

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

June 2020



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>

Site Updates

Beginning in mid-July 2020, EPA will start the Red and Bonita Mine bulkhead test. The Red and Bonita bulkhead was constructed in 2015 by Mining & Environmental Services to control the adit drainage from the mine workings behind the bulkhead. Running through the bulkhead is an 8-inch diameter pipe that has been kept open since the construction. This allows for controlled mine drainage discharge out of the mine portal and into Cement Creek.

The primary purpose of the Red and Bonita bulkhead test is to evaluate the performance of the bulkhead when water is impounded behind it. Secondly, this will allow EPA to evaluate the effect of closing the bulkhead, such as potential changes in flows from adits and increased groundwater seepage from surrounding structures. To better understand the connections between mines, EPA will monitor the nearby mine portal discharges and pressures. Sampling of the seeps and springs along Cement Creek will also be conducted during the test.



Red and Bonita Portal entrance

For the test, the pressure behind the Red and Bonita bulkhead will initially be raised to about 50 feet. Gradually, pressure behind the bulkhead will be increased to 100 feet, then 150 feet, and finally to 200 feet. It is estimated that it will take a month to reach 200. During this time, the bulkhead and surrounding structures will be monitored regularly.



Red and Bonita Bulkhead with flow-through pipe and valve

At the end of the test, the water drawn down will be fully controlled at the bulkhead valve and be treated at the Interim Water Treatment Plan (IWTP) before being discharged into Cement Creek. In order to minimize the effects of draining and ensure no water quality impacts, the water level will be drawn down slowly. The draw-down activity will be coordinated with the IWTP operators so that they are ready to accommodate extra flow. Treatment of all Red and Bonita bulkhead water will continue until the mine pool has been drained. After the test is completed, the discharge from Red and Bonita mine will return

to flowing into Cement Creek, as is the pre-test condition.

New on the Web

- [Bonita Peak Mining District Update, April 2020 \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007645) (3 pp, 1.15 MB)
<https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007645>
- [2016-2018 Seeps, Springs, and Draining Mines Characterization Report \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007694)(481 pp, 15.2 MB)
<https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007694>
- [Digging Deeper: 2019 Year in Review and 2020 Site Planning Presentation \(PDF\)](https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007684)(46 pp, 4.3 MB)
<https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100007684>