



BASIN BULLETIN

The Periodic Review of Cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin

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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, contact the editors, or 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.

EPA to Update Cleanup Decisions for Upper Basin - ROD Planning Under Way

Planning is under way now to update some EPA cleanup decisions. During 2009, EPA will set priorities for ecological cleanup work in the Upper Basin and Box. The "Upper Basin" includes the South Fork and its tributaries downstream to where they flow into the North Fork. The "Box" is the 21-square mile area around the old Bunker Hill smelter where EPA initially focused its cleanup activities.

To date, most of the cleanup work has focused on human health protection since this remains the highest priority. This new effort will prioritize the Basin's ecological contamination focus and select additional cleanup actions to help improve water quality. The goal is to set out a comprehensive, holistic cleanup approach across the Basin. EPA will identify and select more cleanup actions for the Upper Basin and Box, and prepare a "ROD amendment." A ROD amendment is a change to the current Record of Decision that guides overall cleanup efforts in the Basin.

EPA is undertaking this effort in part to address National Academy of Sciences recommendations. EPA also knows more about conditions in the Upper Basin and Box and can move forward on the next phase of cleanup, including prioritization of the work.

(continued on next page)

Evaluating selected cleanup actions and modifying decision documents is standard practice at Superfund sites. For example, there have been two ROD amendments and two Explanations of Significant Difference since EPA issued the first ROD for the non-populated areas of the Box. Under the Superfund law, EPA is responsible for modifying the ROD. EPA is scheduling opportunities to provide technical information and share straw proposals with the Technical Leadership Group (TLG), Citizen Coordinating Council (CCC), and Basin Commission. The proposed plan will also be provided for public comment. EPA hopes to have the ROD amendment done by late 2009.

At this time, EPA is not planning to identify more cleanup work in the Lower Basin. The existing ROD for the Basin calls for specific work, including pilot projects in the Lower Basin. Before undertaking those projects, EPA will focus on gathering data to learn more about contaminated sediment transport and deposition with respect to river flows.

Summer Sampling Results Will Help Guide Ecological Cleanup

This summer, you may have noticed sampling crews and equipment around Kellogg, Osburn, and Page. Cleanup of the Bunker Hill Superfund Site has come a long way. Even so, there is still metals contamination, and much of it is under ground. Contaminants include metals like lead and arsenic, which can cause health problems and harm the environment.

To figure out the best way to protect the ecosystem and control the metals in the land, surface waters, and groundwater, EPA and DEQ need to know which areas are contributing to the contamination problems. These places are called "source areas." Once they are identified, the agencies need details about them so that cleanup can be designed and carried out.

During summer 2008, EPA and DEQ crews collected many subsurface soil and water samples to help address these questions. The agencies are getting the sampling results from the labs and evaluating the data. Results will be shared with the Basin Commission's Technical Leadership Group and used to plan future cleanup actions (see article above).

East Mission Flats: ICP Area Opens, Design Work Continues

Design of the new repository at East Missions Flats is moving forward. The public reviewed the "60% Design" last August. At that time, the agencies offered a public review period and hosted an Open House at Canyon School near Rose Lake. A summary of the public suggestions, and the agencies' responses, can be found at www.basincommission.com (click on "news").

The repository was open this fall to receive Basin Institutional Control Program (ICP) waste. It is now closed for winter. The ICP portion of the repository will re-open next spring, as soon as ground conditions permit, probably by mid-June. The repository will be open to receive Basin Property Remediation Project waste soil in the late summer 2009. First, a new access road will be built, to link the west side of the repository with the north side of I-90 Exit 39.

The repository is needed to securely contain contaminated soils from yard cleanups in the Lower Basin. It will also hold soil from the community's ICP. The repository will help reduce people's exposure to contaminants such as lead, arsenic, and cadmium.

The EPA Office of the Inspector General is reviewing the agencies' public involvement efforts for East Mission Flats project. Their report is expected in early 2009.

The search for more local repository space continues. The next geographic area of interest is the Upper Basin between Kellogg and Mullan. The agencies welcome input on possible places to construct new repositories. If you have suggestions, contact Andy Mork, DEQ, at 208-373-0141.

Page Repository Filling Up, Expansion Planned

Page waste repository is nearing its designed capacity. The Upstream Mining Group (UMG) is making plans for a limited expansion to begin sometime in 2009. At the same time, options for a long-term ICP repository location for the Box are being evaluated.

