

Mike Horse Messenger



Settlement News

Planning and design for cleanup of the Upper Blackfoot Mining Complex (UBMC), including Mike Horse Dam, are moving forward now that some of the money has been received from the \$37 million settlement agreement. The settlement was agreed to in April 2008 with Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARCO) and ASARCO LLC by the Montana Departments of Environmental Quality and Justice (DEQ/DOJ) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Department of Justice (USDOJ).

In June 2008, the U.S. District Court approved the settlement reached in April. The State of Montana received \$16 million of settlement money in late August 2008 for the removal of the contaminated tailings impoundment at Mike Horse Dam, natural resource restoration and other cleanup. The USFS received \$1 million for project oversight.

Site Update

January 2009

Recent Developments

Water Treatment

In addition to the settlement money, ASARCO has been responsible for constructing a water treatment plant. Testing of the plant is underway, and it is scheduled to be online and operating in January 2009. The plant will use state of the art technology to remove metals contamination from adit waters and seeps to meet state water quality standards. More than half a million gallons of water a week will be treated.



Water filtration system treats an average of 91,000 gallons a day.

Remedial Investigation

Field sampling for the remedial investigation was completed in July 2008. Funding for the work was approved by the 2007 legislature. A remedial investigation examines what the contaminants are, how concentrated they are and how far the contamination has spread. A thorough investigation is important to ensure effective cleanup in the future.

The DEQ remedial investigation report is due by early 2009. A risk assessment, feasibility study, and record of decision

will follow. A feasibility study identifies cleanup alternatives. The record of decision explains the selected cleanup alternative. The remedial investigation will address contaminated land not addressed in the Environmental Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA), which was completed for the USFS in July 2007.

Action Memorandum

In July 2007, the USFS released an Action Memorandum calling for the removal and disposal of the contamination at Mike Horse Dam and mine tailings and wastes in the Mike Horse Creek, Beartrap Creek, and Upper Blackfoot River drainage bottoms or flood plain areas. This work is currently moving forward using the money from the settlement agreement.

Dam Diversion

In fall 2007, the USFS completed the Beartrap Creek diversion around the Mike Horse Dam and tailings impoundment. The diversion is designed to allow drawdown of the reservoir behind the dam. The drawdown will allow collection of information necessary for planning and designing the removal of the dam and impounded tailings. The diversion will also protect the dam by controlling annual runoff until the dam and impoundment are removed.

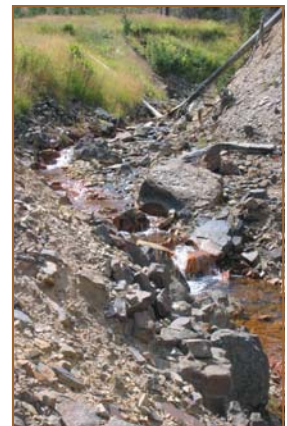
River Restoration

The settlement provides funding for the restoration of the river

Agency Coordination

The DEQ, DOJ and USFS are coordinating in the remediation and restoration of the Mike Horse Dam and UBMC.

and creeks at the site in order to restore the native trout fishery. In 2009, the DOJ Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) will develop a restoration plan for doing so. Scientific and public input on this plan will be actively sought.



Seepage in Mike Horse Creek.



Beartrap Creek diversion around Mike Horse Dam.



Aquatic bug sampling during remedial investigation.



New state-of-the-art water treatment plant..

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History

The Upper Blackfoot Mining Complex (UBMC), also known as the Heddleston district, is an inactive mining district that is more than 640 acres in size.

It was mined intermittently from 1889 to the 1950s and explored off and on up to the present.

The mining district is located at the headwaters of the Blackfoot River in a fairly remote location on and near national forest land, which is used by

hunters and other recreationists.

The town of Lincoln is about 15 miles downstream.

The historic mining and exploration activities in this area have resulted in numerous tailings and waste rock dumps. Seeps from the tailings and waste rock dumps along with acid mine drainage from old adits have contaminated surface water, sediments, soils and groundwater.

The earthen Mike Horse Dam, or impoundment, was built across Beartrap Creek in 1941. In 1975 heavy rains caused a partial failure of the dam and high creek waters eroded contaminated tailings into Beartrap Creek and the Upper Blackfoot River, resulting in additional contamination.

The Blackfoot River was made famous by Norman Maclean's story of family and fly fishing, *A River Runs Through It*.

Resources

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
www.deq.mt.gov

Montana Department of Justice
www.doj.mt.gov

Helena National Forest
www.fs.fed.us/r1/helena/projects/blkfoot_mine

Information Locations:
USFS Office, Lincoln
DEQ, Helena



Water from the toe of Mike Horse Dam flows into Mike Horse Creek.