

Mike Horse Messenger

Site Update

January 2014

Agency Coordination

The DEQ, DOJ/NRDP and USFS are coordinating the removal of the Mike Horse Dam and the remediation and restoration of the Blackfoot River.

Site Tours

As always, we welcome everyone to tour the site with us. As the weather gets better this spring, contact us to come see what's going on.

Thank You

We could not have accomplished what we did without the cooperation and input of our repository neighbors. I personally want to thank each of the surrounding landowners for understanding the goals of the project and working with us to reach them. –Shellie

Check out the
UBMC
Virtual Tour at
www.deq.mt.gov

Recent Developments

Repository Construction/Winter Shutdown

Construction of the UBMC Repository on U.S. Highway 279 began in September 2013. Shumaker Trucking and Excavating of Great Falls Montana won the bid for the first phase of the repository construction. We are very pleased with how it progressed despite weather delays.

Going into construction, we know we are at the mercy of the weather and this fall was no exception. We had record rains at the end of September that hindered progress. However, the rains verified that the designed storm water controls were more than adequate to mitigate these types of storms, even with the site completely unvegetated. The rains also showed that the clays respond as predicted: the top inches soaked up water but the water did not permeate downward. Shumaker did a tremendous job of getting back on schedule and catching up to the original timeline. However, winter storms rolled in every few days and began a freeze/thaw cycle that reduced production and threatened the integrity of the repository underdrain. The decision was made to shut down rather than risk damage. We will be monitoring the weather and soil conditions at the repository site throughout the winter and spring. Construction will resume when conditions are such that the protectiveness of the underdrain will not be at risk.



View of the UBMC Repository from the mountain east of Nora Gulch.



A layer of fabric creates separation between the repository's underdrain (pipes, gravel, and drain grid) and the native material below. A drain grid will be placed on top of the gravel, followed by a layer of clay that serves as the base of the repository.

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<http://deq.mt.gov/>
[StateSuperfund/UBMCI/](http://StateSuperfund/UBMCI/default.mcp)
default.mcp

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2014-2015 Construction

Along with finishing the first phase of the repository construction, we will begin removing mine waste in Mike Horse and Beartrap Creeks in 2014. Wastes will be hauled over the highway from the Meadow Creek Road on Highway 200 to the UBMC repository on Highway 279. The impounded mine waste at the Mike Horse dam will be removed in three phases. The 2014 work will remove the waste at the south end of the impoundment. The 2015 work will remove the east side of the impoundment. The goal is for Beartrap Creek to flow in a restored channel by the end of 2015, rather than in its current man-made, plastic-lined ditch. The west side of the impoundment and the ditch will be removed in 2016. We expect to advertise for bids on the 2014-2015 construction in May. The advertisement will be posted at <http://svc.mt.gov/gsd/OneStop/SolicitationDefault.aspx>. For more information contact Shellie Haaland at 406-431-1401.

Request

With every large-scale construction project, the cooperation of the public is critical to success. The agencies involved are committed to the safety of the project's neighbors and the travelling public. If anyone sees anything they feel is unsafe, please call Shellie Haaland, DEQ's construction manager, at 406-431-1401 so the issue can be resolved immediately. We ask for the public's patience with our traffic as we will have trucks hauling loads of material on the highway. In addition to the minor delays caused by our haul trucks, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is currently planning on resurfacing Highway 200 east of Lincoln and replacing the Alice Creek Bridge near Highway 279 (Flesher Pass Road). The replacement of the bridge

requires work along Highways 200 and 279 and will impact public travel and our haul. DEQ and MDT are working together to minimize delays in this area.

As we have announced in previous Mike Horse Messengers, portions of the roads in the UBMC will be closed during construction for the safety of both the public and the workers. Road closures will likely impact hunting season for folks who normally spend time in the Mike Horse area. The good news is that the end result will be increased wildlife and fisheries habitat in the upper Blackfoot drainage and a better experience for everyone when the area is reopened.



Contractor installing the underdrain pipes. The underdrain will keep water from entering the base or sides of the repository. This design protects the clean water and isolates the wastes in the repository.