

Community Involvement Plan for Black Butte Mine

Staying informed and involved



Cottage Grove Lake



1/15/2013

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Community Involvement Plan for Black Butte Mine

Lane County, Oregon

This is the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) plan for involving community members in the investigation and cleanup of the Black Butte Mine Superfund Site. During the summer of 2012 EPA talked with residents, community groups, Lane County and City of Cottage Grove officials, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) staff and other interested people to find out how they wanted to be informed and involved. We welcome your input and ideas for improving our community outreach at any time.

EPA is doing an environmental investigation at the Black Butte Mine Superfund Site, located in the headwaters of the Coast Fork Willamette River, approximately 10 miles southeast of Cottage Grove, Oregon. Studying the nature and extent of contamination, and evaluating cleanup alternatives with a feasibility study will take several years. EPA will build on extensive work already completed by ODEQ and other researchers.

Community involvement will play an important role as we complete the investigation and cleanup of mercury and other contamination at the Black Butte Mine. Understanding community priorities, issues and concerns can help EPA make informed decisions to create a cleanup plan that meets the needs of the community.

This plan includes the following:

- EPA Contacts
- Site Description and Community Background
- What We Heard from the Community
- How We Will Keep You Informed
- Community Involvement Activities 2012-2017
- Partnerships with Other Agencies and Tribal Governments
- Local Contacts and Additional Information about the Site
- Black Butte Mine Site Photos and Resources

EPA Contacts

If you have questions, comments or need more information about this plan or the Black Butte Mine site, please contact:

- EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Alanna Conley, at (503) 326-6831, conley.alanna@epa.gov
- EPA Project Manager, Rich Muza, at (503) 326-6554, muza.richard@epa.gov

Additionally, if you have questions about the mercury study at Cottage Grove Lake, please contact Chris S. Eckley, Ph.D., EPA Mining Geochemist, at (206) 553-0510, eckley.chris@epa.gov

Website for Black Butte Mine: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/BBM>

Site Description and Community Background

The Black Butte Mine Superfund Site (Figure 1) is located in Lane County, Oregon, approximately 35 miles southeast of Eugene and approximately 10 miles upstream from the Cottage Grove Lake. Mercury mining and processing operations were active at the site from the late 1890s to the late 1960s. The site has been identified as a significant contributor of mercury found in sediment and fish tissue in Cottage Grove Lake. In 2010, EPA listed Black Butte Mine on the National Priorities List. This is a list of hazardous waste sites in the United States eligible for long-term remedial action (cleanup) financed under the federal Superfund program. EPA is in the process of investigating the extent and amount of mercury contamination at the Black Butte Mine site.

The community around the Black Butte Mine site includes a broad range of individuals. Residents of Lane County and Cottage Grove are active in their communities, with over 40 formal and informal community groups ready to take care of neighbors and neighborhoods in need.

The City of Cottage Grove has around 10,000 residents, with as many as 15,000 residents of the surrounding unincorporated areas of Lane County using city services. London, an unincorporated community, sits at the base of Black Butte mine and is the closest populated area to the site. Some residents are descended from the original homesteaders in this part of Oregon. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians are Federally Recognized Tribes with ancestral territory in the vicinity of the site. Many residents have been caring for the land and its resources for generations. In addition to the residents, the area is host to recreational tourists who visit the area during the summer vacation season between Memorial Day and Labor Day to enjoy the outdoor activities which the community offers.

Residents report to us that, for the most part, they agree with EPA listing the Black Butte Mine on the National Priorities List. They stated clearly that the health and well-being of the community and the environment were of primary importance, including the environmental and economic benefits of Cottage Grove Lake. When Black Butte Mine was first placed on the NPL there was concern within the community that naming Black Butte Mine as a Superfund site might limit recreational use of the Lake. During the community interviews and the public meeting held in 2012, community members again reminded us of the importance of the Lake to the residents of the area.

