



Cleanup to begin at Grant-Kohrs Ranch in November

Montana DEQ will begin work this month to remove contaminated mine tailings from the banks of the Clark Fork River on the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site near Deer Lodge.

Montana Civil Contractors of Belgrade, Mont., was awarded the contract to remove approximately 400,000 cubic yards of contaminated material along the riverbanks and floodplain. The work will cover 2.6 river miles on the ranch, which is operated by the National Park Service (NPS). Excavated waste will be hauled to the Opportunity Waste Management Area via I-90.

After the contaminated tailings and soils are removed, the riverbanks and floodplain will be reconstructed with clean soil from the Johnson Borrow Area northeast of Deer Lodge, and the Beck Borrow Area southwest of town via I-90 (see haul route map on page 3).

To keep the community apprised of activity at the site, DEQ will provide frequent construction updates. All truck loads will be covered, and unpaved haul routes will be routinely treated with dust suppressant. Haul trucks will be closely monitored to ensure that speed limits and other safety precautions are followed.

In another safety measure, the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission closed 2.6-miles of the river through the Grant-Kohrs Ranch until October 2020 (see map on page 3). Closure signs will be posted upstream at Arrowstone Park, and just above the actual closure at the boundary of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Recognizing the impact to the community, DEQ and its contractors will work to reopen the river as quickly as possible, and to provide windows of recreation when safety considerations allow. Scheduled openings will be publicized well in advance to allow recreationists to take advantage of river access.



DEQ requested the river closure to protect the public. Temporary bridges to provide access to the west side of the river will not have clearance for boats or floaters, and portaging over active haul routes would be extremely hazardous, as heavy equipment operators have limited visibility. Only employees with extensive safety and communication training will be allowed on the construction site. DEQ also is working with NPS to minimize impacts to ranch visitors and to prevent disruption to the ranching operation.

“DEQ appreciates the community’s patience and understanding while we complete this important milestone in the Clark Fork Superfund Cleanup,” said Program Manager Autumn Coleman. “Thank you for working with us, and please don’t hesitate to contact DEQ’s project team with any questions or concerns.”

Project Fast Facts

The Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is located in the Clark Fork River Operable Unit of the Milltown Reservoir/Clark Fork River Superfund Site, which covers the uppermost 120 miles of the Clark Fork River between Warm Springs Ponds and Missoula, Montana.

Heavy metals from historic mining, milling and smelting processes accumulated on the stream banks and floodplain of the Clark Fork for at least a century, posing a risk to human, aquatic and plant health.

Cleanup construction dates: Fall 2018 — Spring 2020

Miles of river to be cleaned: 2.6

Acres to be cleaned: 110

Contamination to be removed: 400,000 cubic yards (560,000 tons)

Total construction contract award: \$10.9 million

For comprehensive project information, visit:

bit.ly/deqclarkfork

Right: A haul truck crosses a temporary bridge during an earlier phase of the Clark Fork River Cleanup. For public safety, a 2.6-mile stretch of river and floodplain on the Grant-Kohrs Ranch will be closed to fishing and recreational use during construction.



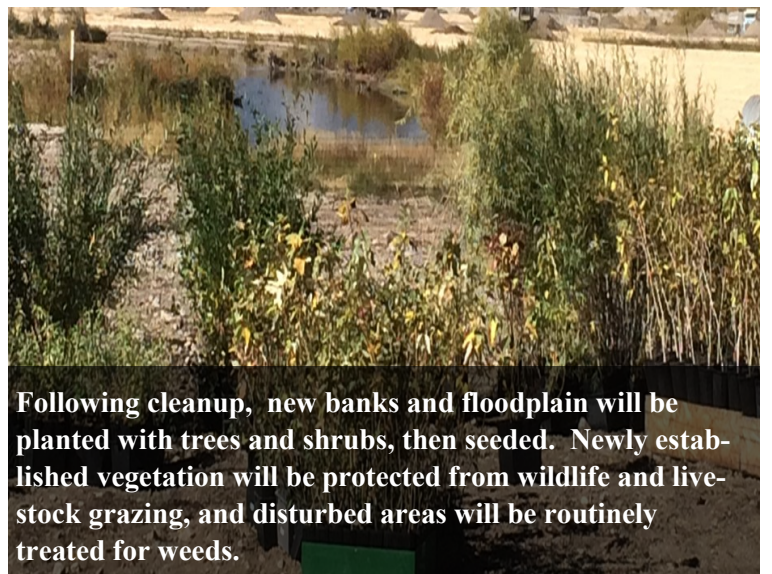
Revegetation work will include diverse array of native plants

Revegetation is a critical component of any environmental cleanup. At the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, planting of cleaned-up areas will begin in spring 2019 and continue throughout the project to help restore a healthy river habitat.

Because the ranch is a National Historic Site operated by the National Park Service, the revegetation plan includes standards that aren't required for other phases of the Clark Fork River Cleanup. The Park-specific standards are set by the National Park Service Organic Act and the legislation establishing the Park. They require that the Grant-Kohrs Ranch be returned to an unimpaired condition, meaning that the frontier cattle-era riparian/woodland landscape will be reestablished.

The most significant differences, compared with other phases of the cleanup, are an expanded and more diverse plant list and a more detailed monitoring program. Monitoring will be conducted for 10 years to ensure that revegetation goals are met.

DEQ has worked closely with Grant-Kohrs Ranch to design a revegetation plan that meets the Park-specific standards. To view the plan, including “keep” areas where vegetation will be left undisturbed, visit **bit.ly/clarkforkreveg**.



Following cleanup, new banks and floodplain will be planted with trees and shrubs, then seeded. Newly established vegetation will be protected from wildlife and livestock grazing, and disturbed areas will be routinely treated for weeds.



Phase 15 & 16 Haul Routes Clark Fork River Operable Unit



Detail Inset Map (I-90 to Project Staging Area)



Montana Inset Map





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