

BASIN BULLETIN

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

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Bulletin Publication Change

EPA now will publish the Basin Bulletin three times a year. You can also find recent site information at <http://Yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cda> . If you have comments on the new schedule, please call Debra Sherbina.

EPA Community
Involvement Contact
Debra Sherbina

800-424-4372 ext. 0247
sherbina.debra@epa.gov
(see back page for websites)

Major Milestone Achieved: Cleanup of Box Residential & Community Areas Complete

During the 2006 construction season, the Upstream Mining Group (UMG) completed cleanup of the last contaminated residential and commercial properties within the Bunker Hill Box. In total, about 3,200 residential and commercial properties and street rights-of-way have been cleaned up and 17 wells closed. UMG and DEQ are now doing inspections so that the Box residential remediation program can be certified complete.

Completion of the Box residential cleanup is a major milestone for the Bunker Hill Superfund site. Credit is due to the many folks who have worked on behalf of UMG, DEQ, Panhandle Health District, Gulf/Pintlar, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and EPA. Particular thanks are due to the Cities of Kellogg, Pinehurst, Smeltonville, and Wardner and the private property owners who have worked with the agencies and contractors during the yard cleanups.



Site Background: The residential cleanup work started in the Bunker Hill Box in 1986, under a “Fast Track” program directed by EPA and guided by Panhandle Health District. Cleanup work continued in 1989 with a focus on “high risk” properties where children aged six or under or pregnant women lived. From 1991 through 1993, Gulf/Pintlar cleaned up properties. In 1994, the UMG entered into a legal agreement to complete cleanup in the residential areas (also known as the Populated Areas of the Box). The UMG agreed to clean up at least 200 residential yards, all adjacent rights-of-way, and commercial properties each year. From 2002 through 2005, EPA and DEQ took over some of the residential cleanup to

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Major Milestone: Box Residential Cleanup Complete *continued*

maintain the pace and minimize the potential for recontamination. UMG completed cleanup of the remaining residential and commercial properties inside the Box in 2006.

Basin Residential Cleanup: In the Basin, progress continues on the residential cleanups. During the

2006 season, DEQ and its contractors cleaned up just over 500 properties with funding from EPA. This brings the total properties cleaned up over the last three years to about 1,200 yards — resulting in 9,350 truck loads of waste soils taken to the Big Creek Repository.

Starr Road Recreation Area Cleanup Wraps Up

This fall, EPA finished cleaning up the Starr Road recreation area. The popular area includes land along the Spokane River in Washington, accessed by Starr and River Roads. 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. The land had been contaminated with lead and arsenic from historic mining activities. When the site is opened to the public in summer 2007, users will find an improved recreational area with a reduced risk to human health.

During the project, workers cleaned up more than two-and-a-half acres of rainbow trout habitat and upland recreational areas. They dug out contaminated shoreline soils and placed a clean soil layer in the upland areas to prevent exposure to soil containing metal. Workers also built a path for access to the newly cleaned up areas. Working with the Washington Department of Ecology and other state and local agencies, EPA completed this cleanup with the help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Ecology, in close coordination with EPA, is taking the lead on designing cleanup plans for two other



Starr Road Recreation Area Cleanup is Complete

recreational areas along the Spokane River in Washington: Island Complex and Harvard Road North.

For more information on the Washington Recreation Areas cleanup, contact: **Ravi Sanga**, EPA, at 800-424-4372 x4092; e-mail sanga.ravi@epa.gov or **Zach Hedgpeth**, Ecology, at 509-329-3484; e-mail zahe461@ecy.wa.gov.

Key Cleanup Documents Moved to St. Maries Library

This fall, key Bunker Hill Box and Coeur d'Alene Basin technical and decision documents were moved from Harrison City Hall to the St. Maries Public Library due to space limitations. EPA thanks both Harrison City Hall for housing the documents for the past several years and the St. Maries Library for agreeing to make them available.

The administrative records, which contain the documents that support EPA's cleanup decisions

for the Basin and the Box, will remain in their current locations. You can find the complete Administrative Record for the Basin at the Molstead Library at North Idaho College, and the Administrative Record for the Box at the Kellogg Public Library.

(See Basin information repository addresses on page 7 or visit the website: <http://Yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cda>)

Basin Institutional Controls Program Moves Towards Adoption

Efforts to establish an Institutional Controls Program, or ICP, for the Basin continue to move forward. The ICP is a regulatory program that is designed to help make sure that cleaned up areas do not become re-contaminated from digging, soil movement, or other activities. The goal of the ICP is long-term protection of human health and the environment.