Community Involvement Overview

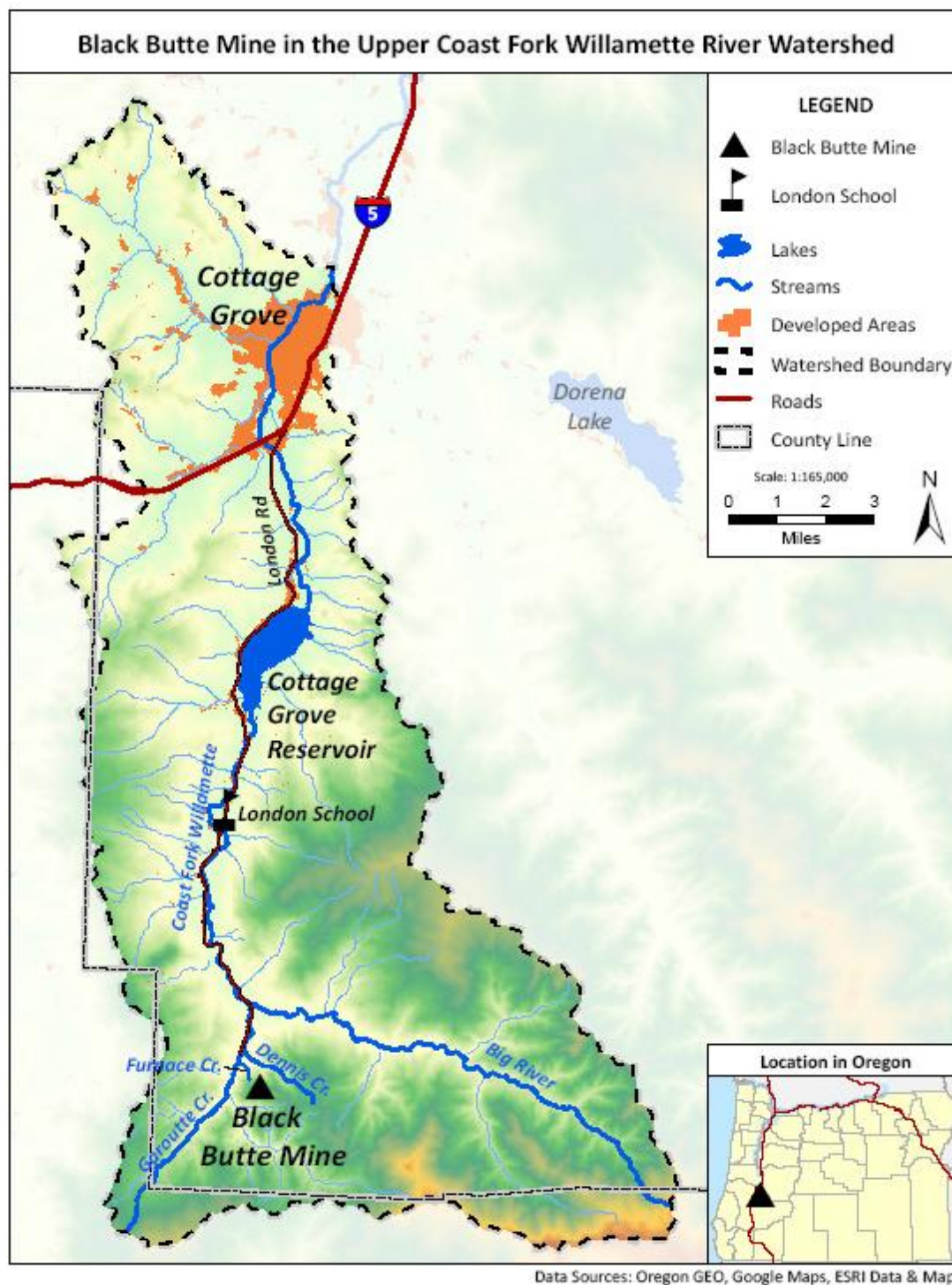
In July of 2012, EPA representatives met with residents of Lane County and Cottage Grove, civic leaders, elected officials, and state and federal agencies in Lane County and Cottage Grove, Oregon. These individuals provided candid views on the needs and expectations of those who might be affected by a Superfund site in the community. The community feedback will be used to help inform better decisions on how we should involve the community in future planning. The community knowledge collected from the conversations was used to draft this document, called a *Community Involvement Plan*. This plan outlines EPA's activities to:

- Provide useful and timely information on site activities and progress
- Provide opportunities for public participation and comment
- Establish open communication, and respond to questions and concerns as they arise
- Evaluate how well community involvement activities work and make changes as needed

We are also very interested in your opinions and we would like to hear your thoughts about this *Community Involvement Plan*. If we have missed something important about the community around the

Black Butte Mine site, or if there are other ways you would like us to provide information to you, or additional ways you would like to be involved, please tell us. To learn more about the Superfund community involvement process, please see the EPA web page <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/process.htm>

Figure 1. Map of Black Butte Mine Watershed (Courtesy of OHA, Public Health Assessment, April 2012)



What We Heard from the Community

We listened to comments from around the community. Provided below are examples of the questions and concerns expressed from the community and EPA responses.

