

Work on UBMC cleanup set to resume this summer, public meeting planned

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A large pipe carrying water from the Mike Horse and Bear Trap Creeks runs through the contaminated section slated for removal this year.

With work set to resume at the Upper Blackfoot Mining complex later this summer, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality is planning to give a presentation on the 2018 construction during the Lincoln Community Council Tuesday, June 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Library.

During the presentation, DEQ officials will discuss the plans for the remainder of the clean-up work, which is slated to begin in July. Efforts this year will focus on the area from the confluence of the Mike Horse and Bear Traps Creeks down to the water treatment facility. The area is estimated to hold 92,000 cubic yards of contaminated material.

Next year the work will encompass about 165,000 cubic yards of waste in the area from the water treatment facility to the Edith Mine area, which is the boundary of the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for the project. The EE/CA was used in the \$39 million settlement with ASARCO that has funded the clean up.

Work on the project came to a halt early last August after work on the draft invitation for bid on the final phase of the project was delayed by a "disconnect" between the state and federal agencies over how to best complete the project with the money remaining. The discovery of additional waste in the Mike Horse Creek drainage led to more excavation and hauling work than expected.

Initial plans called the removal of contaminated material from the wetlands below the Mike horse to be completed in 2017, but under the new plan, more than 44,000 cubic yards of contaminated material in the marsh beyond the EE/CA boundary is slated for "potential future removal."