Attachment 1B: Results of Community Interviews (Interview Text Examples)

Issue Category	Example Text
Agency actions	There was a public working group that . . . held public meetings and ignored you if you weren't praising the mining companies. These were meetings for the public, but weren't conducive to the public. It also appears that the DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other agencies halted any potential clean-up and rehabilitation activities and have impeded progress substantially. Even when faced with clear evidence, they (the agencies) still don't get it. Instead of coming clean and saying it was the selenium contamination that killed the cows, they cover it up. The agencies aren't to be trusted. All agencies could have done better. The presentations made to the public in the past were well attended, but left citizens frustrated with the pace at which things take place. The agencies continue to investigate and analyze, rather than proceeding with the clean up. Also, over the past 11 years, there have only been 3-4 meetings specifically held to inform members of the community. One of the biggest problems is that the agencies try to manage this project through consensus. Consensus is great, but not for this project. Each project has a lead agency identified. Other agencies are supposed to lend their support. No one will support - they will only lead. No one will trust another agency to move forward. It's important that agencies, industry and individuals be fair and honest. (Forest Service staff) did the permitting on the mine expansion and also led the CERCLA cleanup. There is a real conflict there … an entire career spent facilitating phosphate mining permitting – then having the lead for cleaning it up. There is a lot the industries would like to do, but the agencies say we do not have enough information yet. Industry people want to proceed, but cannot get agency approval and the agencies are not moving.
Blackfoot River impacts	A lot of people fish the Blackfoot River. This is not a huge human threat, but there is still the potential. The agencies shouldn't wait until it becomes a huge human issue.
CERCLA process	Some community leaders are concerned about the stigma of having CERCLA sites in the community because it can affect tourism, real estate, new business locations, etc.

Issue Category	Example Text
CERCLA process	It's the process that makes progress slow.
Contamination	I worry about the human health impacts. I see cases of leukemia in the community and wonder about it. The mines should stay, but should be cleaned up and operated responsibly in the future.
	It has not only been a financial hardship, but it has been emotional as well. I . . . have serious concerns about the environmental and/or health impacts from the contamination present in the site.
	I have concerns about health impacts. There are ongoing concerns with selenium contamination. My concerns are about the fish, wildlife, air, water, etc. And – human health.
	The risks associated with selenium have been blown out of proportion.
Cost of cleanup	The waste piles are huge and the cost can limit you to some extent to what can be done.
Data/data quality	Data has not been sufficiently analyzed nor distributed to the affected parties including the . . . general public.
	The agencies are positioning themselves to disallow the data – more rigorous standards to do more studies – and this is not needed across the board . . . There are data gaps, but they should not ignore it all.
	The agencies and mining companies should work together on fact sheets before they are ever released to the public.
	Would like to see a regular report of the sampling data. They don't receive monitoring information – would be interested in getting it.
	Data should be at the layman's level so ranchers would know how to interpret it (not just the raw data). Simple, factual information would help.
	Easy access to sampling and monitoring data would help. They should publish a current status report in the newspaper so everyone can see it.
Ecology/multiple use	My biggest concern is for the ecological effects from the selenium contamination. What is the selenium doing to our aquatic resources and terrestrial wildlife?.
	People realize they need to protect the environment in balance with the need for jobs.

Issue Category	Example Text
Ecology/multiple use	Land must be managed for multiple use, and cleanup should be done right to support multiple use.
	Companies need to (do the) clean up themselves so the lands can be turned back over for multiple-use.
Groundwater	The groundwater hasn't been characterized, and there are a lot of data gaps and uncertainties.
	The public does not want the groundwater (contamination) to go beyond the mine site footprint.
Lack of progress	Very little has changed in the last 10 years. The problem is no closer to being resolved.
	They have to establish a goal and know how to measure it.
	Repeat sampling with similar results have been conducted for over 20 years are a large and valid concern, particularly since absolutely no efforts have been made to clean-up and rehabilitate affected areas.
	As soon as you get someone in who doesn’t understand the process up to speed, you have to start over.
	I know there isn’t any cleanup taking place and I wonder why we’re still hammering out the AOCs.
	There are a lot of agencies and stakeholders involved, which further complicates an already daunting task.
	To hell with the process – just fix it!
	The (mining) company has set aside money for the work, but part of the problem is that they need well-considered interim projects to start working toward a goal in the short term.
Mining company actions	Mining company representatives came and sampled their wells and irrigation water a couple of years ago, but they never received any feedback on the results. They would like to receive information whenever sampling takes place on their property.
	I don't think the mining companies are trying to do anything wrong. When they started mining, there was a set of rules they followed. As technology and testing has evolved, situations change and new rules have to be set. It doesn't mean they have to shut down.
	The mines do a good job of public relations and communication. They are honest, forthright and proactive.

