

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

August/September 2016



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



Update of Recent Activities

- On July 25 and 26, EPA hosted the first meeting of the Bonita Peak Mining District (BPMD) Biological Technical Advisory Group (BTAG). The BTAG is a group of scientists from various organizations formed to advise and assist with ecological studies produced as part of the Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study and/or Removal Actions in the BPMD.
- During the week of July 25, EPA, with the assistance of the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, conducted waste rock, campground soil and road material sampling to collect data as part of the human health and ecological risk assessments for the BPMD Remedial Investigation. Five teams of two to three people collected samples in the Animas River, Mineral Creek and Cement Creek drainages.
- On August 4, Rebecca Thomas, the BPMD remedial project manager, presented information at the San Juan Mining and Reclamation Conference about planned activities at the site. On August 5, EPA staff provided a virtual tour of the Gold King Mine interim water treatment plant for conference attendees.
- On August 6, EPA and CDPHE hosted booths at SuperFUNDays in Silverton. Information about the Superfund process, the BPMD and the impact of pH on aquatic life was provided at the booths.
- EPA has notified natural resource trustees (Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Navajo Nation, State of Colorado, State of New Mexico, State of Utah, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture) of potential damages to natural resources from releases EPA is investigating in the BPMD. (See fact sheet below.)



Cynthia Peterson and Rebecca Thomas at SuperFUNDays booth on Saturday, Aug. 6.

Planned Activities

- A series of public meeting/open houses are planned for the week of November 14, 2016, in Silverton, Durango and Ignacio, Colorado, and a community in New Mexico. A recap of activities undertaken at the BPMD over the last year will be provided along with an opportunity to talk one-on-one about work being done at the site. **Please note:** Due to these meetings, the BPMD site team will not conduct its regularly scheduled site visit the week of October 24, 2016.

- EPA, its contractors and partner organizations (Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety, Mountain Studies Institute, U.S. Geological Survey) will be conducting the following sampling events and investigations in the BPMD during September:
 - Low-flow sampling of surface water, sediments and overbank soils.
 - A benthic macroinvertebrate study.
 - A fish habitat study in the Mineral Creek and Upper Animas River drainages.
 - Measurement of flows from all draining adits identified as source areas in the BPMD.
 - Identification of seeps and springs in the BPMD.
 - Sampling of surface water, sediments and pore water as part of the ecological risk assessment.

Gold King Mine News

EPA contracted the Mountain Studies Institute to analyze monitoring data before, during, and after the Gold King Mine (GKM) release. View their most recent study, "Animas River 2015 Benthic Macroinvertebrate Report Gold King Mine Release Monitoring (PDF)" at http://static1.squarespace.com/static/53bc5871e4b095b6a42949b4/t/57a246b3d1758e2d43f84348/1470254597975/MSI_BMI_Report_20160801.pdf

EPA has developed a report to summarize the agency's efforts to address the release of acidic, mine-influenced water on August 5, 2015, from the Gold King Mine in Colorado. The report is titled "One Year After the Gold King Mine Incident: A Retrospective of EPA's Efforts to Restore and Protect Communities." http://static1.squarespace.com/static/53bc5871e4b095b6a42949b4/t/57a246b3d1758e2d43f84348/1470254597975/MSI_BMI_Report_20160801.pdf

New on the Web

- Upper Animas Fish Habitat Assessment – presentation by Andrew Todd and Ben McGee, USGS <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1775826.pdf>
- Hydrology Path Forward – presentation by Ian Bowen, EPA <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1775824.pdf>
- Photos from EPA community presentations in July <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usepagov/sets/72157654862884644>
- Introduction to Risk Assessment <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1775828.pdf>
- Bonita Peak Mining District: Natural Resources Damages Fact Sheet <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1775829.pdf>

For More Information

Visit the Bonita Peak Mining District website <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>