At the June 21 Basin Commission meeting, the Commissioners voted to move the ICP rule forward to the Panhandle Health District (PHD) for rule-making. Since that meeting, PHD has begun its

formal rule-making process. In early November, the PHD held two public hearings in Kellogg and Hayden. On November 13th, the PHD Board adopted the rule then forwarded it to the state legislature. The rule will be up for consideration during the next legislative session in early 2007. If approved, it will be applied to activities within its administrative boundaries.

For more information, contact: **Jerry Cobb**, Panhandle Health District, at 208-783-0707 or **Bill Ryan**, EPA, at 206-553-8561; e-mail: ryan.william@epa.gov.

ATSDR Final Public Health Assessment for Basin to be Released Soon

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) plans to release the final version of the Public Health Assessment for the Coeur d'Alene Basin late in 2006 or early in 2007. The document will be posted on ATSDR's website (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>). Copies will be placed in EPA's information repositories. Electronic (CD) or hard

copies will be available upon request. Those who received public comment draft versions of the document and/or signed up for ATSDR mailings in the past are on the list to receive a CD. To request a copy, contact ATSDR at 888-422-8737 or e-mail the request to cdcinfo@cdc.gov.

DEQ Buys Property for New Mine Waste Repository

This Fall, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) bought real estate for much-needed disposal space for the Coeur d'Alene Basin cleanup. Before starting the cleanup in the Basin, DEQ and EPA planned to find an appropriate place to store contaminated soils. Over the past five years, DEQ, with EPA support and funding, has searched for repository locations. After evaluating more than 250 possibilities, DEQ has selected a site. It is the second repository site for the Basin cleanup. The first, the Big Creek repository, will remain in operation.

The new site is located in the East Mission Flats, about 1.5 miles west of Cataldo on the north side of I-90. Before the purchase in September, the two agencies investigated the site, coordinated with local and other state and federal agencies, and shared their

findings with the community, Citizens Coordinating Council, Technical Leadership Group, and the Basin Commission.

Because much of the 90-acre parcel initially evaluated in the East Mission Flats is covered by wetlands, the storage site is limited to 19 acres. DEQ will present a conceptual design of the repository for agency review during 2006-2007. The site will hold about 650,000 cubic yards of waste material and could be in use for at least 10 years and possibly as many as 25 years.

For more information, contact: **John Lawson**, IDEQ @ 208-373-0141; e-mail: john.lawson@deq.idaho.gov or **Ed Moreen**, EPA at 208-664-4588; e-mail: moreen.ed@epa.gov.

DEQ Combats Spotted Knapweed with Natural Predators

This fall, DEQ released two types of weevils in the Bunker Hill Box to combat spotted knapweed. Knapweed is an invasive species on Idaho's list of top 10 noxious weeds. The weevils are natural predators to spotted knapweed. Over time, weevils weaken the plants and reduce their ability to produce seeds. In three or four years, there should be a spotted knapweed decrease in the Box.

Spotted Knapweed is a spindly plant with purplish flowers that resembles Bachelor Buttons. It often grows on disturbed arid sites. By controlling the weed, DEQ is reducing long-term operating and maintenance costs. DEQ worked with Shoshone County, City of Kellogg, City of Pinehurst, and the Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate the release of the weevils.

The weevils were released in the gun range and the airport intersection in Smelterville, the Bunker Avenue dike walking path, the East



USDA photo

toe of the Central Impoundment Area in Kellogg, the Pinecreek dike on Dike Road in Pinehurst, and in two locations on the Rails-to-Trails project: Kellogg/Elizabeth Park. DEQ chose release points with the following characteristics: they were public lands that had a large infestation of spotted knapweed plants, were disturbed by the cleanup, and had good growing conditions for more of the weed to grow if no preventive action was taken.

Progress Made at Mine and Mill Sites

EPA, working in partnership with the State of Idaho and the Bureau of Land Management, is wrapping up cleanup activities at a number of mine and mill sites popular with recreational users.

