

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

September 2017



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



Upcoming Events

Fall Public Meetings

Digging Deeper at Bonita Peak: The Mining District's Environmental Impacts

The site team will be holding the fall BPMD public meetings the week of October 16, 2017. As part of these meetings, EPA's Dan Wall, Brian Sanchez and Andrew Todd will present the third of the Digging Deeper at Bonita Peak series – *The Mining District's Environmental Impacts*.

Monday, October 16, at 6:30 p.m.

Silverton Town Hall, 1360 Greene St., Silverton, Colo.

Tuesday, October 17, at 5:30 p.m.

Walter Collins Center, N36/N562, Bldg. S006-001, Fruitland, N.M.

Wednesday, October 18, at 6:30 p.m.

Durango Library, 1900 East Third Ave., Durango, Colo.

Superfund Task Force Recommendations

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management emphasizes making informed decisions throughout the remedial process. As part of a comprehensive site strategy, actions can be taken to address immediate risks, prevent source migration and return portions of sites to use before more detailed evaluations on other parts of site are complete. Monitoring data collected about the effectiveness of these actions can be used to refine future cleanup efforts.

On July 25, 2017, the EPA's Superfund Task Force released its report to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, providing 42 specific and detailed recommendations to streamline and improve the Superfund program. The recommendations are organized into five goals:

- Expediting Cleanup and Remediation;
- Re-invigorating Responsible Party Cleanup and Reuse;
- Encouraging Private Investment;
- Promoting Redevelopment and Community Revitalization; and
- Engaging Partners and Stakeholders

Each goal is accompanied by a set of strategies that include specific actions. The BPMD Site Team is already implementing some of the recommendations, such as expediting remediation through the use of adaptive management to support early, interim actions at the site (see sidebar at left) and engaging diverse stakeholders in the cleanup process.

The site team will be looking for additional opportunities to incorporate the Task Force recommendations into investigation and cleanup efforts at the site.

To view the complete set of Superfund Task Force recommendations, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force-recommendations>.

Recent Activities

- On August 4, 2017, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt visited the Gold King Mine, north of Silverton. He was joined by Governor John Hickenlooper, Senators Cory Gardner and Michael Bennet, and Representative Scott Tipton. During the site visit, community members spoke with EPA Senior Advisor Albert (Kell) Kelly and Senior Adviser for Regional and State Affairs Ken Wagner about the Site. In addition, during the week of Aug. 21, 2017, EPA Region 8 Acting Regional Administrator Deb Thomas attended the Silverton Innovation Expo and met with the Silverton Planning Group and local officials in Silverton and Durango.
- During the week of Aug. 21, six personnel from EPA, its contractors and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted soil sampling activities in areas adjacent to eight mining features (Brooklyn, Bandora, Mogul, Lark, Vermillion, London, Red Cloud, and Clipper Mines) to better understand the area of influence surrounding to these sites. Characterization of these “halo areas” will support the terrestrial ecological risk assessment.
- Recently EPA contractors installed five new monitoring wells (piezometers) in the area of the Howardsville tailings. They took water table measurements at the new wells and at several existing wells. Ground water, surface water, soil and mine waste samples also were collected.

2017 Priorities for Superfund Site Work

Early Actions – initiate interim response actions to address simple water management and waste pile stability concerns.

Stability – identify for future action those mine features that may be the most unstable and at risk of unplanned releases of contamination.

Significant Sources – identify for future action mine features with relatively high contributions of contamination.

Human Health – conduct a Human Health Risk Assessment.

Planned Activities

- Drilling of the horizontal well at the Gold King Mine has begun. When that work is completed, likely in mid-September, installation of the flow control structure in the adit will begin. Following that, the berm outside the historic level 7 adit at the mine will be constructed. This work is intended to reduce the potential of an unplanned discharge from the mine.
- Low-flow surface water and sediment sampling will take place the week of Sept. 25. Game collection for sampling will take place the same week. Sampling of seeps and springs will be taking place later in the fall.

Meet the Bonita Peak Site Team

Benerito (Ben) S. Martinez Jr., Environmental Compliance & Protection (ECAP) & Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program Leader, San Juan National Forest, U.S. Forest Service

Ben is the Abandoned Mine Land Program Leader for the San Juan National Forest. He brings 25 years of environmental and civil engineering experience to the Bonita Peak Mining District team. His experience working for the Department of Defense and the U.S. Forest Service includes supporting operations on wildlife refuges and around historic sites to the remediation of legacy sites while respecting traditional uses and land management interests. He enjoys hiking, biking, completing Tough Mudder courses, snowboarding, and wakeboarding. Ben and his wife have lived in the Durango area for 8 years.



Ben Martinez

More Information

Visit the Bonita Peak Mining District website <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>.