



Blacktail Creek Riparian Actions

August 2023 Fact Sheet

Where is Blacktail Creek and what are the Blacktail Creek Riparian Actions?

Blacktail Creek (BTC) is an urban stream located in Butte, MT. BTC has been impacted by past mining and industrial activities starting in the late 1800s, including mining, milling, smelting, and other wastes that were disposed of in the BTC area. BTC originates in the Summit Valley, drains the Highland Mountains, and is a tributary to Silver Bow Creek (SBC). Prior to the mining era, BTC was a low gradient wetland environment like the riparian habitat that can be observed today in much of the project area. As outlined in the 2020 Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit Consent Decree (BPSOU CD), BTC Riparian Actions are to remove tailings, wastes, and contaminants from BTC and SBC below the confluence with BTC, including the BTC wetlands. Following this removal, the project area is to be reconstructed and revegetated. The BTC project boundaries are shown in Figure 1 below.

Why is DEQ cleaning up Blacktail Creek?

The tailings, wastes, and contaminants found within the BTC area have led to increased risk to human and environmental health. In the 2020 BPSOU CD, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), on behalf of the State of Montana, was assigned responsibility for implementing the BTC Riparian Actions and received a settlement of \$20.5 million to complete the remedy. Remaining funds will be transferred to the Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) for restoration activities.

What are DEQ'S responsibilities for a successful cleanup?

- Remove tailings, wastes, contaminated soils and sediments in the project boundaries.
- Ensure control of discharge of contaminated groundwater during remediation.
- Reconstruct BTC and SBC below the confluence with BTC.
- Revegetate the riparian habitat in the project area with plants consistent with local biota.

What are DEQ's next steps?

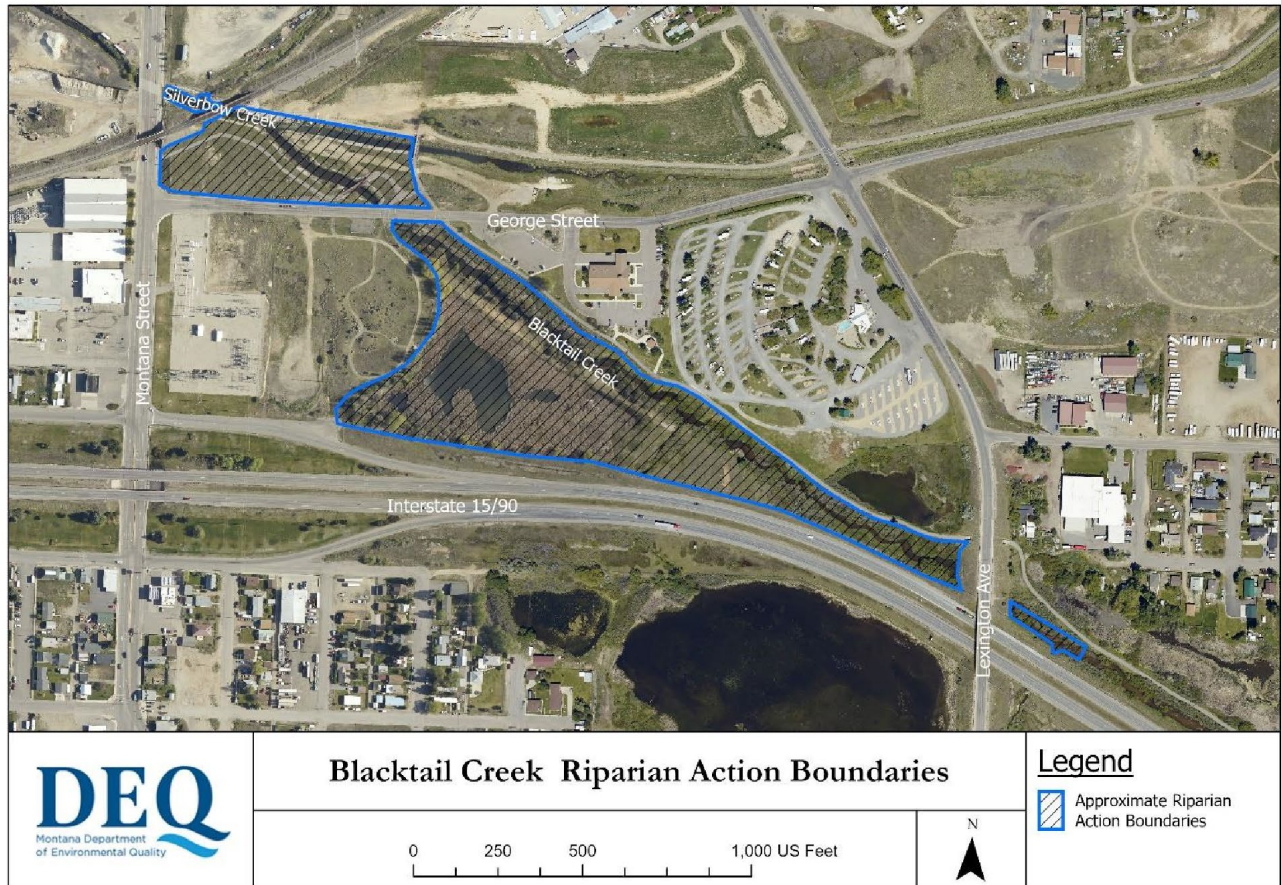
DEQ is currently addressing data gaps by conducting a pre-design investigation (PDI). This will ensure all necessary data is collected prior to moving forward with a remedial design. The PDI is a key step to ensure a science driven, cost-efficient remedy is developed. The first step in the PDI will be a sonic drilling investigation to further characterize the extent of contamination. DEQ plans to drill in the BTC project area for two weeks, beginning August 21st, 2023. The drilling schedule will be Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm. Depending on sonic drilling results and analysis, additional investigation may be done to fill in any remaining data gaps.

How will the public be involved in the process?

DEQ is committed to an open process as we transition through the PDI into a remedial design, and ultimately, remedial action. As we receive information from our investigation, DEQ will actively inform the community and will provide opportunities for public feedback. DEQ will keep the public informed during EPA Butte community meetings and through the Butte Superfund Newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter visit:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTDEQ/subscriber/new>

Figure 1



For more information, please visit the Montana DEQ Federal Superfund website at <https://deq.mt.gov/cleanupandrec/Programs/superfundfed>

Katie Garcin-Forba
DEQ Superfund Bureau Chief
Katie.Garcin-Forba@mt.gov, 406-444-6445

Kevin Stone
DEQ Public Information Officer
Kevin.Stone@mt.gov, 406-444-6469

Nikia Greene
EPA Remedial Project Manager
Greene.Nikia@epa.gov, 406-457-5019

Dana Barnicoat
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
Barnicoat.Dana@epa.gov, 406-560-6261