



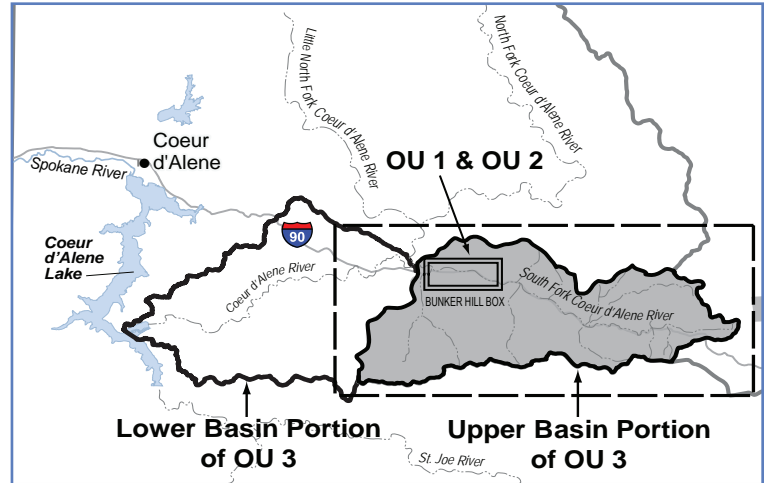
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# MAKING A *DIFFERENCE* IN THE COMMUNITY: The Superfund Job Training Initiative in Silver Valley, Idaho



## INTRODUCTION

The Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 20 trainees living near the Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund site. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and North Idaho College, North Wind Construction Services and TerraGraphics Environmental Engineering, Coeur d'Alene Basin SuperJTI provided local job-seekers with new skills and work experience linked to the cleanup of the Coeur d'Alene Basin site. EPA's goal is to help the community create job opportunities and partnerships that remain in place for the long term.



Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund Site

## CANDIDATE OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING: APRIL – MAY 2012

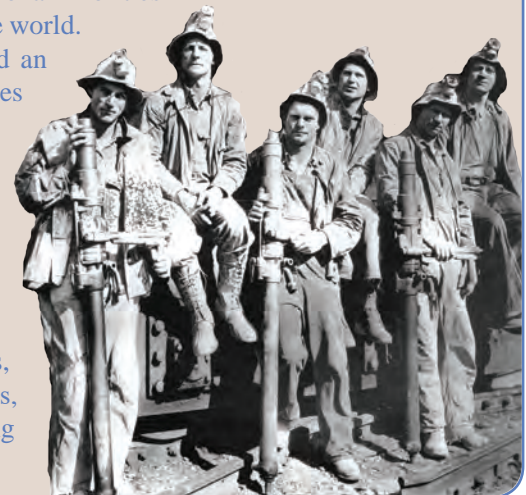
Coeur d'Alene Basin SuperJTI staff and the project's community liaison did outreach, sent out flyers and hosted orientation sessions to publicize the job training program and attract interested candidates. Area community-based organizations and two local newspapers, *The Spokesman Review* and *The Shoshone News Press*, also advertised the program. During April and May 2012, over 100 people came to the program's four orientation sessions. Following these sessions, 86 people completed a preliminary testing stage; 45 of those participants were invited to attend program tryouts. Thirty-nine participants decided to continue with the program tryouts.

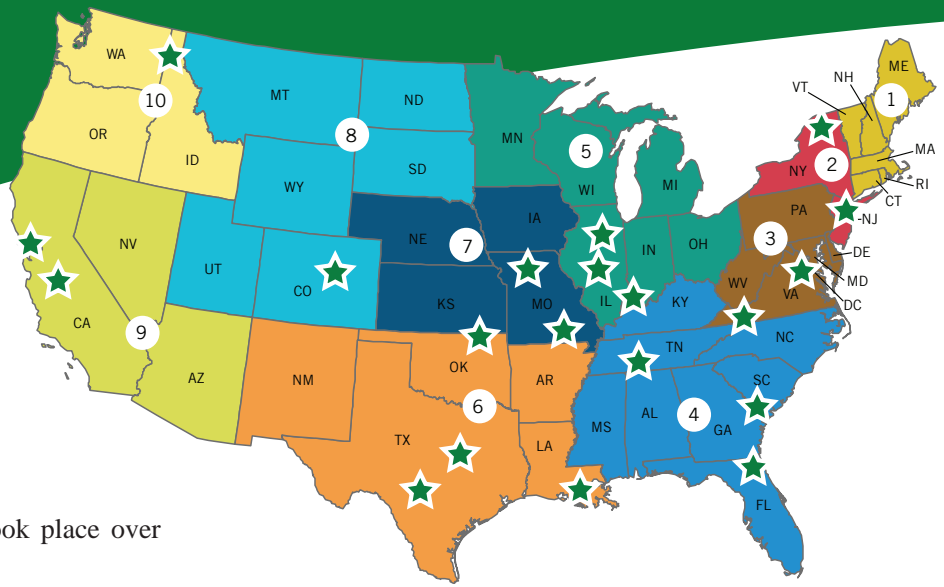
Program tryouts included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, a basic physical fitness evaluation, and observation by a team of evaluators from the project's partners. Seventeen trainees completed the training.

