

MEMORANDUM

To: Kevin Kostka, DEQ
cc: Dana Swift, DEQ
From: Karen Baerlocher
Sarah Weppner
Date: May 31, 2023
Contract No./Title: K305 Task Order 49- PA/SI Outreach Support for Gilmore Townsite
Alta Project No.: 23015
Subject: **Gilmore Townsite and Surrounding Lands Survey Result Summary Memorandum**

1 Introduction

Large-scale hard rock mining and milling operations took place near the Gilmore townsite (townsite) in Idaho until the 1950s and left behind high levels of lead and arsenic in soil and dust at and near the townsite. Sampling confirmed lead in soil at levels more than 50 times higher than what is considered safe at a residence. Elevated levels of arsenic were also found in soil in some townsite locations.

Beginning in 2016, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) have provided outreach to property owners and land users about the risks posed by past mining operations at the townsite. Information was mailed to property owners, health and safety signs were installed at the townsite, and in July 2022, on-site soil screening was offered.

In January 2023, IDEQ contracted with Alta Science & Engineering, Inc. (Alta) to conduct a survey of townsite parcel landowners to collect information related to health concerns and potential remedial action at the townsite and surrounding lands.

2 Methodology

With input from IDHW, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), IDEQ and Alta developed paper and web-based surveys in English and Spanish. On March 13, 2023, prior to implementation of the survey, IDEQ mailed an announcement to individuals who own property in the townsite and local public agency representatives to inform them of upcoming survey and public meetings to be held in Salmon (March 27), Leadore (March 28), and Idaho Falls (March 29).

In addition, IDEQ contacted the Meadow Lake Land Company and asked that they send the survey and public meeting information to individuals who were currently in the process of purchasing or leasing property at the townsite from the Meadow Lake Land Company.

The survey was advertised on the IDEQ Gilmore townsite website, IDEQ social media sites, and in the Salmon Recorder Herald. A paper survey was mailed on March 17 to approximately 100 private landowners and public agency representatives and the web-based survey was made active on March 27.

The survey mailing included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and a phone number for respondents to call to complete the survey over the phone. The cover letter also included the link to the web-based survey and information for respondents to complete a Spanish translated survey if they preferred. A map showing the Gilmore townsite and surrounding lands and a return envelope were included with each survey. (See Attachment A for cover letter, map, and survey questions). Surveys in English and Spanish were available at the three public meetings held in March.

A total of 39 surveys were completed. Three incomplete surveys were returned to the sender. Table 1 shows the number of completed surveys by the collection method.

Table 1. Number of Completed Surveys by Collection Method

Collection Method	# of Surveys
Paper survey from Mailing	22
Web survey from DEQ website	8
Paper survey from Public Meeting	8
Phone Survey	1
Total	39

3 Survey Results

Web-based survey results were collected from March 24 through April 17, 2023. Paper surveys returned by mail were collected through mid-May. All responses were recorded and responses to each question were summarized. In some cases, respondents did not provide an answer for every question. In addition, for some questions, respondents could provide more than one answer. See Attachment B for summarized responses. Please note that the survey was voluntary and anonymous; therefore, any personally identifiable information has been removed from the responses.

