

Blacktail Creek Riparian Actions

What is Blacktail Creek?

Blacktail Creek (BTC) is an urban stream located within Butte. Originating in Summit Valley, the creek drains the Highland Mountains and is a tributary to Silver Bow Creek. Descriptions of BTC prior to the mining era depict a low flow and low gradient wetland environment, similar to the riparian habitat that can be observed south of the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce today. The area within the BTC riparian action boundary (see map) has been impacted by past activities that disposed of mining, milling, smelting, and other wastes in the creek corridor. These past activities are the subject of the BTC Riparian Actions outlined in the Consent Decree.

Why is DEQ cleaning up Blacktail Creek?

In the 2020 Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit Consent Decree, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), on behalf of the State of Montana, consented responsibility for implementing the BTC Riparian Actions and received a settlement of \$20.5 million to successfully complete this project.

What are DEQ's responsibilities for a successful clean up?

- Remove all tailings, wastes, contaminated soils, and sediments in and along BTC and below the confluence with SBC and their floodplains as defined by Waste Identification Criteria in Table 1 of Appendix 1
- Ensure control of discharge of contaminated groundwater to surface water and sediment in the BTC area
- Reconstruct the streams and revegetate all landscapes addressed with these actions
- Complete the project within budget
- Continued coordination with other Further Remedial Elements implementation

What do we know about Blacktail Creek?

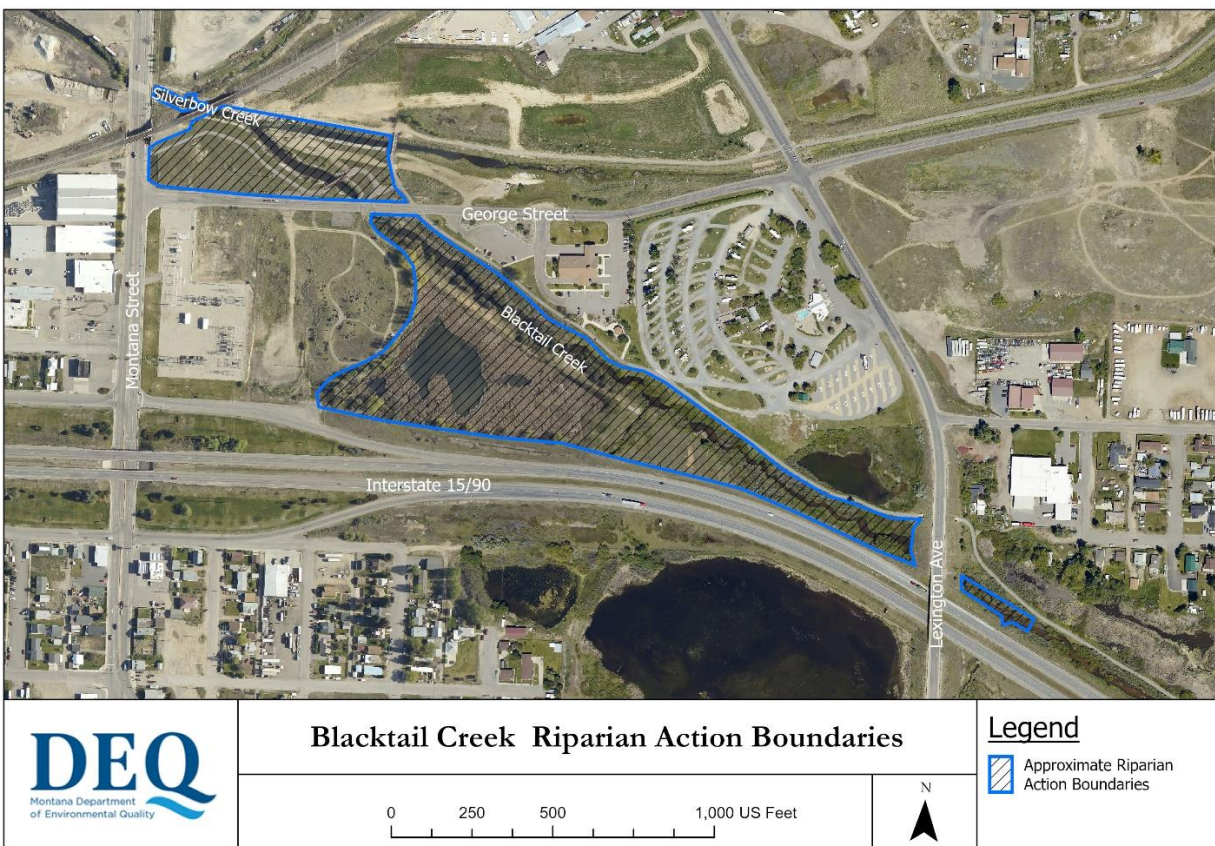
The Natural Resource Damage Program conducted preliminary investigations to delineate waste in the area, as well investigate interactions between groundwater and surface water. During the remedial design process, DEQ will answer several data-gaps within the BTC Riparian Action boundary area first. A major data-gap to be addressed is identifying the vertical and horizontal extent of wastes within the project boundaries. Along with the delineation of wastes, a better understanding is needed of the de-watering requirement that will be associated with construction and removal of wastes. Due to elevated groundwater, de-watering of contaminated material will need to be done prior to removal.

What are DEQ's next steps?

Currently, DEQ is in the pre-design investigation phase of the project. DEQ is working to investigate data gaps so that the project can move forward with the remedial design process. Making sure we have all the necessary data prior to moving forward with a design is a key step that ensures a science driven and cost-effective approach to meeting DEQ's responsibilities in the Consent Decree.

How will the public be involved in the process?

DEQ is committed to an open process as we move forward into a remedial design. We will actively inform the community and will provide opportunities for public feedback. DEQ will keep the public informed during the monthly Butte community meetings.



For more information, please visit the Montana DEQ Blacktail Creek website: <https://deq.mt.gov/cleanupandrec/Programs/superfunded> or contact one of the following agency representatives:

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