

Superfund Construction Project – Funding Pending



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 and the Carpenter and Snow Creek watersheds. EPA added the site to the National Priorities List in 2001.

There are as many as 96 abandoned or inactive mine sites within the Carpenter Snow Creek site. 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 mining and milling processing byproducts. 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 mining adits, some of which lie in close proximity to Neihart, have metal-laden water discharging to local streams either directly or through underground flow.

Site Status and Cleanup Actions to Date

- 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.
- EPA signed a record of decision to mitigate residual risks to human health from Neihart soils in 2009. The selected remedy's major components addressing mine waste, soil and sediment include:
 - Excavate, transport and dispose 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.
 - Transport and dispose of soil and waste in an engineered repository, which will be capped with soil and revegetated.
 - Backfill excavated residential areas with soil and revegetate with suitable ground cover.
 - Backfill the Belt Creek tailings area with rock and reconfigure the stream channel to a natural condition.
 - Engineer the repository surface, cap with soil, and revegetate.
 - Implement institutional controls to reduce potential for human exposure to contamination remaining after engineering controls are implemented.
- Following the selection of a remedy, continued site-wide sampling and design work associated with proposed repository locations and bridge/haul road development occurred. Also, a Property Owner Soil Management (POSM) program was developed to assist residents with safe management of contaminated soil when performing property improvement projects before remedial action could be initiated. A remedial design was completed in 2016 for the Neihart remedy.
- EPA has conducted previous cleanup actions under removal authorities to address imminent threats.

Project Pending Funding, as of the end of Fiscal Year 2019

This work includes mine waste excavation 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 Through Fiscal Year 2019

EPA has provided approximately \$14 million for cleanup activities at the site.