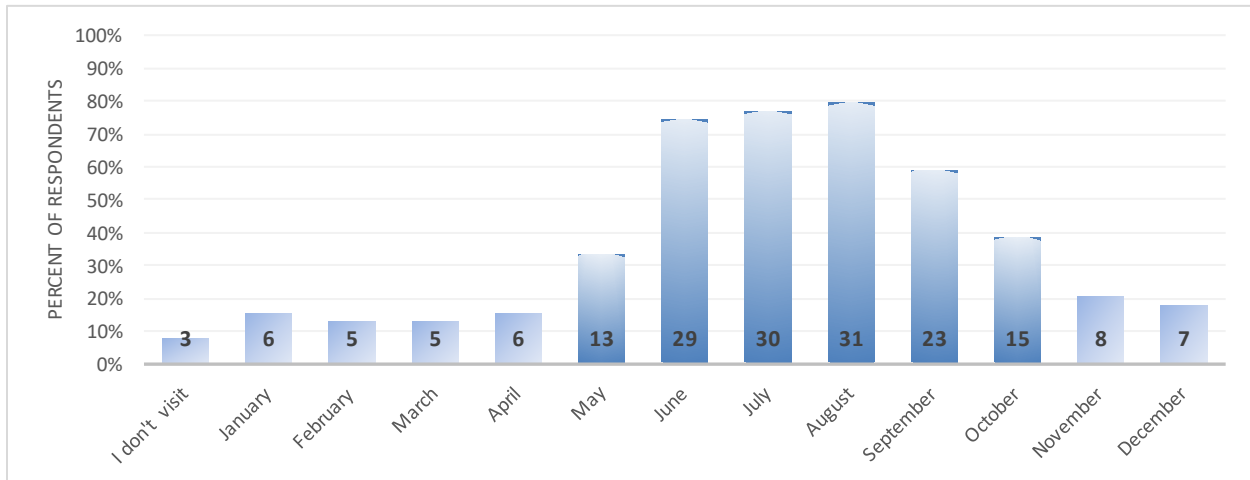
Of 39 survey respondents, 35 identified themselves as landowners. The remaining four respondents identified themselves as members of the community, day-use visitors, or did not provide a response to the question about landownership.

3.1 Land Usage

Of 38 survey respondents, 92% stated that they visit or live at the Gilmore townsite or surrounding lands. The majority of respondents that visit the townsite, visit between 1-10 times a year (73%) and their average stay at the townsite or surrounding lands is between 1-4 days (88%); however, some respondents indicated that they stay for 30 or more days per visit and one respondent indicated that they stay at the townsite or surrounding lands for 180 days per year.

Of 38 survey respondents, the majority said that they spent time visiting the townsite or surrounding lands during the summer months. Figure 1 shows the months when respondents say they and others visit the Gilmore townsite or surrounding lands.

Figure 1. Which months do you and others visit the Gilmore townsite or surrounding lands?



3.2 Concerns about lead and arsenic in soils

Of 38 respondents, 34 indicated that they understand the health risks or some of the health risks associated with exposures to lead and arsenic in soils.

The majority of respondents stated that they were concerned about the potential health risks caused by lead and arsenic in soil in the townsite and surrounding lands. Figure 2 shows the level of concern for all respondents.

Figure 2. How concerned are you about potential health risks caused by lead and arsenic in soils in the Gilmore townsite and surrounding lands?