Constitution Site: Work Completed

Construction at the Constitution Mine site began in June 2006 and was completed in October 2006 by EPA and the Bureau of Land Management. Before the



Constitution Mine site construction was completed in October.

cleanup, people could easily access contaminated tailings and waste rock at this site. Constitution is a popular area for dirt bikes and ATVs, as well as for recreational shooting. As a part of the cleanup, the mine tailings from the upper and lower mine sites were consolidated and capped at a single location at the Upper Constitution Mine. Waste-rock piles were re-graded, and the entire site was seeded to prevent erosion of the contaminated soils. This will reduce the flow of metals into the East Fork of Pine Creek and help protect the consolidated tailings from eroding.

Golconda Site: Protecting Human Health and Improving Water Quality

Phase 1 of the effort to protect water quality at the Golconda Mine/Mill site has been completed by DEQ. DEQ's contractor, Ferguson Contracting, has installed a catch basin and pipe, which captures water from the mine and carries it over the waste rock dump. Water that used to flow through the waste rock dump, becoming contaminated with heavy metals in the process, is now directed away from the caved mine entrance to prevent contamination. This, in turn, prevents the metals from entering the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River.

The work involved:

- Installing a drainage collection system at the caved entrance of the mine;
- Building a pipeline from the collection system to the river; and
- Digging a surface water control ditch and installing culverts along the hillside between the rock dump and the tailings pond. The culverts carry water away from the mine area.



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Pipe carries mine water over waste rock to catch basin.



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Pipeline directs water to South Fork Coeur d'Alene River.

In December 2006, EPA expects to complete Phase II construction activities. The main actions include removing tailings from the mill area to an upland on-site repository, filling and grading a tailings pond, capping the on-site repository, and installing rip-rap at the toe of the waste rock pile and stream bank to limit erosion and prevent sediments from getting into the river.

Rex: Design Work for Upper Site Nearly Complete, Construction to Begin in 2007

Design work for the upper Rex site is nearing completion, and construction is scheduled for summer 2007. Construction of the toe buttress designed in July by EPA is under way by the Bureau of Land Management and is near completion. The cleanup goal is to bring all contaminated soils together in one on-site location and cap them with clean materials to prevent human and environmental exposure.

At the US Bureau of Mines site, design data-gathering began in September 2006. Development of a design will follow. Construction will start in 2007.

For more information on the Mine and Mill sites, contact: **Bill Adams**, EPA at 800-424-4372 ext. 2806.



US Bureau of Mines site: Construction phase to begin in 2007

Basin Commission Contacts

Updated November 2006

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission – Sherry Krulitz, Chair

Allan, Chief; Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Phone: 208-686-7803	FAX: 208-686-8813	chief@cdatribe-nsn.gov
Buell, Jack; Benewah County Commissioner	Phone: 208-245-3274	FAX: 208-245-4364	ksather@benewahcounty.org
Currie, Rick; Kootenai County Commissioner	Phone: 208-446-1604	FAX: 208-446-1609	rcurrie@kcgov.us
Hardesty, Toni; IDEQ Director	Phone: 208-373-0240	FAX: 208-373-0417	toni.hardesty@deq.idaho.gov
Harwood, Terry; BEIPC Executive Director	Phone: 208-783-2528	FAX: 208-783-4561	terry.harwood@deq.idaho.gov
Kreizenbeck, Ron; EPA Deputy Reg. 10 Admin.	Phone: 206-553-1234	FAX: 206-553-1809	kreizenbeck.ron@epa.gov
Krulitz, Sherry; Shoshone County Commissioner	Phone: 208-752-3331	FAX: 208-753-2711	commsec@co.shoshone.id.us
Manning, Jay; State of Washington	Phone: 360-407-7001	FAX: 360-407-6989	jaym461@ecy.wa.gov

BEIPC Staff

Beckwith, Mike; Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Phone: 208-667-5772	FAX: 208-667-0919	mbeckwith@cdatribe-nsn.gov
DeLange, Jeri; BEIPC	Phone: 208-783-2548	FAX: 208-783-4561	jeri.delange@deq.idaho.gov
George, Dave; WA Dept. of Ecology	Phone: 509-329-3520	FAX: 509-329-3572	cgeo461@ecy.wa.gov
Hanson, Rob; IDEQ	Phone: 208-373-0290	FAX: 208-373-0154	rob.hanson@deq.idaho.gov
Moreen, Ed; EPA Coeur d'Alene Basin Rep.	Phone: 208-664-4588	FAX: 208-664-5829	moreen.ed@epa.gov