Issue Category	Example Text
Mining company actions	The mining companies acknowledged past practices and past mistakes and have an interest in moving on. The mining companies expressed that they have learned and they have responded accordingly. They did what the agencies told them to do in the past. Now they have new BMPs but can't get agencies to buy off on them. Companies expressed to him that they can't get agency approval because they don't want to get in trouble if it doesn't work.
	Agrium has not been as open in the past as Monsanto, but they are getting better.
	The mining companies have been very responsive. They have spent millions to address the problem - and maybe the agencies don't care about that, but the public does. There has to be some balance developed and solutions implemented.
	A number of years ago the mining companies established a selenium subcommittee. They fund a variety of the cleanup activities. DEQ bills them for cleanup activities, and they in turn bill the responsible company.
	As a whole, for locals and non-locals, the greatest concern is the environment and that the mining companies are doing their job to meet environmental requirements.
Political factors	The agencies are trying to do the right thing, but politics get in the way.
	The DEQ employees are frustrated, but aren't able to affect change – which gets to politics.
	Any agency person who speaks up and says there is a problem is transferred or fired.
	The fact that Bob Geddes, a Monsanto employee and long-time manager of the P4 mines, is President Pro-tem of the Idaho Senate does not seem fair. It gives the impression of a conflict of interest when the Senate is dealing with phosphate mining matters. I fault industry for not keeping the community aware of what's going on through either the newspaper or other sources.
	Our state is a pro-mining state. Governor Otter used to be an executive for Simplot. Kempthorne was the PA officer for FMC. Geddes works for Monsanto. With these strong political ties, the State DEQ is incapable of doing the right thing because of the fear their budgets will be cut – and the State doesn't want to cause any harm to the mining companies.
Potential job/financial loss	Many people have health concerns. This is a company town here, though. The employees and vendors are careful what they say.
	If the mining companies cannot make money, they cannot generate the funds to support the cleanup.
	There have been meetings with strong feelings expressed about not shutting down mining operations.

Issue Category	Example Text
Public information	The best thing the agencies and industry can do is to get the negative issues out faster to the public. Do the agencies usually issue a press release when something is wrong? If you don't, how do the people know? I propose that two times a year the agencies publish a list of all the mine sites, which companies are responsible, which agency has the lead, the latest selenium reading, action being taken, current action, and timetable for the future. Make everyone accountable to the public. We need regular, factual outreach. Industry and the agencies need to provide a quarterly or annual report. As it stands, the public is getting information from the noisiest source, and it is not balanced. A website that is maintained would be of use. Also, a repository that is open to the public would be good too. DEQ charges for documents. More communication is needed from the agencies. I personally need a number I can call at each of the agencies when I have questions. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition has raised issues that the agencies and industry have let slide. There has not been enough communication or public involvement so far. This needs to change. The Administrative Record and Information Repository should be electronic. What they have is way outdated and not organized. In the past, the agencies and mining companies have done a horrible job of communicating with the public. It's almost like they're covering up the issues. The DEQ and mines are at fault for not communicating to the public on their own instead of being mandated by law to do it. Meetings aren't announced in enough time to get the word out ahead of time so the public knows what to ask. Agencies can lose credit with public and tribes if they can't answer questions at public meetings. They should utilize company representatives to assist in the public involvement process when necessary and proper. Everyone in the community knows more now that the Greater Yellowstone Coalition has gotten involved and has kept these issues in the media. None of the players – mining companies, agencies, and interested groups – has explained things well to the public.

