

Fiscal Year 2017 Unfunded New Construction Project



Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site Neihart, Montana

Site Description

The [Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund site](#) lies in the Little Belt Mountains of southern Cascade County, approximately 55 miles south of Great Falls, Montana. It consists of the town of Neihart (operable unit 1, or OU1) and the Carpenter and Snow Creek watersheds (OUs 2 and 3).

There are as many as 96 abandoned or inactive mine sites within the Carpenter Snow Creek site. Ore extraction also occurred in this area. Mining and mineral processing left behind approximately 190,000 cubic yards of waste rock and 170,000 cubic yards of mill tailings covering approximately 68 acres.

Waste rock and tailings are by-products of mining and milling processes. These wastes are deposited along the banks of Carpenter Creek, Snow Creek, Belt Creek, and all their tributaries where ore extraction took place. In some areas these waste materials are in direct contact with surface water. In Neihart, mine waste can be found adjacent to residential yards. Many adits, some of which lie in close proximity to Neihart, have metal-laden water discharging to local streams either directly or through underground flow.

EPA added the site to the National Priorities List in 2001.

Site Status and Cleanup Actions to Date

The record of decision to mitigate residual risks to human health from soils in Neihart was signed in 2009. The major components of the selected remedy addressing mine waste, soil and sediment include:

- Excavating, transporting and disposing of contaminated residential soil, contaminated material under roadways, and the Belt Creek tailings. Developed and undeveloped properties that exceed the soil cleanup action levels of 400 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) for lead or 100 mg/kg for arsenic will qualify for cleanup.
- Transporting and disposing of soil and waste in an engineered repository, which will be capped with soil and revegetated.
- Backfilling excavated residential areas with soil and revegetate with suitable ground cover.
- Backfilling the Belt Creek tailings area with rock and reconfiguring the stream channel to a natural condition.
- Engineering the repository surface, cap with soil, and revegetate.
- Implementing institutional controls to reduce potential for human exposure to contamination remaining after engineering controls are implemented.

Remedial design was completed in 2016 for the OU1 remedy. EPA has conducted previous response actions under removal authorities to address imminent threats, including:

- In 2004, EPA removed 5,300 cubic yards of contaminated soil from residences and the Neihart community center with lead concentrations greater than 2,700 mg/kg.
- In 2014, EPA removed the Silver Dyke tailings, which were approximately 35,000 cubic yards.

Unfunded Action

The unfunded fiscal year 2017 work includes the remedy for OU1, the excavation of mine waste from residential properties and roadways within Neihart and the Belt Creek tailings, and disposal at the Mackay Gulch mine waste repository in the Carpenter Creek watershed.

Funding Status

Remedial action for the site has not yet begun.

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