

# BASIN BULLETIN



## Updates on the Coeur d'Alene River Basin Cleanup

March 2020

### Strong Participation in Blood Lead Screening



Last August, Panhandle Health District completed its annual blood lead screening in the Silver Valley. Results were positive.

“In 2019, average blood lead levels for children screened in Box and Basin communities continue to fall well below 5 micrograms per deciliter,” said Andy Helkey, PHD. “This is the level the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers ‘elevated.’ In the Box the geometric mean average for children ages 6 months to 6 years was 2.2 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ). In the Basin the geometric mean average was 1.9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ .”

Participation rates were up last year. A total of 338 individuals were tested during the 2019 blood lead screening week, while 320 individuals were tested during the 2018 screening.

PHD, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and EPA would like to remind residents living in the Bunker Hill Superfund Site that screening is available through PHD year-round. For more information on screening, health impacts of lead, and ways to avoid exposure, contact PHD at 208-783-0707 or visit [DEQ.Idaho.gov/playclean](http://DEQ.Idaho.gov/playclean).

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

[epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill](http://epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill)

## Property Cleanups Reduce Lead Exposure

Property cleanups protect people's health by reducing exposure to lead and other harmful metals. A grand total of 7,153 properties (3,917 in the Basin and 3,236 in the Bunker Hill Box) have been cleaned up to date. Properties remaining to be sampled and/or cleaned up are those whose owners have refused access, or who have not responded to repeated contact attempts by the Trust and IDEQ. These include residential and commercial properties, rights-of-way, and private drinking water sources.

Currently, 216 properties in the Upper and Lower Basin likely require sampling. Based on previous

sampling, 45 properties will likely require cleanup. In the Box, eight properties remain to be cleaned up. During a property remediation, generally the top 6-12 inches of contaminated soil is removed and replaced with clean soil. If you believe your property may be eligible and you'd like to have it sampled for mining-related metals, please contact **IDEQ** • 208-783-5781, or **Kyle Richards**, Coeur d'Alene Work Trust • 208-783-0222.



## What is the Institutional Controls Program?

The Panhandle Health District manages and enforces the Institutional Controls Program. The ICP was created to ensure barriers (such as clean soil or gravel) covering metals-contaminated soil continue to protect the health of residents. The ICP makes it possible for residents to get up to a cubic yard of clean soil or gravel each year, to keep their barriers in good shape. If a resident is doing a small excavation project, the ICP will provide containers or facilitate soil pickup and disposal. Be aware that permits are needed for many types of indoor and outdoor construction activities. Permits and consultations are free. Before you dig on your property or start an interior project, make sure you are following the ICP rules. See the ICP boundaries map above. If you have questions or need more information, contact PHD at 208-783-0707.

## Basin Cleanup Employs Local Workers



Cleanup work in the Basin employs many local workers. For the 2019 field season, the Trust employed a total of 220 seasonal construction workers. Crews perform such work as drilling, mine waste hauling, sample pit excavation, dust abatement, and hydro-seeding.

91 percent of the seasonal workers are from the local area. The Trust also employed a total of 137 workers at various times throughout 2019 to plan and design the investigations and cleanup.

## Central Treatment Plant and Groundwater Collection System Project Will Improve Water Quality

EPA and our partners have accomplished some important milestones at the Bunker Hill Central Treatment Plant and Groundwater Collection System project. We've finished building the 55-foot by 156-foot steel filter building, 105-foot diameter sludge thickener tank, 32-foot-tall reactor, and associated piping and electrical systems. The extraction wells and pumping systems for groundwater collection are in place and operational.



We are now testing the system that controls the pumps and data monitoring. We've completed construction of the pipeline that carries groundwater to the CTP for treatment and another pipeline that carries the treated water to a diffuser in the South Fork CDA River. Over the next few weeks we will continue pumping water to the various components of the treatment system and finally run a test of the integrated groundwater collection system and the upgraded CTP. The containment wall will be completed this spring, after initial start-up and testing of the collection system. After construction of the wall is complete along I-90, we will continue to test and optimize the groundwater collection system throughout the operations and maintenance period, which will extend into 2021.

Overall, the new systems will improve treatment of acid mine drainage coming from the Bunker Mine and surrounding contaminated groundwater. The project will greatly reduce metals contamination going into the South Fork of the CDA River, improving water quality. A big thank you to the Army Corps of Engineers, our contractors Wood and Jacobs, and IDEQ for their many contributions to this huge, complex project!

CONTACTS: **Ed Moreen**, EPA • [moreen.ed@epa.gov](mailto:moreen.ed@epa.gov), 208-664-4588, or  
**Kim Prestbo**, EPA • [prestbo.kim@epa.gov](mailto:prestbo.kim@epa.gov) • 206-553-0239 • 800-424-4372, ext. 0239.

