



Mike Horse Messenger

Site Update

February 2016

Success

In 2015, the Mike Horse Dam and the tailings behind it were removed and Beartrap Creek is flowing in the bottom of the valley for the first time in nearly 75 years. Helena Sand & Gravel hauled almost 400,000 cubic yards of material out of the Beartrap valley and took it to the UBMC repository. Their subcontractor, Streamworks, built 1700 feet of new channel for Beartrap Creek where the tailings had been. The crews' dedication to their work and this project is commendable. They did a great job for the people of Montana!



Above: The moment that contractors broke through the "dam."

Below: Another truck being loaded to go to the repository.



The goal is to complete the haul and restore the river by the end of 2017 (barring any major surprises from Mother Nature or other unforeseen activities in the area). In 2018, the repository will have its final cover and construction will be complete. The health of the Blackfoot River will continue to improve and fish will be moving back into the area.

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Closures

The Forest Service road closure on Meadow Creek Road was lifted on December 1 and is open to public travel again. There are continued safety concerns in the area where removals have taken place. The remaining steep, unstable tailings slopes, combined with icy, muddy, snowy conditions make for hazardous conditions.



To avoid accidents and injuries in the area, and to protect the newly built creek, there is an area closure in place where the Mike Horse dam and tailings impoundment used to be.

Upcoming Decisions

The proposed plans (State Proposed Plan for non-federal lands and Forest Service Technical Memorandum for the UBMC ground not previously covered in the 2007 Action Memorandum as amended) were released for public comment last fall. A public meeting was held on October 28 in Lincoln. DEQ received one set of comments requesting clarification of site-specific cleanup numbers for soil, sediment, groundwater, and surface water. With the response to that clarification included, the State's Record of Decision should be issued at the end of February. The Forest Service received no comments. The Forest Service's Action Memorandum will be issued by the beginning of March.

Thank you to everyone who safely shared Highway 200 with the haul trucks this year. A special thanks to Lincoln for accepting us into your community the past two years. To our neighbors along the haul route, we cannot thank you enough for putting up with us so far! 2015 was the heaviest haul year for the project, and that is now behind us.

Please continue to contact me with any questions and concerns you have about the project. By working together we can make the project more successful, keep everybody safe, and try to mitigate impacts to everyone. Thanks for a great year! Here's hoping this year will be just as productive!

-Shellie