

EPA joins other agencies to finalize summer work plans for Pennsylvania Mine cleanup

Meeting on May 29 to outline cleanup effort to address acid discharge and toxic waste piles

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(Denver, Colo. – May 16th, 2013) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety, the U.S. Forest Service, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Summit County, today announced plans to address legacy mining contamination at the Pennsylvania Mine site, located near Montezuma, Colorado. The cleanup work is scheduled to begin this month. The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, Blue River Watershed Group, and Snake River Watershed Task Force are also supporting the project.

Cleanup efforts taken under the project plan will be phased over several years and will address threats from both acid mine discharge that is currently draining from the mine as well as tailings and other mine waste found on the surface. The project plan will be presented in Keystone at the Snake River Watershed Task Force meeting on May 29, 2013 from 2-4pm. This meeting is open to the public and is being held at The Keystone Center, 1628 St. John Road, Keystone CO.

“This project is a big step forward to clean up a longstanding threat to the Snake River Watershed,” said Paul Peronard, an EPA On-Scene Coordinator who will be overseeing the cleanup work. “From mid-May to August, heavy equipment will be operating at the mine portal. We are asking the public to avoid visiting the immediate area due to safety concerns.”

“We applaud the EPA for its recent assistance investigating pollution sources and developing an action plan based upon reconnaissance into the mine,” said Thomas Davidson, Summit County Commissioner. “We look forward to working with EPA toward our mutual goal of improving water quality and aquatic habitat in the Snake River Basin.”

During construction, the Peru Creek Road will remain open; however there may be some brief periods of road closures. There will also be increased truck traffic during the summer. Four-wheel drive access to Cinnamon Creek will be open, but access to the mine will be closed. The Dillon Ranger District will have specific information on scheduled road closures.

The Pennsylvania Mine operated from the late 1880s into the early 1930s and produced over \$3 million of silver, lead and zinc. However, the mine has long been identified as a source of heavy metals draining into Peru Creek and as such poses a threat to human health and the environment.

For more information about the project please visit: www.snakerivertaskforce.org