## Gray's Meadow Agriculture to Wetland Conversion Takes Shape

Gray's Meadow, the former Black Lake Ranch property, is a joint cleanup and restoration project. It will create up to 700 acres of clean, ecologically functional wetlands for wildlife and people recreating in the Lower Basin. The property is owned by Idaho Department of Fish and Game. It was selected by EPA and the Restoration Partnership for a collaborative design and construction project that will:

- Reduce soil lead concentrations to below levels that are toxic to waterfowl.
- Convert monotypic agricultural lands to wetland and riparian habitat.
- Create nesting/loafing islands for waterfowl.
- Use natural processes and structures to manage water levels, with minimal management.

The project will further improve water quality in Black Lake by eliminating the agricultural inputs (fertilizer and manure-laden water) that historically impacted the lake. The design team has installed piezometers to measure groundwater levels, and will collect additional soil samples this summer. The 60 percent design will be complete by November 2020, with final design and start of construction in late 2021.

CONTACT: **Kim Prestbo**, EPA • [prestbo.kim@epa.gov](mailto:prestbo.kim@epa.gov) • 206-553-0239 • 800-424-4372, ext. 0239.





Off roading at the Douglas site stirs up metals-contaminated soil.

## Douglas Mine and Mill Complex Cleanup Will Protect People's Health

The Douglas Mine and Mill Complex is located on the East Fork of Pine Creek, south of Pinehurst. Soil at the site contains lead and other metals. The site is a favorite among ATV and motorcycle riders, who stir up contaminated dust. When the dust is breathed in or swallowed, it poses a health risk. Last year, a flurry of sampling and testing took place to find out how much contamination exists at the site. This study will guide a cleanup design that reduces people's exposure to lead, arsenic, cadmium, and other metals. The cleanup design will also reduce contaminants getting into the East Fork of Pine Creek. Additional sampling will occur this spring to take advantage of the wetter site conditions and higher creek flows. EPA expects cleanup design will be complete by 2021. CONTACT: **Patrick Hickey**, EPA, [hickey.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:hickey.patrick@epa.gov) • 206-553-6295 or 800-424-4372, ext. 6295.

## Upper Basin Projects Update

EPA is now planning Upper Basin design investigations and cleanup projects for the upcoming field season. Eliminating sources of heavy metals from historical mine and mill sites will help improve water quality and protect the local ecology and people downstream. In 2020, under EPA direction, the Trust will:

- Start up the second and final cleanup year at the *Interstate Millsite*, including mine waste removal and reconstructing East Fork Ninemile Creek through the site.
- Continue investigations at *Tamarack Mine #7* near the town of Burke. These studies will help answer questions about the extent of contamination and inform cleanup design.
- Start investigations at the *Flynn Mine* and *Black Bear Fraction* sites in the Canyon Creek Basin.
- Continue designing the cleanup for the *Star Complex*, in Canyon Creek Basin.
- Continue design work at the *Tamarack Complex*, in the East Fork Ninemile Area.
- Start design at the historical mine areas along the Lower East Fork Ninemile Creek, and at *Dayrock Mine*.



Crews conduct studies at Tamarack Mine #7

CONTACTS: **Bonnie Arthur**, EPA • [arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov) • 206-553-4072 800-424-4372, ext. 4072.

**Tamara Langton**, EPA • [langton.tamara@epa.gov](mailto:langton.tamara@epa.gov) • 206-553-2709 • 800-424-4372, ext. 2709.

## Construction to Resume: Canyon Complex Repository/Waste Consolidation Area

Crews will start the second of four construction seasons later this spring out at the new Canyon Complex Repository/Waste Consolidation Area, in Canyon Creek. This area is right next to the old "SVNRT repository."



Mine waste from SVNRT will be moved to this new area in 2021. This transfer of waste will allow the drainage system, which will be installed as part of the new facility, to be expanded into the old SVNRT area to create more space for future waste. The facility will be ready to take in mine waste removed from other mine and mill cleanup sites in the Canyon Creek area in 2023. Repositories and waste consolidation areas like this one reduce health risks from metals like lead and arsenic.

CONTACT: **Bonnie Arthur**, EPA • [arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov) • 206-553-4072 • 800-424-4372 ext. 4072.

## Paved Roads are Barriers to Heavy Metals Contamination

Since 2013, the Paved Roads program has provided barriers to heavy metals contamination throughout the Silver Valley. Roads and streets meeting certain criteria required repair due to heavy truck traffic during cleanup activities. Paving prevents contamination under the roads from re-contaminating adjacent cleaned-up properties. The local cities and counties continue to be responsible for maintaining cleaned-up road segments. During the 2020 construction season, Kellogg's program will pave Wildcat Way and portions of Bunker Avenue and Hill Street. Shoshone County will continue to work on its Basin road segments in 2020, with the hope of completing as many as possible. The county will have the 2021 season, if necessary, to complete its roads program. The county will pave more than 25 segments this season, several west of Pinehurst and south of Silver Valley Road. Much of the work on roads has been successfully coordinated with utility upgrades that were funded by grants. This way, pavement was not dug up to install new utilities, and paving did not have to occur twice.



