



# EPA's Proposed Cleanup: Understanding the Plan

You may have questions or concerns about EPA's Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Upper Coeur d'Alene Basin. EPA wants you to have the facts. In coming weeks, EPA will publish topics to answer many of your questions.

## *Topic Number 1:* **Why is More Cleanup Needed Now?**

We are making great progress cleaning up the Basin, including cleaning up residential yards, redeveloping cleaned up properties, and replanting barren hillsides. We've also been cleaning up abandoned mine and mill sites that are a risk to human health. During this work, EPA also was doing studies needed to develop a longer-term remedy for the entire Upper Basin.

Despite the progress, much contamination remains. It is EPA's job to reduce the risk from this contamination. As you probably know, historic mining, milling and smelting practices in the Upper Basin resulted in widespread contamination of soils, sediments, surface water and groundwater. Though the mining industry no longer uses those practices, they left behind contaminants, including lead, that far exceed standards.

The contaminants pose risks to people (especially young children), fish and wildlife. For example, only a small amount of lead ingested or inhaled by a child can cause damage to the nervous system and developmental delays.

Based on our data showing extensive contamination in the Upper Basin, EPA believes the area must be cleaned up to reduce these risks.

When EPA finds that a cleanup remedy must be changed to better protect people and the environment, a "ROD Amendment" is required by law. A ROD, or Record of Decision, is a document that guides the cleanup process at a Superfund site.

Some people are suggesting a short-term approach to the cleanup. However, EPA believes a more comprehensive ROD Amendment will provide a "road map" that clearly shows the scope and scale of cleanup needed to meet regulatory goals. This approach gives all of us more certainty about what cleanup actions need to occur and at what cost.

By considering the big picture, EPA will spend fewer taxpayer dollars and more wisely spend money set aside for the cleanup. This approach allows cleanup funds to be managed for the long-term. It is time intensive and costly to amend RODs. It makes sense to get the job done now and be thorough about it, instead of taking a piecemeal approach. We can focus resources on cleaning up contamination rather than on amending RODs.

This proposed cleanup and ROD Amendment will protect people and the environment, and we believe it is the best approach to manage cleanup for the long-term. You will have many opportunities to give input, ask questions, and influence the work throughout the cleanup process.

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### **Public comments on the Proposed Plan are due November 23, 2010.**

Send comments to [cdabasin@epa.gov](mailto:cdabasin@epa.gov) or to Coeur d'Alene Basin Team, EPA, 1200 6th Ave., Ste. 900, ECL-113, Seattle, WA 98101.

**We want to hear from you. Your comments are important to help design the Proposed Plan and guide the cleanup.**

See other Topics at

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/bh+rod+amendment> or <http://go.usa.gov/igD>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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