



BASIN BULLETIN

A Quarterly Review of Cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin

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Next Basin Commission meeting
June 21, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Coeur d'Alene Inn

EPA Community
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(see back page for website)

Coeur d'Alene Basin: A Time of Opportunity

A Message from Regional Administrator Michael Bogert

As a new member of the EPA team and an Idaho native, I welcome the opportunity to serve on the Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission and be a part of the important cleanup under way in the Silver Valley.



It is a time for new opportunity in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. After many years of cleanup, public health concerns are being addressed and environmental improvements realized. Cleanup areas are being returned to productive use, while the local economy is gaining strength. EPA is pleased about North Idaho's community redevelopment work and infrastructure initiatives. We share in the excitement about the area's strong economic growth.

EPA's commitment to the health of the Basin and its people remains strong. Our goal is to complete the cleanup and leave the area a cleaner, safer place. It's a tough, complicated job that will take time and the cooperation of many people and agencies.

EPA believes the Basin Commission is the best forum for collaboration and local involvement in the cleanup. Government agencies at all levels can work together toward a common vision — a cleaner, healthier place to live, work, and raise our families. The Basin Commission plays a unique and instrumental role in the cleanup. EPA looks to the Commission to help set our cleanup

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A Time of Opportunity *(continued)*

A Message from Michael Bogert

priorities, make sure that local views are heard and considered, and tap technical experts in the area. The Basin Commission provides a unique opportunity to identify new ways of working together, highlighting progress, and creating a working environment where creative ideas and collaboration thrive.

EPA encourages local residents to become informed about and involved in the cleanup work. Basin Commission meetings are open to the public and are held every three to four months. **The next Basin Commission meeting will be held June 21, in Coeur d'Alene, at the Coeur d'Alene Inn, 414 W. Appleway, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** For more information, visit the Basin Commission website at www.basincommission.com.

The Commission

The Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission is a local coordinating body created by Idaho state law. The Commission is in charge of developing cleanup work plans, sharing project information, giving technical advice, coordinating work with local priorities, and providing a forum for public participation in those decisions. It includes representatives from the federal government, the states of Idaho and Washington, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and three north Idaho counties. Michael Bogert, EPA regional administrator, serves as the commissioner representing federal agencies.

Birds to Get Safer, Cleaner Feeding Grounds

Migrating waterfowl flying over Idaho's Panhandle will have a safe new place to rest and feed, thanks to a newly forged Conservation Easement Agreement in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. The agreement was developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and a willing private-property owner. It is an important first step in addressing contaminated wildlife feeding areas in the Basin.

This agreement covers about 400 acres in the Coeur d'Alene River valley near Medimont, Idaho. It is a key part of the Basin mine-waste cleanup. It is an unusual partnership of federal, state, tribal, and private parties, and a non-profit wetland conservation organization. They are launching this cost-effective project to reduce waterfowl deaths in the Lower Basin.

"Public and private interests have come together in Idaho on behalf of waterfowl and other wildlife," said EPA Regional Administrator Michael Bogert. "This innovative, collaborative effort directly benefits the resource, the community, and our project partners. I can't think of a



better way to kick off another season of progress in the Basin cleanup."

More than a century of mining has contaminated the sediment of Coeur d'Alene River, nearby lakes, and wetlands. The sediment has high levels of cadmium, lead, zinc, and other metals. As a result, waterfowl often eat lead-contaminated sediment and suffer serious toxic effects or die. An annual "die-off" of waterfowl has taken place in the area for decades.

The agreement was established under EPA's 2002 Bunker Hill Record of Decision. Over the coming months, EPA, FWS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will clean up the easement area, converting the agricultural land to clean feeding habitat. In coming years, the FWS proposes to do a wetland restoration project at this site. By returning the area to a more natural state, the partnership predicts it will be an attractive feeding area and safer habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl. The property will continue to be owned by the private owner and will not be open to the public.

