

A map provided by the Forest Service details the location and area of the closure.

Partial area closure remains in place for Mike Horse area

Roger Dey
BVD Editor

Although the gate on Meadow Creek Road was re-opened earlier this month to provide accesses to the the Blackfoot headwaters area, the Mike Horse impoundment remains under a temporary area closure until July 2015 to provide for public health and safety.

According to a Nov. 24 press release from the Helena National forest, the areas just below the Mike Horse dam, the dam itself and the mine waste impoundment are closed to all public access and use, which applies to hiking, snowmobiling and motorized or mechanized use.

Three closed and locked gates are in place to prevent access the dam and impoundment area, but roads and areas adjacent to the site will remain open to public use.

The Mike Horse impoundment was the site of considerable excavation and hauling activity over the summer as the long-anticipated

removal of the contaminated mine tailings it contained finally got underway. The area could pose a risk to people due to unstable land features, the release indicated. Additionally, as Lincoln School students learned during an October field trip to the area, the clay-like mine waste found in the impoundment is contaminated with arsenic, lead, zinc and cadmium - materials that can be harmful to human health.

Continued excavation and hauling of the contaminated material from the mine area to the wasterepository along Highway 279 s is expected to resume next summer, as conditions allow.

For more information, contact construction project manager Shellie Haaland with the Department of Environmental Quality at 406-431-1401, or the Lincoln Ranger District at 406-362-7000. The closure order and map are available online at www.usda.fs.gov/helena/.

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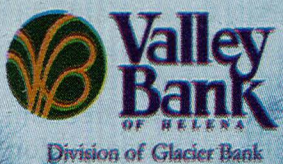
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