Technical Leadership Group (TLG) — Brian Spears, Chair

Adams, Bill; EPA Region 10	Phone: 206-553-2806	FAX: 206-553-0124	adams.bill@epa.gov
Addy, Mark; NRCS	Phone: 208-762-4939 x106	FAX: 208-762-9859	mark.addy@usda.gov
Beckwith, Mike; Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Phone: 208-686-0159	FAX: 208-686-7221	mbeckwith@cdatribe-nsn.gov
Brewer, Lloyd; City of Spokane	Phone: 509-625-6968	FAX: 509-625-6537	lbrewer@spokanecity.org
Box, Steve; U.S. Geological Survey	Phone: 509-368-3106	FAX: 509-368-3199	sbox@usgs.gov
Clark, Greg; U.S. Geological Survey	Phone: 208-387-1324	FAX: 208-387-1372	gmclark@usgs.gov
Connolly, Randy; Spokane Tribe	Phone: 509-258-7709 x13	FAX: 509-258-9600	connolly@spokanetribe.com
Dailey, Anne; EPA Region 10	Phone: 206-553-2110	FAX: 206-553-0124	dailey.anne@epa.gov
Dierich, Ginny; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Phone: 206-764-3265	FAX: 206-764-3706	elizabeth.v.dierich@usace.army.mil
Fink, Rich; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Phone: 208-762-5915 x222	FAX: 208-762-5905	richard.e.fink@nws02.usace.army.mil
Flagor, Bob; K-S Soil & Water Cons. District	Phone: 208-762-4939	FAX: 208-762-9859	ksswcd@icehouse.net
Fortier, David; Bureau of Land Management	Phone: 208-769-5022	FAX: 208-769-5050	david_fortier@blm.gov
Fredrickson, Sid; City of Coeur d'Alene	Phone: 208-769-2277	FAX: 208-769-2338	sidf@cdaid.org
Gentry, Dean; Benewah County	Phone: 208-245-2477		dgg@smgazette.com
George, Dave; WA Dept. of Ecology	Phone: 509-329-3520	FAX: 509-329-3572	cgeo461@ecy.wa.gov
Hansen, Jim; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Phone: 509-893-8034	FAX: 509-891-6748	jim_hansen@fws.gov
Hardy, Rogers; Benewah County	Phone: 208-689-3731		rogershardy@aol.com
Haynes, Bob; ID Dept. of Water Resources	Phone: 208-762-2801	FAX: 208-762-2819	bob.haynes@idwr.idaho.gov
Helmich, Bryan; ID Dept. of Fish & Game	Phone: 208-769-1414	FAX: 208-769-1418	bhelmich@idfg.idaho.gov
Johnson, Jeff; U.S. Forest Service	Phone: 208-765-7442	FAX: 208-765-7307	jkjohnson@fs.fed.us
Kirkpatrick, Bob, U.S. Forest Service	Phone: 406-329-3307	FAX: 406-329-3198	bkirkpatrick@fs.fed.us
Kirschner, Fred; Spokane Tribe	Phone: 509-924-0184		fredk@icehouse.net
LePard, David; ID Dept. of Water Resources	Phone: 208-762-2803	FAX: 208-762-2819	dave.lepard@idwr.idaho.gov
Lindsay, Robert; Spokane County Utilities Office	Phone: 509-477-7259	FAX: 509-477-4715	rlindsay@spokanecounty.org
Perfect, John; Idaho Transportation Dept.	Phone: 208-772-1224	FAX: 208-772-1203	john.perfect@itd.idaho.gov
Schlepp, Mike; K-S Soil & Water Cons. District	Phone: 208-689-3593	FAX: 208-689-3141	farmermike@imbris.com
Sheppard, Clyde; Kootenai County	Phone: 208-773-9116	FAX: 208-773-0162	chsheppard@adelphia.net
Snider, John; Kootenai County	Phone: 208-664-9773		jasduke5@imbris.com
Spears, Brian; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Phone: 509-893-8032	FAX: 509-891-6748	brian_spears@fws.gov
Stevens, Rebecca; Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Phone: 208-667-5772	FAX: 208-667-0910	rstevens@cdatribe-nsn.gov
Stevenson, Mike; Bureau of Land Management	Phone: 208-769-5024	FAX: 208-769-5050	mike_stevenson@blm.gov
Stokes, Scott; ID Transp. Dept.	Phone: 208-772-1201	FAX: 208-772-1203	scott.stokes@itd.idaho.gov
Stromberg, Mark; IDEQ	Phone: 208-783-5781	FAX: 208-783-4561	mark.stromberg@deq.idaho.gov
Suhr, Dave; Shoshone County	Phone: 208-556-4471		dmsuhr@imbris.com
Washburn, Carl; ID Department of Lands	Phone: 208-769-1577	FAX: 208-769-1597	cwashburn@idl.state.id.us
Werner, Terry; City of Post Falls	Phone: 208-773-1438	FAX: 208-773-0311	twerner@postfallsidaho.org
Zilka, Nick; IDEQ	Phone: 208-783-5781	FAX: 208-783-4561	nick.zilka@deq.idaho.gov

