

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Bunker Hill Superfund Site

Northern Idaho

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

June 2009

Summer Construction Season in Full Swing

Cleanup is moving forward at the Bunker Hill Superfund Site in northern Idaho. The work is aimed at cleaning up lead and other contaminants. The goal is to make the area a cleaner, safer place to live, work, and play. If you live in or pass through the Silver Valley this summer, you may see large vehicles on the move hauling dirt and equipment. You may also notice signs posted and traffic temporarily rerouted or slowed in certain areas. For details, read on.

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Providing Clean Feeding Place for Birds

This summer and fall, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will complete conversion of nearly 400 acres of farmland near Medimont to healthy wetland habitat. You may see project signs posted along the Highway 3 roadside and Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. This area is being made into clean feeding habitat for swans, ducks, and other wetland birds.

Waterfowl deaths have been recorded in the Basin for decades. This project, part of the interim Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund cleanup plan, will reduce their exposure to toxic heavy metals. It is the first project of its kind in the Basin, and an important step in addressing the Basin's ecological contamination issues.

Work this construction season will build upon work already done at this site. The work will complete the conversion to clean feeding habitat on the last 100 acres of the project area. Work includes:

- Cleaning up land by reducing metals concentrations in the soils to acceptable levels,
- Installing a water control structure and pump station, and
- Creating a drainage channel.

During construction, minimal traffic disruptions may occur on Highway 3. Drivers will be alerted by signs and flaggers.

Many partners are cooperating to make this project happen. The key partners are the property owner, EPA, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The cleanup work is being done under EPA's 2002 Basin cleanup plan, using an innovative legal agreement. The design was prepared by CH2M Hill for EPA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has awarded the construction contract to a local firm, and will oversee and manage the construction effort. FWS and Ducks Unlimited will do the restoration work and maintain the site over the long term under the Trustees' Coeur d'Alene Basin Interim Restoration Plan.

The work will be done using settlement and Asarco Trust monies. The property is owned by a private party and will not be open to the public. For details, contact Anne Dailey, EPA, at dailey.anne@epa.gov or 800-424-4372, x2110; or Kathleen Moynan, FWS, at kathleen_moynan@fws.gov or 503-231-2228.

Children's Blood-Lead Testing: July

Screening children for elevated blood lead levels has happened every year in the Coeur d'Alene Basin

since 1996. It helps identify children with elevated blood lead levels. Public health professionals follow up with information on ways to reduce lead exposures. The screening data also informs the Basin cleanup efforts. Test results are confidential.

The blood lead screening program will continue in 2009. See below for dates and locations. Screening of children who live in the Bunker Hill “Box” is free, but no incentive will be paid. Parents of children living in the Basin (outside the Box) will get paid a \$40 per child incentive, an increase over previous years. The increase is intended to boost participation in the Basin blood lead screening. Check for times and other details: Panhandle Health District, 208-783-0707.

Blood lead screening will take place:

July 6-10, Panhandle Health District, Kellogg

July 13-14, Canyon School, Cataldo

July 15, Grange Hall, Near Mediment

July 16-22, 7th Day Adventist Church, Osburn

Basin Properties Cleanup Moves Forward

The pace of residential and commercial property cleanups in the Basin will pick up over the next two years, with new funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) expects to use the Recovery Act funds (commonly called “stimulus money”) to increase the number of properties that will be cleaned up in 2009 and 2010. This increase in cleanups is expected to create 75-100 more jobs above and beyond the 125 jobs created each year from property cleanup activities. For more information, contact Rob Hanson, DEQ, at rob.hanson@deq.idaho.gov or 208-373-0290; or Bill Ryan, EPA, at ryan.william@epa.gov or 800-424-4372 x8561.

Attention Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Users: Ride Clean

Recreational vehicle operators and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders need to be aware that they may face increased health and safety risks when riding around abandoned mine areas. These risks have nothing to do with spills and crashes. The same precautions apply to anyone recreating in areas of bare dirt, river sediments, or mine dumps.

Mine waste piles may look enticing to ORV riders. However, the dust and dirt they breathe in and swallow while racing around the property contains elevated levels of arsenic and lead. These metals pose a risk to public health, and not only while on the site. These contaminants can also hitch a ride on the recreational equipment when people head home.

Here are brief facts about a couple of the contaminants people breathe and swallow as they raise dust while racing through contaminated mine waste areas.

— Inorganic arsenic can irritate the lungs and cause a sore throat when inhaled. Arsenic is also known to cause cancer.

— Lead can affect almost every organ and system in the body, whether breathed in or swallowed. The nervous system is particularly affected in both adults and children. Lead may also cause weakness in fingers, wrists, or ankles. Children and pregnant women are most vulnerable to lead exposures. Even at low levels, lead can affect a child’s mental and physical growth.