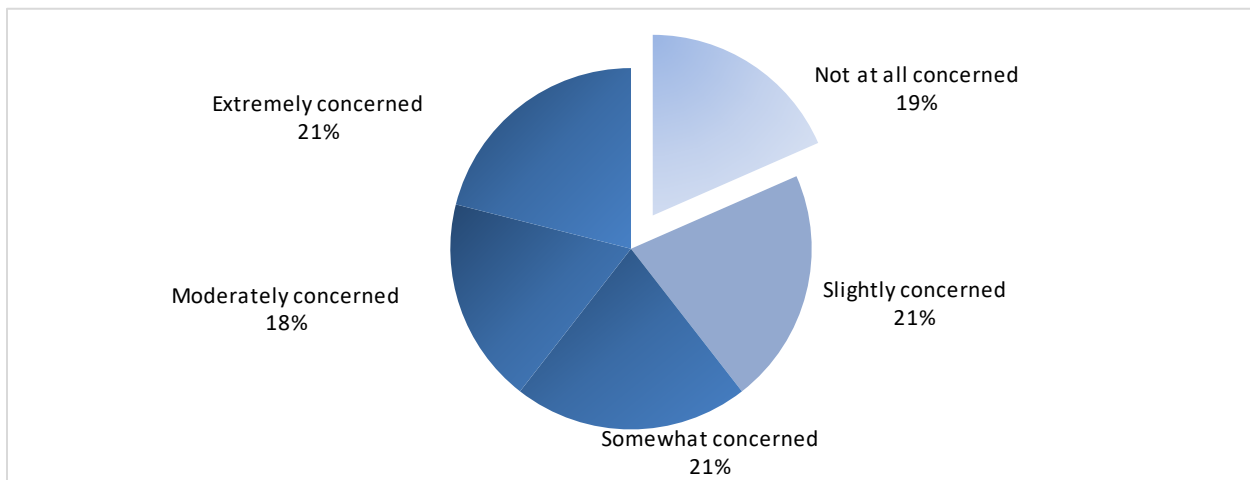


Table 2 shows the concern level from respondents that lead and arsenic in soils and dust at and around the townsite may impact or be harmful to each of the following: their health, their family's health, the environment, the townsite's historical and cultural integrity, property values, and future use of private property.

Table 2. Concern level from all respondents for impact on each of the categories listed.

	Concerned	Not Concerned	N/A
The Environment	87%	14%	0%
Future Use of Private Property	86%	11%	3%
Property Values	83%	17%	0%
My Family's Health	79%	16%	5%
Historical or Cultural Integrity	76%	19%	5%
My Health	74%	23%	3%

3.3 Property Use

Respondents who identified as Gilmore townsite property owners were asked about the type of structures they have on their property and their plans for future use of their property. There were seven respondents with permanent structures and eleven with temporary structures.

Table 3 shows the comments the property owners provided in response to how they plan to use their property at the Gilmore townsite in the future use.

Table 3. Property owners' responses on future property uses.

Question: <i>If you own property within or near the Gilmore townsite, how do you plan to use your property in the future? Please describe.</i>
All Responses:
No plans.
Currently not utilizing it. Don't know re: future.
I do plan on using my property as usual. My property has been tested and was found to have no contaminated soils.
We have an old barn and small cabin. We use them for family reunions and camping at all times of the year. They are our "main base" when we are off roading with the 4 wheelers and Land Cruisers, Jeeps, motorcycles, and other vehicles. We often set up campers, RVs, and tents inside of our fenced area when we are having reunions, parties, and get-togethers. We have even hosted special community events like "Gilmore Days," where we have invited the public to come and participate in music and entertainment.
Was going to put a little cabin on it. But now we may possibly sell it not sure yet.
The museum property (mercantile, shed behind the mercantile, and land in the cemetery) will simply remain historical sites.
Limited visitation typically in my Airstream.
Would like to build a cabin on it with some outbuildings.
Building a home.
I plan on building a small cabin on the property to be used by my family for a few months a year.
Camping.
Camping and riding.
Visiting & recreational.
Getaways from the city.

We spend time there in summer & snowcat in winter. * Our properties tests pretty clean & our well water tested good.
I only own one lot and own it just to own a piece of history and to visit the townsite and historical buildings.
Not changing anything. My plan is too put campers on it and fix the cabin.
Camping.
Camping, fishing, ATV and snowmobiling.
Unsure.
Sell it.
Livestock grazing.
That's my business not yours.
Camping with trailer.
Camping.
Vacation getaway/camping.
Recreational.
Vacation.
Recreation, camping, hunting.
Build a A-Frame.
Camping.
Thought about selling the property.
I have planned to start construction on a small cabin this spring. I had high hopes of having a getaway for me and my family to enjoy the outdoors.
Near term recreational use living in RVs. Longer term building a cabin or several provided we can find areas that are not located over lead contaminated areas--aka soil sampling is planned before we do any construction of cabin type units.

3.4 Cleanup Activities

Respondents were asked specific questions about cleanup activities at the townsite and surrounding land.

In response to a question about interest in receiving assistance cleaning up the soils on their property and around the townsite to reduce lead and arsenic concentrations in soil and dust, 17 of the 35 respondents who identified as townsite property owners said they were interested in assistance, 4 said they were not interested in assistance, and 14 said they needed more information.

When asked if they would provide property access to state or federal government for sampling and removal and replacement soils, 26 of the respondents who identified as townsite property owners said they would provide access, 2 said they would not provide access, and 7 said that it would depend or that they need more information.