CONTACT: **Craig Cameron**, EPA • [cameron.craig@epa.gov](mailto:cameron.craig@epa.gov) • 509-376-8665.

## Waste Repositories Safely Contain Contaminated Materials

To protect people and the environment, EPA, IDEQ, and PHD employ several methods of containing contaminated materials.

An *Institutional Controls Program* waste collection site takes in soil from residential properties. When home or property owners and contractors conduct routine activities that generate soil or soil-bearing materials, like tree stumps, they can take these materials to an ICP repository. The ICP material is then transferred to the large waste repositories, where it is mixed with waste from cleanup activities.

The *Community Fill Program* was created to allow local residents and developers to consolidate contaminated soils in already-contaminated low-lying areas. CFPs require clean caps and are then available for development. There are specific requirements associated with the CFP.

*Large waste repositories* are used to collect and securely store soils and materials excavated during cleanup projects. Repositories are expressly designed and engineered to ensure contaminants are contained, and do not migrate to the surrounding environment. Waste repositories, and their associated ICP waste collection sites, are located at East Mission Flats, Big Creek and Big Creek Annex, Lower Burke Canyon, and Page in the Box. There is also an ICP collection point in Mullan.



Getting Access to the ICP waste collection site and CFP: Permits and 24-hour ICP access cards are provided through PHD.

For more information, contact **Andy Helkey** at 208-783-0707.

CONTACT: **Patrick Hickey**, EPA

[hickey.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:hickey.patrick@epa.gov)

206-553-6295

800-424-4372 ext. 6295.

## PHD Brings Lead Health Education to Local Communities



Every January, Panhandle Health District starts planning outreach efforts for the year. PHD tailors its trainings for the intended audiences. For kindergarten through third grade, the emphasis is on techniques for good hygiene and proper hand washing. For older children, PHD has demonstrations and interactive games that reinforce good hygiene, while also teaching the history of the Silver Valley. For young families and families to be, PHD has materials on how to avoid exposure to lead and other heavy metals and maintaining a healthy home. In addition, PHD regularly holds presentations across the region about the history, cleanup efforts, and environmental progress in the Silver Valley. If you know of an event, or have a group that would like to learn more about the history of the Bunker Hill Superfund Site and how to avoid exposure to heavy metals, call **Valerie Wade** at 208-783-0707 or visit [www.deq.idaho.gov/contact-us/outreach-request](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/contact-us/outreach-request).

### Mark your Calendar

#### May 20 BEIPC meeting

Save the date! The next quarterly Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission meeting will take place May 20, 2020 in Coeur d'Alene. Everyone is welcome. For more information: [www.basincommission.com](http://www.basincommission.com).

#### Environmental Science and Technology Fair

You're invited to the third Annual Environmental Science and Technology Fair on April 23. The event will be held at the Old Kellogg Middle School, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Come learn about projects and work being done in the area, meet representatives from the government and private sectors doing the work, and find out more about a possible career. There will even be a drone demonstration by Alta Science and Engineering this year! For more information contact **Valerie Wade**, Panhandle Health District • [vwade@phd1.idaho.gov](mailto:vwade@phd1.idaho.gov) or call 208-783-0707.

### Comings and Goings

*A warm goodbye to the irreplaceable Anne McCauley! Anne has served 16 years as an EPA project manager for the Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup Project. During her time with EPA, she was assigned many complex projects, including working with IDEQ and the CDA Work Trust to help make the Basin Properties Remediation and Remedy Protection Programs a success. Anne's valuable contributions will help protect people's health in the Silver Valley for many years to come. Her colleagues have come to rely on her innate leadership abilities, pragmatic and wise judgement, and warm heart. We appreciate her wry observations and understated sense of humor. Anne's precise style ensures that her work products are invariably of impeccable high quality. She makes sure the job gets done right the first time, and her tireless efforts have strengthened our cleanup decisions and connections with the local community. Bon Voyage and congratulations on your retirement, dear Anne! Enjoy skiing, hiking, and traveling in your new camper van. We'll miss you!*



## 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>

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 Debra Sherbina 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

Debra Sherbina • 206-553-0247.

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



## EPA Community Involvement Contact

Debra Sherbina

[sherbina.debra@epa.gov](mailto:sherbina.debra@epa.gov) 1-800-424-4372 ext. 0247



## **BASIN BULLETIN**

### **Updates on the Coeur d'Alene River Basin**

March 2020

### ***Inside...***

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## **Learn More on the Web**

**EPA's CDA Basin Cleanup Project**  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill)

**IDEQ — Play Clean**  
[www.deq.idaho.gov/playclean](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/playclean)

**PHD — Institutional Controls Program**  
[panhandlehealthdistrict.org/institutional-controls-program](http://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/institutional-controls-program)

