

BASIN BULLETIN

Updates on the Coeur d'Alene River Basin Cleanup

November 2015



Get your property sampled at no cost to you

Hey, property owners:

Yard sampling, cleanup at no cost to you

Has your yard been tested and cleaned up? The property remediation program has cleaned up nearly 7,000 residential yards and commercial properties in the area. The program is winding down. Now is your chance to get your property sampled. Sampling and any necessary cleanup work occur at no cost to you.

Property cleanups are done as part of the Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup. Past mining practices left behind metals like lead and arsenic in the communities and surrounding environment. Those metals pose a risk to people's health, especially for young children and pregnant women. In the Silver Valley, having your property tested is an important way to keep your family safe and healthy. Call 208-783-5781 to request testing or learn more.

For more information, go to www.deq.idaho.gov/BunkerHillSuperfundSite

Highlights

- Thanks for a great year of cleanup, everyone!..... 2
- Clean habitats, streams in Ninemile..... 3
- EPA grant will support air quality, protect people, in Silver Valley 3
- Robinson Creek: Restoring Wetlands 5
- Sidewalks, volunteers, good neighbors..... 6
- Success! More bugs, fewer weeds 7
- Clean habitat project gets reuse award 9

Learn more about the Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup on the Web

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bh>

New!

NOTE: *new Internet address!*

Thanks for a great year of cleanup, everyone!

A note from Bill Adams, EPA Cleanup Team Leader

Together, we are making great progress to protect people's health in community areas and improve water quality in the Basin. This year, a whopping \$35 million was spent on the cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. This work employed over 400 people, nearly all of them from the Silver Valley. We know the work can sometimes be disruptive. Thanks, everyone, for your patience.

Here's some of the work we completed this year:

- ▶ Removal of 43,000 cubic yards of contamination from Ninemile Creek to reduce the amount of metal going into surface water
- ▶ Constructing eight remedy protection projects totaling about \$4 million; this work protects past clean-up from the impacts of flooding in community areas
- ▶ Paving 19 miles of roads in communities (37 total since the program began); the new pavement serves as a barrier to waste
- ▶ Cleanup of over 75 residential and commercial properties, representing over 1.5 million square feet
- ▶ Release of the request for proposals for the design and construction of the expanded Central Water Treatment Plant and installation of a groundwater collection system; the system will capture about 40% of the metal load from the Upper Basin – that will be a huge reduction in the amount of metals moving downstream; construction of this project will begin in 2016
- ▶ Constructing a 3,000 foot river bank stabilization project in the Lower Basin at a recreation area
- ▶ Continued operation of four repositories and development of two 'Limited Use Repositories' for the roads program waste



Bill Adams, EPA Team Leader

Photo: Jo Gallaher, EPA

I am incredibly proud of the efforts of both our EPA team and our partners at IDEQ who made this work happen. I also appreciate the local jurisdictions for their close coordination and their role in implementing this work. And a big thank you to all the local contractors who work so hard to benefit their communities. As the weather sets in and the work on the ground slows, we are all planning and looking forward to even greater progress next year towards completing cleanup in community areas.

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Clean habitats, streams in Ninemile



Crews constructing a new stable channel in the cleaned up area.

Good things have been happening this year up in the Ninemile watershed. Crews have reconstructed over 1700 linear feet of east fork Ninemile Creek and 1300 linear feet of tributaries around the Interstate Callahan Rock Dumps. The creek was rerouted during work to allow removal of contaminants from the waste rock dumps and the streambed. When the removal was done, a new stream channel was created. Now the water flows through clean habitat for fish and other animals, freshly planted with new vegetation. This year, about 43,000 cubic yards of mine waste was removed, bringing the area total to over 200,000 cubic yards in two years. The waste was placed in the Waste Consolidation Area, or WCA. Work will continue in east fork Ninemile Creek next year as crews begin cleanup at the Success Complex.