## SITE HISTORY

The Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund site (also known as the Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex site) is located in Northern Idaho's Coeur d'Alene River Basin. EPA placed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 1983. The Coeur d'Alene Basin is one of the largest areas of historic mining in the world. Since the late 1880s, mining activities in the Upper Coeur d'Alene Basin contributed an estimated 100 million tons of mine waste to the river system. Many Basin communities were built on mine wastes. Until as late as 1968, tailings were deposited directly into the river. Over time, these wastes have spread throughout more than 160 miles of the Coeur d'Alene and Spokane rivers, lakes and floodplains.

Contaminants from mining operations in the Silver Valley spread harmful levels of heavy metals down the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River and into the floodplains. A plan for cleaning up residential and recreational areas in the Basin was developed in coordination with community members, federal, state, tribal and local governments, and local organizations. Project goals include reducing heavy metals, improving fisheries, reducing downstream migration of contaminated sediments, and providing safe feeding habitat for waterfowl.





## TRAINING: MAY 2012

The Coeur d'Alene Basin SuperJTI training took place over two weeks and included:

- **Pre-Employment Training:** Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo Solutions provided the training.
- **Technical Training:** Trainees completed the 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training, flagging, sampling, and CPR and first aid training. North Idaho College and Terragraphics provided the training.

Upon completion of the program, trainees possess the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in these communities.



## JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP: JUNE 2012 — NOVEMBER 2012

After graduation, trainees interviewed with area subcontractors, including North Wind Construction, Ferguson Contracting and McGillivray Environmental, for available site cleanup positions. Twelve graduates were hired following completion of the training for a variety of positions, including environmental technicians, dump truck drivers and construction workers. Six of these graduates are working on remediation projects in the Silver Valley. Remaining graduates are interviewing with site subcontractors, pending the award of new remediation contracts.

Coeur d'Alene Basin SuperJTI is one of the many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for unemployed and underemployed citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.

### THE COEUR D'ALENE BASIN SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

- **Live in areas affected by the Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund site.** Eighty-eight percent of the trainees (15 people) live in communities affected by the Superfund site. Twelve percent of the trainees (2 people) live in areas surrounding the site.
- **Include younger and older populations.** Six trainees are age 25 or younger and 11 trainees are age 26 or older.



Graduation for the program's 17 trainees was held at Memorial Hall in Kellogg, Idaho, in June 2012. SuperJTI's National Program Manager Viola Cooper attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The program also included remarks from project partners as well as the graduates.

Coeur d'Alene Basin SuperJTI staff and the project's community liaison followed up with the graduates and their supervisors for six months after the graduates started work. During this time, graduates could change positions but were encouraged to remain employed, either with one of the site subcontractors or another employer.

# SUPERJTI COMMUNITY PROFILES: Making a Difference

Jacob Seiverding



A family friend knew Jacob was looking for a career change and emailed him a flyer about the SuperJTI program. “There were so many people at tryouts, I thought there was no chance I’d make it,” Jacob recalled. “I was so excited to learn that I had been accepted.”

Since graduating from the program, Jacob feels the training opened doors for a new line of work and increased his career opportunities. He was able to put his skills to work right away working locally for North Wind Construction in Smelterville, Idaho, and as far away as Kodiak, Alaska. Jacob plans to continue his education and pursue a career in water resource management.

An advertisement in the paper caught David Villapando’s attention. “I was looking for work and I saw the words EPA, Superfund and free training,” he said. “I had been laid off, so I took the initiative to pick up the phone and call right away.” After showing up for the competitive tryouts, David’s enthusiasm grew during the selection process. “There were a lot of people who showed up who really wanted to work. We were presented with challenges and this excited me more,” he said. “I wanted to be one of those selected.”

After completing the training, David felt a new drive and focus in his life. “I received a well-rounded set of skills in water sampling, flagging, first aid and working with hazardous waste,” he said. David was excited to put his new skills to work cleaning up yards for Ferguson Contracting, a local employer. “The work was a great experience, physically challenging, and I really enjoyed it,” he said. David is now looking forward to learning additional skills. He hopes to obtain a Commercial Drivers License in the near future.

David Villapando



Lonnie Cook



Lonnie heard about the SuperJTI program through his local unemployment office. “I had been laid off from my job as a mine operator. I had no previous experience in environmental remediation, but I was looking to learn new skills,” he recalled.

Lonnie found the training interesting and said the most valuable thing he learned was how to work better as a team member. Since graduating, Lonnie has worked for a local contractor, McGillivray Environmental, cleaning up yards and performing demolitions. Looking back, he said, “I would recommend this program for anyone who wants to move forward with a new career.”

## What is the SuperJTI Program?

The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups. The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce. EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.

***For more information, please visit: [www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti)***

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