Table 4 shows all responses to the question “What concerns do you have about the potential impacts of cleanup activities to remove contaminated soil?”

Table 4. Respondent concerns about potential impacts of cleanup activities.

<p>Question:</p> <p><i>Lead and arsenic do not break down over time and will remain in soil unless the contaminated soil is removed and replaced. The goal of cleaning up contaminated soil is to reduce exposures to lead and arsenic in soil and dust. What concerns do you have about the potential impacts of cleanup activities to remove contaminated soil?</i></p>
<p>All Responses:</p>
<p>That clean-up activities don't result in demolition of historical structures.</p>
<p>How will dust be contained? What will happen to our personal buildings and structures. How will they be impacted?</p>
<p>Removal of native vegetation and destabilizing soil making it prone to erosion.</p>
<p>Not knowing the extent of lead in our soil (we have no arsenic according to test DEQ did previously), we are very concerned with the cost of cleanup as well how long it will take before we can move forward with our plans for the property.</p>
<p>If I have a proper equipment.</p>
<p>Concerned about government limiting my use of my personal property. There is a dump area on my property.</p>
<p>Will destroy old buildings and beauty of Gilmore as an old mining town.</p>
<p>We had our soil tested and it was very considerable low levels the problem is when you start digging as others have the levels get real bad. We were in the safe zone for levels. But our neighbor 75 feet away were 5 times what ours were because they moved 6 to 8 inches of dirt.</p>
<p>Cost of clean up & how the soil would be replaced.</p>
<p>Spreads it further.</p>
<p>What ever needs to be done, should be done.</p>
<p>Possible impact for those that live in Gilmore and their day to day life. However, cleanup would certainly benefit their health in the long-term.</p>
<p>Would just like it cleaned up!</p>
<p>Unable to use property or ride on public trails.</p>
<p>None, geter done.</p>
<p>None.</p>
<p>No concern. Glad to see it done.</p>
<p>Probably cause more problems than being left alone.</p>

Those minerals are settled unless disturbed and are on flat ground at the townsite and water only deepens them. Anymore the government only screws everything it touches up. Keep your hands off it. Your heavy equipment will spread what's settled. We are not California so stay out. No interference.
No concerns. I would rather be safe.
What will be done to clean it up? Who is responsible to clean it up?
Coordination of activities so that exposure is minimal.
What to do with the soil when we made the driveway.
Who will be responsible for the cleanup, how long will it take, and who will be paying for all of it?
Don't know if its been tested in that area.
It might cause the area to be closed to the public for an extended length of time.
I support cleanup of any contamination especially the piles of waste where the concentration of dangerous metals are the highest. My biggest concern is a shutdown to the entire site. I do not support that.
In my opinion the largest driver at this point in time regarding the spread off contamination from the spoils piles is water. We see very little dust off the piles but do see dust in disturbed areas. In my case we are working to stabilize the runoff if possible.

4 Conclusion

Overall, survey respondents indicated that they visit or stay at the Gilmore townsite or surrounding lands between 10 or fewer times a year for 4 days or less. Most respondents visit between May and October; however, June, July, and August are the most popular months for respondents to visit the townsite or surrounding lands.

The majority of respondents (34 of 38 or 89%) understand the health risks or some of the health risks associated with exposure to lead and arsenic in soils at the townsite and 80% of respondents (31 of 38) expressed some level of concern (from slightly to extremely concerned) about potential health risks caused by lead and arsenic in soils in the townsite and surrounding lands.

Although a similar percentage of respondents (between 74 and 87%) expressed concern that lead and arsenic in soils and dust at and around the townsite may impact or be harmful to each of their health, their family's health, the environment, the townsite's historical and cultural integrity, property values, and future use of private property, respondents were most concerned with impacts to the environment (87%), future use of private property (86%), and property values (83%).

Overall, respondents who identified as Gilmore townsite property owners were in support of receiving assistance with cleaning up their property and would allow property access for sampling and cleanup activities or said they would like more information.

Attachment A
Survey, Letter and Map

Attachment B
Summarized Responses