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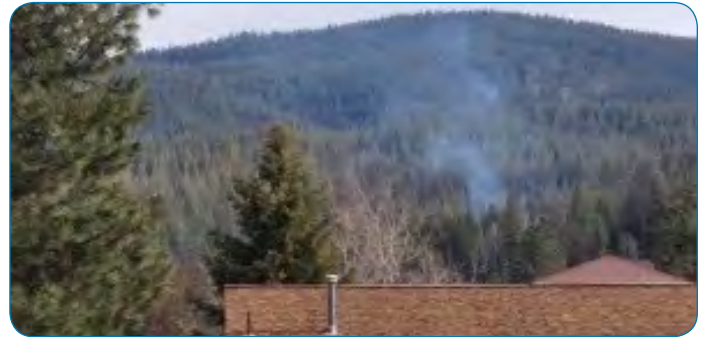
EPA grant will support air quality, protect people, in Silver Valley: Funding expected to energize local efforts to breathe cleaner air

The IDEQ has received a \$2.48 million EPA grant to reduce pollution and protect air quality in the West Silver Valley. The grant is part of EPA's 2015 Targeted Air Shed Grant Program. The West Silver Valley proposal aims to reduce harmful emissions from wood stoves and open burning. Planned projects include:

- ▶ Woodstove change-outs
- ▶ Building wood-drying sheds
- ▶ Providing more efficient and cleaner burning fire logs during colder weather
- ▶ Upgraded home weatherization
- ▶ Promoting residential yard waste and logging debris removal instead of open burning
- ▶ Outreach and education

A local Air Quality Citizens Advisory Committee is working with IDEQ to develop a plan to reduce emissions in the West Silver Valley. The aim is to bring the area's particulate matter back to healthy levels for community members of all ages. The grant will help the community implement its plans. Scientific studies link exposure to particulate matter with serious human health problems. Particulate matter are tiny particles about 1/30th the size of a human hair.

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An EPA grant to IDEQ will help the West Silver Valley breathe cleaner air.

Photo by Rene Gilbert

EPA refines remedy protection project locations to keep cleaned-up areas clean

The EPA has issued an “Explanation of Significant Differences” for the Coeur d’Alene Basin Cleanup. The 2012 cleanup amendment selected a remedy to keep cleaned-up areas clean within Upper Basin communities and side gulches, over the long-term. These selected remedy protection actions called for building infrastructure such as storm water systems and larger culverts. These improvements will help protect people and the environment by reducing erosion and recontamination from storm water runoff, tributary flooding, and heavy rain and snowfall. This ESD selects five locations within side gulches to build structures to manage storm water: Silver Creek in the Page community, Slaughterhouse Gulch Road above Wardner, Blackcloud and McCarthy Creeks in Ninemile, and Boulder Creek in Mullan. The ESD will become part of the Bunker Hill administrative record. View the ESD at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bh> or view it at select local libraries.



Remedy protection projects focus on reducing recontamination.

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Protecting cleaned up areas from recontamination



Revenue Gulch in Silverton was one of many remedy protection projects this year.

You probably noticed lots of construction this summer and fall in the Silver Valley. It was a big year for remedy protection work. This work helps protect public health by keeping cleaned up areas clean – by controlling flooding and drainage in select areas. IDEQ completed four projects: Little Pine Creek improvements, Jackass Creek bypass pipe (protecting the hospital), a culvert upgrade on Silver Creek in the Page area, and overland water diversion on the gravel road above Wardner. All remedy protection work is now complete in the Box.

The CDA Trust completed four projects: the Revenue Gulch stormwater system in Silverton, the Mill Road stormwater system and South 2nd storm pipe in Mullan, and the Ninemile Road culvert upgrade on McCarthy Creek. Looking ahead to 2016, the CDA Trust plans to upgrade the Printers Creek intake in Wallace and the Copper Street stormwater system. They will also work on upgrades to the Blackcloud Creek and Boulder Creek culverts, and improvements to the lower half of Mill Creek in Mullan.

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Robinson Creek: Restoring Wetlands



What was once a pasture land with modified versions of Robinson and Canary Creeks draining through it, is now being developed as a high-value, 47-acre wetland. The project is located near the Schlepp wetland habitat project in the lower CDA Basin. Idaho Fish and Game, IDEQ, EPA, The Restoration Partnership, and several stakeholders are collaboratively participating in this effort. IDEQ is excited about the opportunity to create a higher value habitat on healthy soil, to make up for some contaminated Upper Basin wetlands that were filled. IDFG designed the wetland to provide safe feeding, resting, and nesting sites for waterfowl and shorebirds in an area that is uncontaminated by heavy metals.

