

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

September 2018



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>

Recent Activities

- On August 28 and 29, 2018, the San Juan County Historical Society hosted a tour of mining sites where EPA is proposing future work. Two deputy state historic preservation officers from Denver were joined by representatives from the State Historical Fund, EPA, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Silverton and San Juan County. The group visited nine mines/tunnels, including several sites that are representative of the adit drainage reroutes, stormwater run-on controls, and sediment pond maintenance that were included in the May 2018 *Proposed Plan for Interim Remedial Actions at the Bonita Peak Mining District*.



Tour participants at the Columbus Mine.

Photo by Ray Dileo

2018 Priorities for Superfund Site Work

Continuously **improve environmental conditions** in the mining district by implementing identified early, interim cleanup actions and prioritizing additional response activities for future years.

Increase overall understanding of the mining district through ongoing investigations, site modeling and adaptive goal development.

Involve potentially responsible parties (PRPs), property owners and others in site investigative and cleanup activities.

Continue to **foster active engagement** with all interested parties.

- On Sept. 12, 2018, in response to a media request, EPA released public comments it received on its May 2018 *Proposed Plan for Interim Remedial Actions at the Bonita Peak Mining District*. Due to heightened interest, EPA is making these comments available before completing its analysis of them. This early release furthers the agency's goal for transparency and is appropriate for certain sites with significant public interest. EPA will respond to significant comments in a responsiveness summary, which will be included in the final decision document – the Interim Record of Decision. Those comments that were received but that were not related to the proposed action will not be addressed specifically in the responsiveness summary. However, they will be considered, and as appropriate responded to, based on the substance of the comment.

- For more information, view a [fact sheet \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005345) (3 pp, 1.4 MB) about the release of the public comments.
https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005345
- View the [comments that were submitted](https://go.usa.gov/xP4Jg) about the proposed plan.
https://go.usa.gov/xP4Jg
- Some response activities in the BPMD, have the potential to cause discoloration of the Animas River or its tributaries. In addition, natural events, such as large thunderstorms, or incidents not related to activities at the site may also impact the river. To notify stakeholders of these events in the most efficient and prompt way, EPA is continuing to use the 2017 Animas River Alert and Notification Plan for its communications to stakeholders related to any events that affect the appearance or water quality of the Animas River. The plan was developed by state and local emergency management agencies to provide consistent, predictable communications related to the Animas River. EPA uses the plan for proactive notifications regarding planned activities at the site and to alert stakeholders about any impacts to the river from work being conducted at the site.
- EPA has recently released its *2016 Low Flow Seeps and Springs Characterization Report*. This report summarizes the results of the 2016 low-flow sampling event that measured water quality and quantity coming from seeps, springs, and draining mine adits in the BPMD. This investigation is helping the site team determine the potential hydrologic connections between seeps and springs and mine-impacted waters. It also enhances the team's understanding of groundwater quality in areas that have not been disturbed by historic mining activity. Ninety-eight seeps and springs, along with 14 draining mines and an additional 17 dry mine portals, were surveyed for the presence of seeps or discharge. Samples were analyzed for total discharge, total and dissolved metals, anions, alkalinity, pH, temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, and stable water isotopes.
- View the [2016 Low Flow Seeps and Springs Characterization Report \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005335) (48 pp, 4.4 MB).
https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005335

Upcoming Events

- During the week of September 24, 2018, EPA will conduct low-flow sampling at various locations in the BPMD.

New on the Web

- [Bonita Peak Mining District Update, August 2018 – Spanish \(Novedades del distrito minero Bonita Peak, Agosto de 2018\) \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005326) (2 pp, 1.7 MB)
https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005326