Why is EPA doing yet more studies? Hasn't this site been studied enough?

It is true that studies have been done by universities, state and federal agencies, and EPA is using much of that work to inform and focus our study. Because of the work these other groups have done, EPA's work can be more targeted, filling in the "missing pieces" of information that will help us decide how to move forward with cleanup at the site.

This area has self-reliant folks whose biggest concern is the lack of jobs.

Several people expressed an interest in volunteering, working, or otherwise participating in the study of contamination at Black Butte Mine. We are looking into ways that we might provide such opportunities.

The Cottage Grove Lake (CGL) is an important recreational resource for the community and good for businesses in the area. Don't shut down the lake. Don't dredge the lake.

Residents and business leaders made it clear that the CGL is important to you. While our goal is to lower the level of mercury in the fish of CGL, **we do not plan to recommend limiting the use of the lake for recreation.**

Organized groups as well as individuals take care of each other as a matter of course so "nobody ever falls here."

Close-knit communities are well suited to ensure that agencies working on this Superfund site are aware of the impact our work may have on nearby people and neighborhoods.

People have eaten the fish they caught in Cottage Grove Lake for years without any problems.

Fish are an important part of a healthy diet. There are fish consumption advisories for the Lake. The Oregon Health Authority completed a Public Health Assessment, April 2012, that has information about who can safely eat fish from CGL, and who should limit the amount of those fish they eat. The Assessment can be found at:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/healthyenvironments/trackingassessment/environmentalhealthassessment/pages/bbmsite.aspx>, or you can contact Oregon Health Authority at 971-673-1219.

People are skeptical of government efforts, but communication early and often will help – people in the area want to know what's going on with taxpayer money.

EPA tries to keep people informed of our work in and near your community. Many of the ways we hope to distribute information are listed below. If you have questions or concerns, you can always contact the community involvement coordinator or project manager for additional information. The community involvement coordinator is Alanna Conley, 503-326-6831 and the project manager is Rich Muza, 503-326-6554.

People are interested in ways to involve college students and youth in activities related to the Black Butte Mine Site.

There are 7 schools within the Cottage Grove city limits and several colleges/universities within the vicinity. London Elementary School is the closest to Black Butte Mine. EPA is seeking opportunities to provide presentations to college students about the site and Superfund process. In addition EPA is seeking creative options for connecting with K-12 students and educators who are interested in learning more about the site and how they can be involved.

How We Will Keep You Informed

EPA will use many tools to keep you informed and involved on work on the Black Butte Mine Superfund Site. These may include:

E-mail and Telephone Contacts: You can find contact information for EPA on the first page of this plan. EPA will send brief updates to the project e-mail list every three to four months or when new information is available. We will respond promptly to incoming phone calls and e-mail messages. Contact the Community Involvement Coordinator to be added or removed from the e-mail list, Alanna Conley, (503) 326-6831, conley.alanna@epa.gov.

Website: Project Information, including fact sheets, documents and meeting notices can be found at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/BBM>

Information Repository: The repository provides a local site for copies of selected site information. EPA will place technical documents and reports, as well as the Administrative Record for the site (when it is complete), at the Cottage Grove Library, located at 700 Gibbs Avenue, Cottage Grove.

Project Updates: Project updates summarizing key information will be developed as needed and updated annually. Updates will be distributed by e-mail, postal mail and posting to the Black Butte Mine web page.

Public Meetings: EPA may hold community meetings to provide new or updated information about the Black Butte Mine site and gather feedback. Public meetings will be announced by e-mail and news releases sent to the local newspaper. EPA and our agency partners are also available to meet or make presentations to community groups by request.

Public Comment Opportunities: Formal public comment opportunities will be scheduled when the proposed cleanup plan is released. Prior to that time, meetings and/or conference calls will be scheduled for informal feedback. Documents will be available for public viewing during the remedial investigation and feasibility study at the Cottage Grove Library.