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Birds to Get Safer, Cleaner Feeding Grounds *(continued)*

The EPA, U.S. Department of the Interior, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe have agreed to coordinate on the cleanup, restoration, and long-term operation and maintenance of the conservation easement area. The Army Corps of Engineers and Avista Utilities have also supported the project.

“This is another fine example of what can happen when Idahoans and EPA work together,” EPA’s Bogert declared.

For more information contact **Anne Dailey**, EPA, at 800-424-4372, x2110 or dailey.anne@epa.gov.

EPA Follows Up on NAS Review

EPA continues to follow up on the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) final report: *Superfund and Mining Megasites—Lessons from the Coeur d’Alene River Basin*. For example, EPA Region 10 will evaluate technical issues related to the NAS recommendations. During planning, study, and design of the ecological remedy, the region will evaluate the potential for recontamination in the floodplain and study groundwater contamination. EPA will focus on groundwater contamination and source control as it carries out the current interim remedy and plans for the final remedy.

EPA Region 10 recently finished evaluating groundwater and surface conditions in the Box non-populated areas. The region has also adjusted the Basin environmental monitoring program in part in response to NAS recommendations.



The NAS recommendations will assist the region and other key stakeholders in carrying out the Coeur d’Alene Basin remedy. EPA remains committed to working with the Coeur d’Alene Basin Commission, including the Commission’s Technical Leadership Group and Citizens’ Coordinating Council.

How to View the Final NAS Report

Local Libraries: Copies of the final report have been placed in the repositories (see **page 7**).

EPA Web page: The report is available on the EPA Headquarters Superfund website at: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/reports/coeur.htm>

NAS Web page: The final report is available for purchase in both paperback and PDF book format from the NAS Web page at <http://www.nas.edu> (search on “Coeur”).

Starr Road Rec Area Cleanup to Begin in Washington

This summer, EPA, with the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), plans to clean up the Starr Road Recreation Area. This area runs along the Spokane River in Washington. It is one of the ten shoreline recreation areas identified for cleanup in EPA’s Coeur d’Alene Basin (Operable Unit 3) Record of Decision. Baywest, Inc. has been awarded the cleanup contract for Starr Road through the Corps.

The cleanup is expected to begin in early August. It will involve excavating shoreline soils and capping

upland areas. Workers will develop a path that will direct the public to the newly cleaned up areas. A small pull-out area that can be used for parking and direct access to the shoreline will also be created. During the cleanup, Starr Road will be closed to the public. Signs will be posted to let people know how long the road will stay closed. EPA and Ecology plan to send out a fact sheet near the start date to residents in the area.

For more information contact **Ravi Sanga**, EPA, at 800-424-4372, x4092 or sanga.ravi@epa.gov; or **Zach Hedgpeth**, Ecology, at 503-329-3484 or zahe461@ecy.wa.gov.



Blood-Lead Testing Coming Up This Summer

Each summer, the Panhandle Health District (PHD) offers blood-lead testing during a two-week period. This year, testing is expected to take place in both the Box and Basin. Watch for newspaper and radio ads and mailers with more details soon. To reach the PHD, call **208-783-0707**.

The Basin blood-lead screening program covers children 6 months to 6 years old. The Box testing program covers children aged 6 months to 9 years. Younger children are more at risk from lead exposure.

PHD Continues Lead Education in Schools

In late spring, PHD will send public health nurses out to Box and Basin schools. The nurses' services are offered to public schools, Headstart, and the Christian

Academy. The program teaches children from kindergarten through third grade about lead, how it can affect them, and how to avoid it. The children learn through puppet shows, an interactive doll house, and other presentations. Children also take brochures home to their families.

PHD Offers Brochures and Vacuums

The PHD office at 114 W. Riverside in Kellogg offers free brochures about lead, and posts these brochures at local doctors' offices. The brochures cover how lead affects the body, how lead can affect pregnant women and unborn children, and other topics. PHD also loans vacuum cleaners to Box residents.

