



ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN

Conjecture Mine, Bonner County, Idaho

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 — U.S. Forest Service



May 2007

Idaho Conjecture Mine Cleanup to Begin in June

Early this June, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Forest Service will begin a cleanup at the Conjecture Mine and Mill, in Bonner County, Idaho. Equipment will be moved onto the site the first week of June. EPA expects the actual excavation to begin later in the month. This former silver and lead mine is about six miles south of the community of Lakeview.

EPA and the Forest Service are working together to address public health and environmental risks from mine wastes in the Gold Creek watershed, within the Pend Oreille Basin. The Conjecture Mine and Mill site cleanup is an important part of this comprehensive, coordinated interagency approach. In fall 2005, EPA and the Forest Service conducted removal actions at the Idaho Lakeview Mine and Mill site, in the adjacent Chloride Gulch Creek drainage.

Mine waste contamination at the Conjecture Mine and Mill site poses risks to human health and the environment. The main risk to people is from breathing or ingesting contaminated soils and sediments. Contaminated materials, if not controlled, could also move throughout and downstream of the site, spreading to other areas. Arsenic, lead, and manganese are the main contaminants of concern.

The project is expected to take about four months. During the cleanup, EPA will excavate about 31,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from rock dumps, and about 2,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the bed and banks of Gold Creek.

The excavated materials will be taken to a nearby U.S. Forest Service repository, the same one used for the Lakeview Mine and Mill site cleanup. A repository is a carefully chosen place where mine wastes are gathered together and safely maintained over many years. The materials will be consolidated under a protective barrier. The disturbed areas will be graded (sloped) and stabilized. The stream will be realigned through the site, and the bed and banks stabilized. During the cleanup, precautions will be taken to control erosion, dust and storm water, and to protect wildlife and their habitat.



The southwest waste rock dump, on private land within the Conjecture Mine site



The north waste rock dump, on public land within the Conjecture Mine site

(Continued on reverse side.)



U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue, ETPA-081
Seattle, Washington 98101-1128

*Conjecture Mine Site
Bonner County, Idaho
May 2007*

*If you need materials in an alternative
format, please contact Debra Sherbina.
TTY users please call 800-877-8339.*

Cleanup Goals

The cleanup is designed to:

- Reduce the likelihood of people accidentally swallowing or breathing in soils and sediments contaminated with mine waste;
- Reduce the movement downstream of soils and sediments contaminated with mine waste; and
- Rebuild the stream bed and banks of Gold Creek disturbed by cleanup activities to create a clean stream corridor.

Site History

The Conjecture Mine and Mill site is near the headwaters of Gold Creek and takes up more than one-third mile of the creek, which flows through the site. Mining began at the Conjecture Mine sometime after 1894 and continued periodically until 1963. Mining took place underground on a patented claim and on nearby National Forest System land. Waste rock and mill tailings were left on both private and public lands. Several large waste rock dumps are scattered throughout the site.

For More Information

Earl Liverman
EPA On-Scene Coordinator
208-664-4858
liverman.earl@epa.gov

Debra Sherbina
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
800-424-4372 or 206-553-0247
sherbina.debra@epa.gov

Jim Nieman
USFS On-Scene Coordinator
208-263-5111
jnieman@fs.fed.us

Documents about EPA's Conjecture Mine cleanup are available for review at the following locations:

EPA Coeur d'Alene Field Office
1910 N.W. Boulevard, Suite 208
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

EPA Region 10 Records Center
1200 Sixth Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, WA 98101

Hours: M-F, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Please call 206-553-4494 for an appointment.

Find information online: www.epaosc.org/ConjectureMine