Sharing preliminary documents: EPA will post electronic copies of documents on the EPA project web site so that they are available for public review. CD copies of documents can be mailed out by request. Paper and/or CD copies of key documents will be placed in the information repository at the Cottage Grove Library.

Environmental Education Partnership: EPA will work with other agencies, organizations and educators to identify learning opportunities for students in communities near the Black Butte Mine site over the next several years. EPA will explore ways to share information about how a sound foundation of science is used to evaluate and clean up contaminated sites to make sure they will not pose a risk to people and

wildlife. EPA talked with London Elementary School and Lane Community College teachers in summer 2012 and will be actively pursuing environmental education activities in 2013 and beyond.

Community Involvement Activities

Provided below is a list of activities and future actions the EPA community involvement coordinator (CIC), and remedial project manager (RPM) have planned to keep engaged with the community.

Community Involvement Activities	Date	Who
Provide update to county commissioners and city officials	July 2012	RPM
Prepare community involvement plan that will be periodically updated	October 2012	CIC
Provide written project update describing activities for the site	Fall 2012	RPM
Update and post documents to the EPA Black Butte website	Ongoing	CIC
Send copies of documents to repository at Cottage Grove Library	Ongoing	CIC
Develop and expand e-mail contact list for sending site updates	Ongoing	CIC
Prepare fact sheet with site summary and superfund process	Winter 2013	
Provide written project update describing activities for the site	Spring 2013	CIC
Host public information session to discuss site updates, community involvement and mercury study	Summer 2013	CIC, RPM
Provide update to Lane County Commissioners and City of Cottage Grove officials	Summer 2013	RPM
Presentations to students in the London Elementary School and Lane Community College	Summer-Fall 2013, As requested	RPM Others
Explore environmental education opportunities with educators	Ongoing	CIC
Inform and involve partner state, county, and federal agencies and tribal governments	As needed	RPM
Meet with community groups as requested and as resources permit	Ongoing	CIC
Host community information session to share cleanup information	TBD 2014	RPM, CIC, Others
Respond to calls, letters, emails from residents	Ongoing	CIC, RPM

Community Involvement Activities 2014-2017

As work on the site continues, we will continue to use activities described above to stay engaged with you and continue to meet the requirements established by the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act for public involvement at the Black Butte Mine Superfund Site. For more information on the Superfund process or required outreach activities at Superfund sites, visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/community/index.htm

Partnerships with Other Agencies and Tribal Governments

EPA is working in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority, Environmental Health Assessment Program and others to evaluate what are the human health and ecological risk from the site, the extent of the risk associated with the site and, how the risks may be reduced. These evaluations will be conducted during the Remedial Investigation (RI) of the Black Butte Mine site. After the RI, a Feasibility Study (FS) will be conducted to evaluate options for reducing the risk described in the RI.

EPA will also offer formal Tribal Consultation regarding the site to the Tribes with ancestral territory in the area. Here is information on who we plan to contact at other agencies and Tribal governments:

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Bryn Thoms, Geologist, 541-687-7424, thoms.bryn@deq.state.or.us

Susan Turnblom, Toxicologist, 541-687-7464, turnblom.susan@deq.state.or.us

Oregon Health Authority, Environmental Health Assessment Program (OHA, EHAP)

Todd Hudson, Toxicologist, 971-673-0024, todd.hudson@state.or.us

Karen Bishop, Public Health Educator, 971-673-1219, karen.bishop@state.or.us

Army Corps of Engineers

Christie L. Johnson, Park Ranger, 541-942-5631 ext 12, Christie.L.Johnson@usace.army.mil

Kathryn Tackley, Water Quality, 503-808-4883, Kathryn.L.Tackley@usace.army.mil

Tribal Contacts

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, 2371 NE Stephens, Suite 100, Roseburg, OR 97470

Dan Courtney, Tribal Chair 541-672-9405

mrondeau@cowcreek.com

Amy Amoroso, Natural Resources Director 541-677-5575, x5516

aamorosa@cowcreek.com

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Cheryle Kennedy, Chairwoman 503-879-5211

cheryle.kennedy@grandronde.org

Mike Wilson, Natural Resources Director 503-879-2380

mike.wilson@grandronde.org

Michael Karnosh, Ceded Lands Coordinator 503-879-2383

michael.karnosh@grandronde.org

Rob Greene, Tribal Attorney 503-879-2270

rob.greene@grandronde.org

Brandy Humphreys, Environmental Resource Specialist 503-897-2423

Brandy.humphreys@grandronde.org

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380

Delores Pigsley, Tribal Chair 541-444-2532

(b) (6)