The project includes adding in water control structures to improve portions of Canary Creek and Robinson Creek. A Kingston-based contractor will complete the earthwork next spring to ready the site for native and culturally significant plants for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. The site will offer year-round public access, interpretive signage and bird watching areas. Project such as these support ecological health in the Lower Basin, a goal of the CDA Basin Cleanup.

CONTACT: **Bruce Schuld**, IDEQ, 298-783-5781, bruce.schuld@deq.idaho.gov



Sidewalks, volunteers, good neighbors

By Mike Feiler, Wallace Resident

Wallace contractor John Ruggles has a reputation of having a passion for everything he does. It could be his profession as a contractor, politics, community volunteerism, bicycling and hiking or fighting cancer.

When his doctors told him he had to exercise as part of his health regimen, he walked or biked every sidewalk in town. It was a crumbling sidewalk that caught his attention more than a year ago. Seeing that problem and knowing replacement costs would be a hardship to the retired property owners, John contacted neighbors to see if they would be willing to help with the cost of concrete and materials. John said he would take care of building forms, get materials at his cost and finish the concrete. Neighbors took him up on his offer and a budget of about \$1,000. Work was planned and the job was expected to take two weekends.

Rain and an IDEQ project to replace the street, curbs and gutters next to the sidewalk on Pine Street forced rescheduling of the work for fear of damaging the new curbs.

Finally, more than a dozen volunteers gathered with plans to break up 129 feet of concrete, load it into wheelbarrows, and take it around the corner where the City of Wallace agreed to pick it up.



Volunteers planned to break up 129 feet of concrete and load it into wheelbarrows.

Resident Don Hoffman brought his mini backhoe but it quickly became obvious the job of hauling away the chunks by hand would take at least another weekend of hard work.

All of this was happening as IDEQ-contracted road crews from Kingston-based DG&S were starting to do the final work of the new pavement. When two men from the project walked over to the volunteers and questioned what they were doing, there was concern that the volunteers would be told the sidewalk project would have to stop because it could interfere with the road work.



Road crews can be good neighbors, too!

Instead, DG&S supervisor Aaron Arthur and David Evans and Associates' road program project manager Kevin Puckett asked how their crews could be good neighbors. They offered to load up all the concrete and haul it off. And they did!

A few days later, volunteers poured and finished concrete, and Pine Street ended up with one of the best sections of sidewalk in town.

Photos provided by Mike Feiler

Success! More bugs, fewer weeds



Paul Brusven

Bugs are helping in the battle against spotted knapweed.



IDEQ is fighting a nasty invasive weed – called spotted knapweed – with weevils. And winning! In 2006, IDEQ released 1,400 weevils on their land near the Smeltonville Airport, a former slag pile area, and other nearby areas to control the knapweed where the State had previously done cleanup work.

Experts evaluated the weevils’ progress this summer. Jan Olsen, IDEQ Analyst and Shoshone County Weed Advisory Board Chairperson, along with Carol Young, Shoshone County Weed Superintendent, called upon Paul Brusven, Coordinator for the Nez Perce Bio-Control Center, to evaluate. The trio collected weevils in nets using a technique called “sweeping.”

The findings were quite favorable. The bugs were so abundant that the area is an incubator for new hatch. And populations of knapweed are reduced since the 2006 release.

“This is a great success story that we can be proud to have in our county,” Young stated. Olsen is pleased with the results, too. “The little bugs won’t eradicate the plants, [but they] will weaken the population of weeds so that they are greatly reduced,” she says. The state continues to monitor their lands annually for weed management and the effectiveness of cleanups already in place.

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Jan Olsen and Carol Young

Photos provided by IDEQ



In the community...



It was great to see so many of you at September's Shoshone Medical Children's Health Fair. Remember, Keep Clean, Eat Clean, Play Clean!

IDEQ thanks Kellogg High School's wood shop class for building bluebird houses supporting habitat near wetlands built in Page, ID. Bruce Schuld and Denna Grangaard installed the houses this fall in anticipation of the bird's early spring arrival.