The Page repository takes in waste soils from development activity in the Box and from the local Institutional Controls Program (ICP). The soils contain contaminants such as lead and arsenic, and must be safely contained.

The agencies and UMG did some preliminary technical work and studies last summer to help with expansion planning. That work also helped plan for partially closing the existing repository, as the expansion takes place.

The expansion will require construction in wetlands that have formed on old mill tailings. Those wetlands are contaminated with metals. Because these wetlands will be impacted by the expansion, a Clean Water Act Section 404 analysis is necessary. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the analysis sometime during the later winter or spring of 2009. Mitigation to offset impacts to wetlands will also be part of the project.

To learn more, contact Bruce Schuld, DEQ, at 208-373-0554, or bruce.schuld@deq.idaho.gov

Project Helps Reduce Sediment and Nutrient Impacts to Mica Bay

Success! This was the word recently on the minds of the Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission, a group of cooperating agencies, and a local land owner. This team recently completed a notable demonstration project. The project was designed to reduce sediment and nutrient loading to Mica Bay on Coeur d'Alene Lake. A Clean Water Act Grant funded by EPA made the project possible.

Land use activities in the Coeur d'Alene Lake watershed can add excess sediment and nutrients to the lake. To protect water quality in the lake, it is necessary to minimize nutrient enrichment. This helps ensure that heavy metals on the lake bottom stay chemically bound to sediments.

The project partners checked into possible sites and visited with landowners to find a location for the project. Field studies confirmed there was significant and active stream bank failure and erosion on sections of Mica Creek on private property.

The project had two purposes: stabilize erosion damage on Mica Creek to help water quality, and serve as a demonstration and training project to be used to work with landowners around the lake and along streams feeding the lake. The project seeks to encourage landowners to manage their land, not only to enhance their property, but also to benefit the public by lowering sediments and nutrients loading into streams feeding the lake and areas near the shore.

Working with the property owner, the agencies did stream bank and bed stabilization on areas along the creek to control sediment and nutrient impacts to the Mica Creek Delta. The approaches used were evaluated for cost and effectiveness.

To raise awareness, a tour of the completed project took place in October. The tour was given by the involved agencies and the cooperating landowner. The tour included:

- discussion on the impact of sediment and nutrients to streams and the lake
- photo display of pre-project conditions compared to post-project conditions
- costs per linear foot of the various methods used
- discussion on the effectiveness of the methods
- discussion of cost-share programs available through the agencies

In addition to the Basin Commission and EPA, cooperating agencies are the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Kootenai/Shoshone Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission.

To provide an educational tool for a wider audience than the local farmers and ranchers who attended the tour, a 10-minute DVD of the project was produced. Get a copy of the DVD from the Conservation District: ksswcd@icehouse.net

Brochure Gives Info on Local Superfund Cleanup

A new brochure called *Bunker Hill Superfund Cleanup: Protecting Yourself and Your Family* is now available. This brochure gives an overview of the Superfund cleanup and provides information for property owners. It discusses ways to reduce lead exposure and offers ways to get more information. The brochure is published by EPA, the Basin Commission, Panhandle Health District, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

For a copy, contact Andrea Lindsay, EPA, at 206-553-1896, 800-424-4372 x1896, or lindsay.andrea@epa.gov

Or, find it online at [yosemite.epa.gov/r10/CLEANUP.NSF/bh/Fact+Sheets/\\$FILE/BHSFCfamilyd.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/CLEANUP.NSF/bh/Fact+Sheets/$FILE/BHSFCfamilyd.pdf)

2008 Property Cleanup Goals Reached

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) runs the Basin Property Remediation Program with funding from EPA. That program focuses on cleaning up residential properties, commercial properties, and rights-of-way in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin.

The program cleaned up about 350 properties (individual addresses) in the 2008 construction season, which ended in mid-October. The 2008 goal was to clean up 350-400 properties.

Most cleanups took place in the communities of Mullan, Wallace, Burke Canyon, and Osburn. Forty-eight of the completed properties were considered to be "high risk," those properties where pregnant women and/or children ages six and under live.

In addition to the properties that have been cleaned up, over 700 properties in the Basin were sampled in 2008 to determine if they need to be cleaned up.

Cleanup Complete at Harvard Road Rec Area in WA

In coordination with EPA, the Washington Department of Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program removed and capped soils contaminated with heavy metals at the Harvard Road North Site. The site is about a mile north of the City of Liberty Lake in Washington. The contamination is the result of historical mining practices upstream in Idaho. The work was part of EPA's cleanup decision for the Coeur d'Alene Basin, and was led and funded by Ecology.