Mine and Mill Sites Overview

Golconda: Those of you who have been out and about in the Basin may have noticed the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) work on the Golconda site. DEQ's contractor, Ferguson Contracting, is doing Phase 1 of the Golconda Mine/Mill site project, between Wallace and Mullan. Phase 1 involves building several water conveyance features. These will limit infiltration through contaminated materials to protect water quality. Despite its appearance, the bridge is temporary.

EPA will perform Phase II of the cleanup this July or August. Workers will remove mine tailings from the floodplain and consolidate them in an upland area. Armoring will be placed along the base of the waste rock pile and the stream bank to limit erosion and sediment loading to the river. During this part of the project, the temporary bridge DEQ installed will stay in place. People using the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes near the site should be aware of construction activity and possible short detours. Signs are posted along the trail to notify trail users of this activity.

Rex: EPA's contractor Parametrix/CDM is wrapping up the design details for this site. Actions will include installing a collection pond for surface water and groundwater, removing debris, and capping highly



Photo, courtesy of Idaho DEQ
State builds temporary bridge for Golconda work.

contaminated soils. Workers will also build a toe buttress at the tailings dam to improve stability, and consolidate all tailings at one location. The site will be sloped and capped with clean materials. One of the designs being considered would require the lower access road to close permanently. If this takes place, the alternate route around the site would be the Sunset Peak road off of Dobson Pass.

Constitution: Cleanup work at this site has been scheduled to begin in early May. The Army Corps of Engineers awarded the construction contract to TPA-CKY. This firm has hired local

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Mine and Mill Sites Overview *(continued)*

subcontractors. The plan is to consolidate and cap tailings at the Upper Constitution site and provide overall surface water controls. For more information on any of the above mine and mill sites, contact **Bill Adams**, EPA, 800-424-4372, x2806, or adams.bill@epa.gov; or **Nick Zilka**, DEQ, at 208-783-5781, or nicholas.zilka@deq.idaho.gov.

EPA Puts in Wells at Canyon Creek

EPA's recently-completed treatability studies focused on treating Canyon Creek groundwater with higher concentrations of metals, rather than large amounts of surface water. Early study results are promising, and EPA is confident we can efficiently treat this groundwater. However, we need to find out if treatment will reduce surface-water metals concentrations to meet the goals of the Superfund Record of Decision.

To help answer that question, EPA has designed an investigation which will better define the relationship between groundwater and surface water. Part of this work means installing wells, piezometers, and stream gaging stations that will automatically measure groundwater and surface water heights. It is important that we capture this information during spring runoff, when water



Workers put in a groundwater monitoring well next to Canyon Creek.

level changes are greatest. By mid April about eight wells, 15 piezometers, and three stream gages had been installed.

EPA will use this information and the previous studies to develop and evaluate treatment options for Canyon Creek. Before choosing and designing a treatment system, we will seek public input on the preferred approach. For details, contact **Bill Adams**, EPA, 800-424-4372, x2806, or adams.bill@epa.gov.

Fish Bones Reduce Metals in Ninemile Creek

Over the past four years, EPA, Idaho National Laboratory, and Basin Commission stakeholders have been working on a pilot passive treatment system at the Success site in Ninemile Creek. This is a former mine tailings disposal area next to a tributary of the Coeur d'Alene River. The study evaluated how effective fish bones are in removing metals such as zinc, lead, and cadmium from groundwater. These metals are coming from mine tailings and waste rock near the site. In other past EPA studies, such as the Nevada Stewart Mine study near Pine Creek, fish bones have removed metals through physical and chemical processes.

For the Ninemile Creek project, a two-celled vault was placed along the creek, behind a groundwater cutoff wall. Groundwater was diverted through



underground pipes into this vault for treatment, then discharged back to the east fork of the creek.

