

Mike Horse Messenger

Site Update

July 2012

Thank You

We appreciate the time and energy that the community and interested parties have invested to provide input and become engaged in the process over the past several years. The agencies value the public's cooperation and understanding that the repository decision is based on the best science available. Having a decision now allows us to move toward our shared goal of restoring the Blackfoot River. We look forward to working with the Lincoln community and nearby residents throughout this important cleanup.

For More Information

For additional information on the decision, please contact Kathy Bushnell or Kevin Riordan at the Helena Forest Supervisor's office at (406) 449-5201.

For additional information on the implementation or schedule of the project, please contact Shellie Haaland at (406) 431-1401.

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

Recent Developments

Waste Repository Selected

After preparing a technical analysis and considering public comments, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has selected Section 35 as the most protective waste repository location for mine waste removed from the Mike Horse Dam and Upper Blackfoot Mining Complex (UBMC). The Forest Service has issued an amendment to its 2007 Action Memorandum for wastes on National Forest Land. This selection follows extensive analysis of alternative repository sites after investigations revealed concerns that substantially limited the possible use of the originally planned Paymaster repository. Section 35 best meets the selection criteria under federal environmental law (the Comprehensive

Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act) for protectiveness, feasibility, and cost.

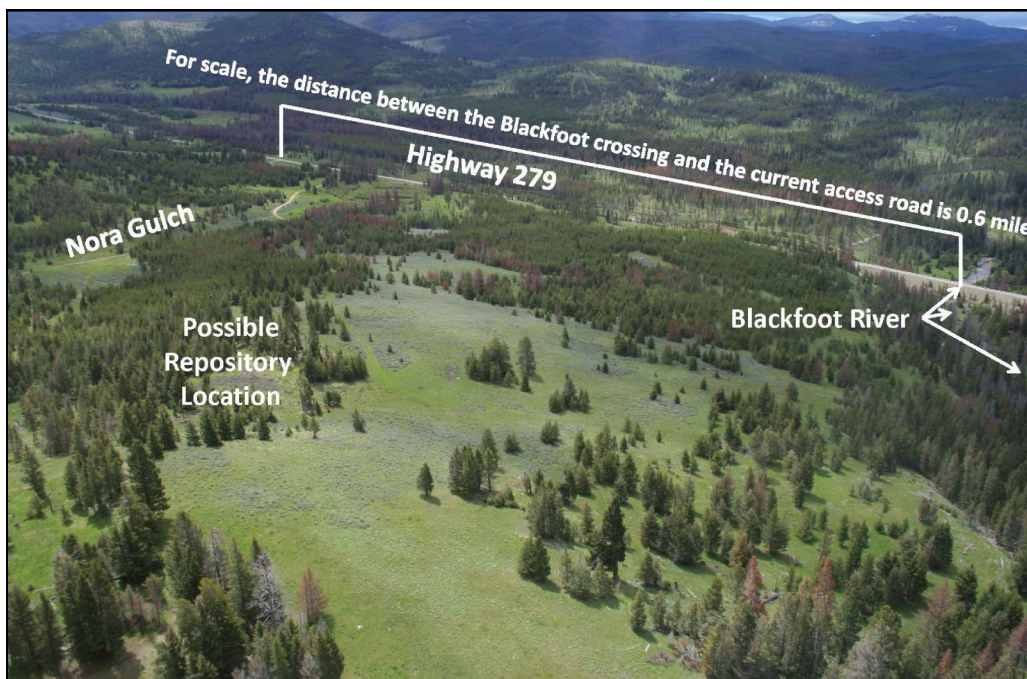
The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has concurred in the decision and will implement the site cleanup actions under a 2008 agreement between the Forest Service and state. No other changes are being made to the 2007 Action Memorandum.

Section 35 is located east of Highway 279's crossing of the Blackfoot River, about 8.5 road miles from the Mike Horse Dam and approximately 13 road miles east of Lincoln. In 2011, a repository study was prepared by Pioneer Technical Services, Inc. to review previous repository information, take a fresh look at potential sites, and make a recommendation for the most appropriate location. The

Forest Service released the study for public comment in September 2011. The decision can be viewed at the Helena Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r1/helena/. Links are also provided at the DEQ UBMC website at www.deq.mt.gov.

If you would prefer a CD, please contact the Helena Forest Supervisor's office at (406) 449-5201. A copy of the amendment is available at the Lincoln Ranger District office at 1569 Highway 200 and the Lincoln Library at 102 9th Street. In Helena, copies are available at the Lewis & Clark Library at 120 South Last Chance Gulch, the Helena National Forest office at 2880 Skyway Drive, and the Montana DEQ office at 1100 North Last Chance Gulch.

Below: Aerial photos of Section 35 identifying landmarks



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Or visit the website at
<http://deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/UBMC/default.mcpdx>

Water Treatment Plant

The water treatment plant (WTP) is now meeting final discharge limits (final limits) for all metals at UBMC. Construction modifications to meet final limits began at the WTP in the spring of 2011 so that the WTP could effectively treat the millions of gallons of metals-laden water seeping from the historic mines. Meeting final limits protects fish and aquatic life, as well as human health. The crew at the WTP (Blaine Cox, Jesse Cotton and Jason Failor) has worked tirelessly to modify the WTP in order to successfully meet the final limits. In addition, the WTP sludge generation process has been modified so that the

materials extracted from the water do not require additional treatment prior to being sent to a landfill.

Even with the success of modifying the WTP to treat the mine discharges, the crew is continually working to improve plant operations, maximize effectiveness, and save money. On average, the WTP collects and processes half a million gallons of water each week. The WTP will likely operate for many decades to treat acidic mine water that will constantly drain from the mine adits. Acid mine drainage is an unfortunate, though fairly common, remnant of mining to be addressed well into the future throughout Montana.



New WTP Employee

Todd Fisher has been hired at the WTP as Jesse Cotton moves onto new opportunities. Please welcome Todd! We thank Jesse for all he has done and wish him all the best.

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.

Current Work

Beginning in July, the agencies will be investigating the floodplain in the mining area to collect design-level information for cleanup and fine tuning waste quantities. At the repository site, scientists will dig sample test pits and install additional monitoring wells to further ensure that a protective repository can be built on Section 35 and to determine the most protective location and design for a repository within Section 35.

DEQ's construction manager plans to meet with nearby residents to discuss the implementation of the project and how the residents' concerns will be addressed throughout the project. These meetings will begin the same week the decision is released.

Proposed Schedule

Repository Decision	Spring/Summer 2012
Conceptual Design	Summer-Winter 2012-2013
Design Level Investigation	Summer-Summer 2012-2013
Initial Design/Bid Package	Winter-Spring 2012-2013
Repository Preparation	Summer/Fall 2013
Construction Begins*	Summer 2014
Construction Ends**	Summer/Fall 2019
Maintenance Begins	

*Construction includes removal, remediation, and restoration, including revegetation
**The majority of the hauling will occur from 2014 through 2017



Dam breach in 1975