Mike Kennedy, Natural Resource Director 541-444-8232

mikek@ctsi.nsn.us

Tom Downey, Environmental Specialist 541-444-8226

tomd@ctsi.nsn.us

Local Contacts

EPA will stay in communication with the following elected officials in Cottage Grove and Lane County.

City of Cottage Grove

City Mayor, Thomas Munroe 541-942-5501

400 E. Main Street, Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424

City Manager, Richard Meyers 541-942-5501

400 E. Main Street, Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424

Lane County

Commissioner Faye Stewart

125 E 8th Street, Eugene, OR 97401 541-682-4203

EPA will coordinate with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (Bryn Thoms) to update federal legislators, state representatives and senators.

Media contacts listed below will be used to advertise announcements for public meetings.

Cottage Grove Sentential

PO Box 35, Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424 541-942-3325

KNND 1400 AM & KCGR 100.5 FM

321 E. Main St., Cottage Grove, OR 97424 541-942-2468

KSOW-Ip 106.7 FM

Cottage Grove, OR 97424 541-942-1067

Additional Information about the Site

The Black Butte Mine Site is a former mercury mine located off London Road approximately 10 miles south of Cottage Grove, Oregon. The Site is located on the northwest flank of Black Butte Mountain. The Site is bordered to the northeast by Dennis Creek, to the southwest by Furnace Creek, to the southeast by Black Butte Mountain, and to the northwest by Garoutte Creek. Both Dennis Creek and Furnace Creek flow west-northwest to Garoutte Creek which flows northward approximately six miles to the Coast Fork of the Willamette River. The River empties into Cottage Grove Lake. Access to the site is via a dirt road east of London Road.

Black Butte Mine was discovered in 1890 and became the second largest mercury-producing mine in Oregon. Peak production occurred between the years 1927 to 1943; after 1943, the mine operated intermittently until its last use in 1969. The property is currently owned by The Land and Timber Company, who purchased it in 1994 for logging.

In July 2004 the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality requested that the EPA perform a removal assessment at the former Black Butte Mine. EPA's contractor completed that work in 2005-06. In August/September 2007 a removal action was performed by regrading the steep slopes of the Site's Main Tailings Pile along one of the three creeks to prevent tailings material from washing into the creek; a substantial amount of tailings were removed during the regrading and used as capping material for two other highly contaminated areas on the site.

EPA conducted a Site Inspection at the Black Butte Mine that was used to document the presence of hazardous substances. As a result of the site assessment, the Black Butte Mine was listed on the National Priorities List on March 4, 2010.

Black Butte Mine Site Photos

The photos below were taken during a site walk of Black Butte Mine in 2012. Site walks, or site reconnaissance visits, are a tool to help EPA and other agencies better understand the history of the mine, locate potential sources of contamination from the mine and determine where future water sampling points should be taken. All of the information gathered during the site walk helps guide EPA when developing plans to study the site and determine the extent of contamination from the mine site.



Photo 1. One of the adits found during the site walk of the mine. An adit is a passage that leads into a mine or provides a passage for water to drain from the mine.



Photo 2. View of water draining from a Black Butte Mine adit.



Photo 4. Mine tailings pile (notice the different tailing sizes from larger gravel to fines). Tailings are materials left over after the process of separating the valuable minerals from the ore.



a.



b.

Photo 4a. Structure associated with a mill furnace. **4b.** Rotary kiln and mill. Note mercury vapor capture device installed at left side of building.



Photo 5. Abandoned equipment found on the mine site.

Resources

EPA's Black Butte Mine Superfund site web page:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bbm>

Oregon Health Authority Public Health Assessment for Black Butte Mine:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/healthyenvironments/trackingassessment/environmentalhealthassessment/pages/bbmsite.aspx>

EPA's Community Involvement at Superfund sites:

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/index.htm>

More about EPA's Superfund program:

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/>

Optimization Review, Black Butte Mine Superfund Site:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/bbm>