

# NPL Site Narrative for Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District

## CARPENTER SNOW CREEK MINING DISTRICT Neihart, Montana

**Conditions at Proposal (December 1, 2000):** The Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District is located approximately three miles north of the Town of Neihart, Cascade County, in the central portion of Montana. The area is located in the Little Belt Mountain Range in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The site is within the Carpenter Creek drainage basin, with Carpenter and Snow Creeks flowing into Belt Creek, and consists of uncontained tailings piles thought to be produced by the Silver Dyke Mine. These tailings piles are in direct contact with Carpenter Creek and several unnamed tributaries. The discovery of minerals in the Little Belt Mountains in nearby Barker in 1879 caused a rush of mining activity, but ore was not discovered in the Neihart region until 1881.

In 1886, a smelter was built in Neihart and operated until 1887. The mining activity of the region fluctuated widely over the next 50 years, dependant on the price of silver. A railroad arrived in Neihart in 1891 and ran until 1945. Silver was the major ore extracted from the region; however, zinc, galena, lead, and gold were also mined. By 1930, all mines with the exception of the Silver Dyke Mine were closed, which closed the next year. Over the next 70 years sporadic mining occurred in the region and has completely ceased today.

The Silver Dyke Tailings source is located approximately 1 mile south of the Silver Dyke Mine. The Silver Dyke Tailings consist of approximately 56,350 cubic yards of uncovered tailings in three piles. The Montana Department of State Lands/Abandoned Mine Reclamation Bureau (MDSL/AMRB) conducted a Hazardous Materials Inventory in May 1993. The 1993 Inventory indicated elevated levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, copper, manganese, and lead in waste rock samples.

The Carpenter Creek Tailings source is comprised of approximately 111,000 cubic yards of mostly uncovered tailings located in two piles bisected by a small road that leads to the Snow Creek mining area. The MDSL/AMRB conducted a Hazardous Materials Inventory in May 1993 that indicated elevated levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, copper, manganese, lead, and zinc in waste rock samples.

The Lower Rebellion Tailings source is comprised of approximately 37,670 cubic yards of uncovered tailings located in one pile. There is one adit associated with these tailings. The MDSL/AMRB conducted a Hazardous Materials Inventory in June 1994. The report indicated elevated levels of arsenic, copper, mercury, lead, silver, and zinc in waste rock samples.

The Neihart Tailings source is comprised of approximately 23,100 cubic yards of uncovered tailings located in two piles. A Hazardous Materials Inventory Site Inspection Report prepared by the MDSL/AMRB, dated June 1993, indicated elevated levels of antimony, arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, silver and zinc in waste rock samples.

Carpenter Creek is the primary drainage basin at the site and eventually flows into Belt Creek. Snow Creek is also a tributary of Carpenter Creek where several mines, tailings piles, and mills are located.

Copper, lead, manganese, and zinc are present in total metals analysis of surface water release samples. In sediment release samples, arsenic, barium, cadmium, copper, lead, manganese, and zinc. Belt Creek is classified as a fishery and is subject to actual contamination. Surface water release samples contained copper, lead, manganese, and zinc at concentrations three times background concentrations that were attributable to the site. Sediment release samples contained arsenic, barium, cadmium, copper, lead, manganese, and zinc at concentrations three times background concentrations that were attributable to the site.

**Status (September 2001):** EPA is considering various alternatives for this site.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.