pieces or training sessions.

The PFT's Recreation Education Subcommittee, chaired by Tina Elayer of IDEQ, has been updating the Panhandle Health District's mascot, Riley Raccoon.

Riley will be used to help educate young children about lead awareness and playing safe in the Lower Basin. Look for a new and improved Riley in the future!

Get on the e-mail list!

Want to get timely news and notices about the cleanup? Sign up for our e-mail alert list. You can expect to get about two or three e-mails per month with real-time project information. To get on the list, just send your e-mail address to lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.



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