Issue Category	Example Text
Public information	With very little communication over the past few years, the public needs to know what is going on – especially the employees and the public in Soda Springs, Montpelier, and Bear Lake and Caribou Counties. It would be helpful to start providing regular communication through local papers such as the Caribou County Sun and the Montpelier News Examiner. The (communications) process should be based on science and risk, not emotion. When an interview or survey is done, there is no feedback about the results. I want to know what's going on. The average citizen can't wade through 1,000 page documents and expect to learn very much. Maybe they don't want us to know if they're making it so hard. I would like to know the plan and intentions for clean up. What is the goal? And I would like to have some input into that process. One idea would be doing an insert a couple of times a year in the local paper. Explain what the investigation shows, what the problems are, and how to fix them. Be sure to talk in layman's terms. A two-times a year update would be great. Then to have a contact list of names I can call, too. The community needs newsletter and/or something in the paper because they don't understand the real issues. Blogs or emails. Making sampling results available would be good. There are studies going on all year, and people would be interested in the results. The library website has community links that information could be posted on. An open house could be hosted at the library. As press releases came out, they could be e-mailed to the library for posting. Whatever information is put out there needs to be in terms the average citizen can understand. DEQ used to have a list of people – they need to combine that with the EPA's list and develop and area-wide mailing list. The public wants to hear all sides of the issues relating to the mines. Advertising, billboards, etc. have stirred things up. Citizens in the community are frustrated and want to know why the switch from the EE/CA to a RI/FS and why everything has to start over.

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Public information	Information should be sent out in power bills or via the school kids.
	Conversations are the best way to get information.
	They would like additional briefings, and face-to-face meetings.
	Short, bulleted information is better.
	River Fest and Environmental Fair in Pocatello are good places to give information.
	Public is not satisfied with information they get. Don't have clear understanding of what it (selenium) is doing and can it be fixed. What's being done about it? They need to address getting information to public about what can be done. Need clear causes, effects and solutions.
	On-the-ground tours work best – taking them to the mines and showing them where selenium would be coming from. Show them open, reclaimed, etc. so they see different stages.
	Talking to people in person is best to communicate information. No mailing list.
	Small intimate meetings, not hearings. Meetings at people's homes – at the coffee shops.
	They would like little updates – maybe every three months. Just the basics. They are not sure how many people would use websites. Most people do read the Sun and watch network news on TV.
	Public meetings are waste of time unless they are absolutely required for regulatory compliance.
Stakeholder relationships/involvement	It's good that they're doing the interviews, and the public involvement component of the cleanup is good. In the past the agencies and mining companies have done a horrible job of communicating with the public.
	We have had no input on anything. We feel like as landowners we should have been kept in the loop more. We deserve to know everything that is going on with regard to our land.
	Local folks have more positive perceptions than people who live outside the area . . . Overall, there is a varied perception that depends on geography. If they have a "tie" to mining they are more informed and more well-rounded in the information they are receiving than is the general public.

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Stakeholder relationships/involvement	Most local stakeholders want to know if daddy or mommy will have a job in a few years – are the companies taking care of the problem and can they continue to work? They are not concerned about potential health impacts – just that the mines can stay open. Beyond that, for outsiders who do not have a vested interest, it is easy to point fingers.
	The biggest thing missing has been public involvement. They have had scientists etc. saying what should they study next but they need to ask the public what they are concerned about.
	Would be interested in reviewing the final reports on the investigations and feasibility studies as well as the proposed plan.
	I would like to see sampling plans in advance.
	We would like to review and provide comments (on reports and planning documents).
	We would also like to be on the list to have the opportunity to review documents.
Surface water	They are worried about taking their horses and letting them drink the water . . . I am very concerned about certain areas and wouldn't take my own horse to those areas.
Technical approach	I don't think the mining companies are trying to do anything wrong. When they started mining, there was a set of rules they followed. As technology and testing has evolved, situations change and new rules have to be set. It doesn't mean they have to shut down.
Tribal issues	Ensure decisions being made throughout the process are protective and mindful of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes interests.
Vegetation/grazing impacts	We now have concerns about impacts (from vegetation). If the government hadn't stepped in and changed grazing practices everything would have been fine.
Visual and aesthetic impacts	I'm not worried about human health impacts, but about the environment. Having grown up in the area, I don't like what it's done to the landscape. Mining has ruined the beauty of the area.