TLG Project Focus Team (PFT) Leads

Basin-wide Monitoring – Anne Dailey	Phone: 206-553-2110	FAX: 206-553-0124	dailey.anne@epa.gov
Funding – Terry Harwood	Phone: 208-783-2528	FAX: 208-783-4561	terry.harwood@deq.idaho.gov
Human Health/Recreation – Mark Masarik	Phone: 208-378-5761	FAX: 208-378-5744	masarik.mark@epa.gov
Human Health/Residential – Rob Hanson	Phone: 208-373-0290	FAX: 208-373-0417	rob.hanson@deq.idaho.gov
Lake Monitoring – Mike Beckwith	Phone: 208-686-0159	FAX: 208-686-3021	mbeckwith@cdatribe-nsn.gov
OU2 Phase II – Anne Dailey and Nick Zilka	Phone: 206-553-2110	FAX: 206-553-0124	dailey.anne@epa.gov
Repository – John Lawson	Phone: 208-373-0141		john.lawson@deq.idaho.gov
Repository – Ed Moreen	Phone: 208-664-4588	FAX: 208-664-5829	moreen.ed@epa.gov
Streambank Stabilization – Dave George	Phone: 509-625-5120	FAX: 509-456-6175	cgeo461@ecy.wa.gov
Streambank Stabilization – Nick Zilka	Phone: 208-783-5780	FAX: 208-783-4561	nicholas.zilka@deq.idaho.gov
Upper Basin Source Areas – Bill Adams	Phone: 206-553-2806	FAX: 206-553-0124	adams.bill@epa.gov
Water Treatment/Canyon Creek – Bill Adams	Phone: 206-553-2806	FAX: 206-553-0124	adams.bill@epa.gov
Water Treatment/Mullan I/I – Mark Stromberg	Phone: 208-783-5781		mark.stromberg@deq.idaho.gov

CCC Project Focus Team Volunteer Leads

Human Health/Recreation – Kathy Zanetti	Phone: 208-752-7612		hkzanetti@usamedia.tv
Lake Monitoring – Kristy Reed Johnson	Phone: 208-777-1588	FAX: 208-777-1615	kristyr@earthlink.net

(See *Comings and Goings* on back page.)

Calendar of Events

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission

Executive Director: **Terry Harwood**, 208-783-2528

Check the website for the next meeting date: www.basincommission.com

Citizens' Coordinating Council (CCC)

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

Visit the website for meeting information:

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

SVCRC is a non-profit, tax exempt organization

Washington Citizens Advisory Committee (WCAC)

Contact: **Lloyd Brewer**, 509-625-6968



Basin 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

Wallace Public Library

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

St. Maries Library

822 W. College Ave.
St. Maries, ID 83861
208-245-3732

Spokane Public Library

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

EPA Field Office

1910 Northwest Blvd., Suite 208
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-664-4588

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

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Quarterly Newsletter
Coeur d'Alene Basin, Idaho
Winter 2006

Comings and Goings

DEQ: Please welcome **Diana Greene**, the “Warranty Queen,” who started with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in Kellogg on September 5th. Diana will coordinate warranty issues in the yard remediation program. As the new outreach coordinator, she looks forward to working with the Silver Valley Community. Diana’s background includes hazardous-waste management, safety, forestry research and chemistry laboratory management. You can reach her at 208-783-5781, e-mail: Diana.greene@deq.idaho.gov.

EPA: Please welcome **Caryn Klaff**, our guest editor for this issue. Caryn is on detail to EPA’s Region 10 office from EPA’s headquarters in DC through December 2006.

Websites



EPA Coeur d’Alene Basin

<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 the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339.*