Photo provided by IDEQ



Clean habitat project gets reuse award

A project that converted nearly 400 acres of agricultural land near Medimont to healthy wetland habitat has been honored with the *Howard Orlean Excellence in Site Reuse Award*. The project, aimed at creating clean feeding habitat for swans, ducks, and other wetland birds and mammals, was completed in 2011. Fundamentally, the project was made possible by property owners Mike and Brenda Schlepp. Their care and commitment to their land, their ability to work through complex processes, and their patience and willingness to overcome challenges, helped lay the groundwork for success. Throughout the effort, the EPA worked closely with the Schlepps, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited and many others.



*Mike and Brenda Schlepp accept award.
Pictured here with Gretchen Schmidt (center) of EPA*

More recently, the Coeur d'Alene Basin "Restoration Partnership" (the group of state, tribal and federal natural resource trustees) has taken on a leadership role in managing and enhancing the habitat. The award is named in honor of Howard Orlean, Superfund Project Manager with the Environmental Protection Agency. Congratulations, everyone! For more information on the award, visit <http://go.usa.gov/caERx>

EPA wrapping up Five-Year Review

We're finishing the fourth Five-Year review of the Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup. The agency reviews sites where contaminants remain in place at least every five years. The review ensures that cleanup actions continue to protect human health and the environment.

The final Five-Year Review report will be posted by the end of the year at

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bh>

CONTACT: **Anne McCauley**, EPA
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EPA updates 10-year Superfund Implementation Plan

The 10-year Implementation Plan summarizes prioritized cleanup activities included in the Upper Basin Interim ROD Amendment (EPA, 2012) and prior decision documents for the basin cleanup. Modifications and amendments to the plan have been documented by EPA on an annual basis. To coincide with completion of the five-year review, a more comprehensive update to the Implementation Plan will be made in early 2016 to capture past amendments and outline the work for the next 10-year period.

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Then & Now: Our Changing Landscape



Kellogg Hillsides



Pittsburg Consolidated Mill, Blackcloud

Today, our community enjoys a recovering landscape, wildlife in our backyard and recreation opportunities. Rivers, although clearer than they once were, have shorelines which still carry metals unearthed decades ago. Many changes to our landscape are the result of changes in environmental practices, industry's technological innovation, and environmental cleanup projects. Idaho DEQ is proud to be a partner in Idaho's future.



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of Environmental Quality**
(208) 783-5781
1005 West McKinley Ave,
Kellogg, Idaho 83837

Want Timely Updates? Visit us on Facebook!



One of the best ways to stay up-to-date on the cleanup work is to sign up for our Facebook page. Watch for two or three short posts a week. We invite you to check it out!

 <https://www.facebook.com/CDAbasin>

Documents

North Idaho College Library

Molstead Library
1000 Garden Avenue – Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-769-3355

Wallace Public Library

415 River Street – Wallace, ID 83873
208-752-4571

Spokane Public Library

906 West Main Avenue – Spokane, WA 99201
509-444-5336

EPA Field Office

1910 Northwest Boulevard, Suite 208
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
208-664-4588

EPA Seattle Office

Superfund Record Center
1200 Sixth Avenue – Seattle, WA 98101
206-553-4494 or 800-424-4372

St. Maries Library

822 W. College Avenue – St. Maries, ID 83861
208-245-3732

Kellogg Public Library

16 West Market Avenue – Kellogg, ID 83837
208-786-7231

Opportunities to Get Involved

Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission (BEIPC)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Terry Harwood

208-783-2528

<http://www.basincommission.com>

Citizens Coordinating Council (CCC)

CHAIR:

Jerry Boyd

509-220-1453


<http://www.basincommission.com/cc.asp>

The Basin Bulletin is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency three times a year. The Basin Bulletin offers updates on the Superfund cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. For mailing list changes, to send comments on this newsletter, contact the editors, or submit articles for consideration, contact Andrea Lindsay as noted. Mention of trade names, products, or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying, official EPA approval, endorsement, or recommendation.

Alternative formats are available.

For reasonable accommodation, please call



 Andrea Lindsay at 206-553-1896

 TTY users, please call the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339.



EPA Community Involvement Contact

Andrea Lindsay

 Lindsay.Andrea@epa.gov  1-800-424-4372 ext. 1896



**Learn More About the
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on the Web**

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/bh>



Inside...

- *Property owners: yard sampling, cleanup*
- *Thanks for a great year, everyone*
- *Grant helps Silver Valley breathe cleaner*
- *More bugs, fewer weeds*
- *Sidewalks, volunteers, good neighbors*
- *Much More!*