Play it safe. Ride, eat, and play clean. Follow these guidelines:

- Know where you are recreating. Check with your local off-road vehicle club to locate safe and legal places to ride.
- Wear protective gear to prevent inhaling the dust, and try to allow some distance between riders so the dust can have a chance to settle.
- Always eat at a table or on a clean surface up off the ground, and throw away any food dropped on the ground (five second rule doesn’t apply here!).
- Wash hands and face before eating anything. This may call for bringing extra washing water to areas where there is no running water.
- Remove loose soils from clothing and equipment before leaving the area.
- Wash after coming into contact with contaminated soils.

Be safe while having fun. There are plenty of areas with little to no contamination that still make great riding sites.

For information, contact Tina Elayer, DEQ, at tina.elayer@deq.idaho.gov or 208-373-0563; Jerry Cobb, Panhandle Health District, at jcobb@phd1.idaho.gov or 208-783-0707; or Ed Moreen, EPA, at moreen.ed@epa.gov or 208-664-4588.

Jack Waite Mine Cleanup Helps Protect Local Streams and Fish



Workers regrade tailings pile to improve stability

This summer, EPA and the U.S. Forest Service will continue cleanup work at the Jack Waite Site. This work will help protect water quality, prevent human exposures, and protect habitat for fish and other aquatic animals. This former mine site is in Shoshone County, about 23 kilometers northeast of Wallace. Workers will wrap up cleanup of the T3 Tailings Pile. This will complete work begun in 2008 which had to be postponed due to winter weather. The tailings pile will be sloped and stabilized to keep it from eroding and carrying metals, such as lead and zinc, into nearby Tributary Creek. If you travel near the site, you may notice some limited large truck traffic between June and August.

When more funding comes in, more waste material will be added to the T3 tailings pile and a final soil cap placed over it to protect it from erosion. If Recovery Act funds come through, even more design and construction work would take place at Jack Waite this year.

After T3 cleanup, the agencies will work together to tackle two other large tailings piles on the site. Tailings will be gathered together in an upland location and capped. After the cleanup is done, the Forest Service will continue with stream restoration to improve aquatic habitat. For details, contact Bill Adams, EPA, at adams.bill@epa.gov or 800-424-4372 x2806; or Jeff Johnson, Forest Service, jkjohnson@fs.fed.us or 208-765-7442.

Page Waste Repository to Expand

A limited expansion of the Page repository will start late this summer. The repository, west of Smeltermville, has reached its capacity. The repository is a disposal site that takes in contaminated waste soils from the local community. The Upstream Mining Group (UMG) will do much of the field work. DEQ (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality) and EPA will do oversight.

The expansion will add about two acres to the site's footprint on the southwest side. Capacity will grow by about 75,000 cubic yards. Based on disposal rates over the past 10 years, DEQ predicts this small expansion will provide capacity for 3 to 7 more years.

Most of the existing repository will be closed after the expansion area is open. Part of it may be used to temporarily stockpile wastes. As always, the site will be open to accept permitted ICP (Institutional Control Program) waste during the project. About 12 acres of the existing repository will be seeded with native grasses to control dust and reduce the amount of water soaking into the wastes. Public access to the existing Page repository, which is owned by the South Fork Coeur d'Alene Sewer District, will be closed. Access to the new expansion area will be from the same road being used now.

The expansion will fill about two acres of contaminated wetlands and riparian area which developed on mine tailings. A Clean Water Act Section 404 analysis is needed and the agencies and UMG are considering locations to recreate the wetlands values that will be lost in the expansion. Although no formal public comment period is required, the public will have a chance to preview the analysis this summer. For information, contact Bruce Schuld, DEQ, at bruce.schuld@deq.idaho.gov or 208-373-0554; or Anne McCauley, EPA, at mccauley.anne@epa.gov or 800-424-4372 x4689.

East Mission Flats Summer Work

This summer, you may notice some activity near the East Mission Flats (EMF) Waste Repository. Large trucks and other equipment will be on site, and you may see increased truck traffic. The site is near Exit 39 on I-90, west of Cataldo. It is across I-90 from the Old Mission. EMF is needed to securely contain contaminated soils from yard cleanups in the



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(cont.) Lower Basin. It will help reduce people's exposure to contaminants such as lead, arsenic, and cadmium.

The site reopened this spring to accept more waste related to the Basin Institutional Controls Program (ICP). The ICP entrance is now available for use. It is on the east side of the repository, off Canyon Road. People can access the ICP disposal area using keycards issued by the Panhandle Health District. Call 208-783-0707 to get a keycard.

For more information, contact Andy Mork, DEQ, at andy.mork@deq.idaho.gov or 208-373-0141; or Ed Moreen, EPA, at moreen.ed@epa.gov or 208-664-4588.

Gene Day Pond Testing

Early this June, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took samples in and around Gene Day Pond. The pond is next to Gene Day Park, near Osburn. The Corps is looking into converting the pond into a clean oasis that could support an urban trout fishery for the community. Tests will determine if the pond area is contaminated with heavy metals, and, if so, how high the levels are. Test results should be out later this summer.

For information, contact Bryan Helmich, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, at bryan.helmich@idfg.idaho.gov or 208-769-1414; or Mark Masarik, EPA, at masarik.mark@epa.gov or 208-378-5761.