Cleanup actions were completed by Ecology at both the Murray Road and Island Complex recreational areas last year. EPA cleaned up the Starr Road recreation area in 2006.

Work began at the Harvard Road Site August 18 and was substantially complete by September 2. Over 900 tons of contaminated shoreline sediment were removed and disposed of at Graham Road Landfill. Nearly 1,300 tons of clean spawning mix were delivered to the site and used to build the clean cap. Ecology also relocated recreational boat access within the site, improved the parking area, and installed fencing to protect the remedy from vehicle damage.

The total construction cost for the project was under \$160,000. Ecology is now planning for future cleanups that could occur as early as next summer if funding is available.

For details, contact Zach Hedgpeth at zaha461@ecy.wa.gov or 509-329-3484; or Ravi Sanga at sanga.ravi@epa.gov or 800-424-4372 x4092.

Commission Field Tour Explores Basin

Last August, the Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission sponsored a field tour. Participants visited locations in the upper Coeur d'Alene Basin, reviewing environmental cleanup and natural resource restoration work done since the last tour two years ago. Three bus-loads of people — representing Upper Basin stakeholders; local, state, and federal government officials; the Coeur d'Alene Tribe; and local, state and federal political leaders, and local citizens — attended the tour.



Local stakeholders gather to learn more about environmental cleanup work on a tour of the upper Coeur d'Alene Basin.

At each stop, project representatives gave presentations and took questions, discussing the activities at that location. Sites visited included:

- the East Mission Flats and Big Creek contaminated soil waste repositories managed by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) with EPA assistance;
- the Moon Gulch natural resource restoration project managed by the U.S. Forest Service under a Clean Water Act Grant through the Basin Commission;
- the Rex Mine site cleanup in Ninemile Canyon managed by EPA and the Bureau of Land Management;
- the Success Mine Site in Ninemile where there was a discussion of water quality issues;
- residential and commercial property remediation sites managed by DEQ.

“This was a great opportunity for this diverse group to see firsthand the progress in the Upper Basin,” said Basin Commission Executive Director Terry

Harwood. “We were all able to discuss issues and to build understanding about how complex these contamination problems are.”

Harwood noted there are many actions still needed as progress is made in environmental cleanup and natural resource restoration.

Learn more about the Basin Commission at www.basincommission.com

Team Continues Communications Work

The Basin Commission’s **Communications Project Focus Team** has been busy over the past months. This group recently sponsored training for any interested individuals in the Basin. The EPA training, called “Building Trust and Resolving Differences,” took place November 20. The training received high marks and was well-received. Because demand for the training went over the 40-person attendance cap, EPA is looking into offering a second session next year. Stay tuned for details.

The communications team also staffed a table this summer at the East Mission Flats Repository Open House. Representatives shared brochures and information about the Basin Commission and its Citizen Coordinating Council.

The group has made suggestions to the Basin Commission on ways to improve its website (www.basincommission.com). Ideas for improved communications and outreach are also being explored.

If you are interested in joining the team, or have suggestions for the group, contact Jeri Delange. Ms. DeLange is the Chair of the Communications PFT and can be reached at jeri.delange@deq.idaho.gov or 208-783-3548.

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Updated December 2008

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Opportunities to Get Involved

Spokane River Forum Conference: Creating our Future Together

January 22-23, 2009, spokaneriver.net
Centerplace Regional Event Center, Spokane Valley, WA

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission

Executive Director: **Terry Harwood**, 208-783-2528
Visit the website for meeting information:
www.basincommission.com



Citizens' Coordinating Council (CCC)

Contact: **John Snider**, 208-664-9773
Visit the website for meeting information:
www.basincommission.com/CCC.asp

Shoshone Natural Resources Coalition (SNRC)

Contact: **Robin Stanley**, 208-744-1118
Groups meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month
Call for meeting information

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

The Lands Council

Contact: Brian Walker, 509-209-2408
www.landscouncil.org

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, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140
206-553-4494 or 800-424-4372



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Community Involvement and Outreach
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900, ETPA-081
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

Pre-Sorted Standard
Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. EPA
Permit No. G-35
Seattle, WA

*Basin Bulletin
Cleanup Newsletter
Coeur d'Alene Basin
December 2008*

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 Andrea Lindsay
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