Test results showed that over four years, the fish bones successfully removed about 150 pounds of lead, 100 pounds of cadmium, and 10,000 pounds of zinc. This is important because high levels of these metals can harm aquatic life such as fish.

This technology may help treat water in the Basin at remote sites where no power is available and water flows are small. For details, contact **Bill Adams**, EPA, 800-424-4372, x2806, or adams.bill@epa.gov.

Basin Commission Contacts

Updated April 2006

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Water Treatment/Mullan I/I – Mark Stromberg	Phone: 208-783-5781		mark.stromberg@deq.idaho.gov

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Calendar of Events

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission

Executive Director: **Terry Harwood**, 208-783-2528
www.basincommission.com
Next Meeting: **June 21, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**
Coeur d’Alene Inn, 414 W. Appleway, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho



Citizens’ Coordinating Council (CCC)

Next Meeting: **May 17, 2006, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**
Avista Utilities Bldg. Conference Center (side door, R of front entrance)
120 N. Hill Street in Kellogg, Idaho
Contact: **John Snider**, 208-664-9773
Visit the website: www.basincommission.com/CCC.asp

Coeur d’Alene Basin Citizens Advisory Committee (CBCAC)

Contact: **John Snider**, 208-664-9773

Shoshone Natural Resources Coalition (SNRC)

Contact: **Robin Stanley**, 208-744-1118
Groups meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month
11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Brooks Hotel, 500 Cedar Street, Wallace, ID

Silver Valley Community Resource Center

For information on meetings or how to contribute funds,
Contact: **Barbara Miller**, 208-784-8891
PO Box 362, Kellogg, ID 83837

Washington Citizens Advisory Committee (WCAC)

Contact: **Lloyd Brewer**, 509-625-6968
Regular Board meetings scheduled for 5:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month, at City of Spokane Water Dept. Conference Room, 914 E. North Foothills Drive.

Information Repositories

These locations offer collections of documents:

**North Idaho College
Molstead Library**
1000 W. Garden Avenue
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83814
208-769-3355

Spokane Public Library
906 West Main Avenue
Spokane, WA 99201
509-444-5336

Wallace Public Library
415 River Street
Wallace, ID 83873
208-752-4571

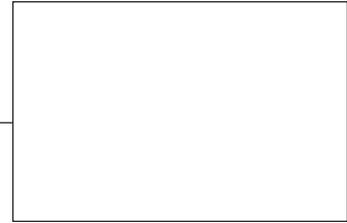
EPA Field Office
1910 Northwest Blvd., Suite 208
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83814
208-664-4588

Harrison City Hall
100 Frederick Street
P.O. Box 73
Harrison, ID 83833
208-689-3212

EPA Seattle Office
Superfund Record Center
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101-1128
206-553-4494 or 800-424-4372



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Community Involvement and Outreach
1200 Sixth Avenue, ETPA-081
Seattle, WA 98101-1128



Basin Bulletin
Quarterly Newsletter
Coeur d'Alene Basin, Idaho
Spring 2006

Comings and Goings

Please welcome **Anne McCauley**, a new EPA Bunker Hill team member, who began her job on March 20. Anne has worked for EPA for 11 years. Her background includes environmental investigation and cleanup. She previously worked for the Corps of Engineers, assisting in some of the Box yards cleanup. Anne will be working with the community, officials, and agencies to address a number of the remaining projects within the Box. You can reach her at 800-424-4372, x4689, or mccauley.anne@epa.gov.

Websites:



EPA Coeur d'Alene Basin
[http://Yosemite.epa.gov/R10/
CLEANUP.NSF/sites/cda](http://Yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/cda)

**Basin Environmental Improvement
Project Commission**
<http://www.basincommission.com>

Technical Leadership Group (TLG)
www.basincommission.com/TLG.asp

Citizens' Coordinating Council (CCC)
<http://www.basincommission.com/CCC.asp>



If you need information in an alternative format, please contact Debra Sherbina at 800-424-4372. TTY users, please call 800-877-8339.