

To the Editor

Your readers may be interested in learning more about how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality are responding to a recent investigation by the EPA Office of Inspector General of the proposed East Mission Flats Superfund waste repository in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin.

The Inspector General's report endorsed the agencies' public involvement work and did not disapprove of the repository location. The report did raise concerns about the potential effects of flooding. In response, EPA and IDEQ are performing more review and analysis. While some construction work is happening at the site, no contaminated soils are being permanently disposed of there until the additional review recommended by the IG is complete.

All of our work in the Coeur d'Alene Basin is aimed at protecting people and the environment from exposure to lead and other metals. The East Mission Flats repository is an important part of our continuing efforts to safely contain mine wastes. By confining and carefully managing the mine wastes as we have done throughout the Basin, we greatly reduce the chance that people will come into contact with the material, and therefore, greatly reduce health hazards.

We understand that people may not want a repository near their homes and communities, but repositories are a necessary reality of large-scale cleanups. They have a proven track record in the Silver Valley and elsewhere around the country as an effective way to protect people and the environment from contaminated materials.

We are committed to working with the communities in the Basin to complete the cleanup in the Basin and safeguard public health and the environment for current and future generations.

Respectfully,

Toni Hardesty

Michelle Pirzadeh

For more information about the East Mission Flats Repository project, OIG Report and EPA's response, visit our website:

http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/east_mission_flats_repository