

# Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site Fact Sheet

## Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site History

James Neihart, a local prospector, was the namesake for the small mining town of Neihart. Mining began in the area in the 1880s when silver deposits were discovered near the future Neihart town site. Mines yielded primarily silver, lead, and zinc ores. During the 1920s, lead and zinc were produced in large quantities. The mining district has been largely inactive since the 1940s, although some mines have reported mine development work and some sporadic production.

The Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site (CSCMD) lies in the Little Belt Mountains of southern Cascade County. The Site encompasses approximately 9,000 acres with mine tailings, waste rock, and acid mine drainage present throughout the site due to the many inactive and abandoned mines. The State of Montana's Abandoned Mine Bureau identified, inventoried, and sampled these inactive mines in the Carpenter-Snow Creek area in the early 1990's. Sampling showed the presence of a variety of metals in the area surface water and soil that are found in concentrations known to produce risk to human health and the environment. The CSCMD Site was listed on the Superfund National Priorities List in 2001.

Since 2001, several investigations have been conducted of waste rock, tailings, sediment, surface water, and groundwater from historic mines in the area and residential and commercial properties and roadways in Neihart to understand as much as possible about the location and extent of contamination. This ongoing sampling effort supports the most effective cleanup design.

In 2004, a Removal Action was completed for select properties in Neihart where areas of higher contamination were prioritized to be removed and/or stabilized. Although this was successful for the areas of high contamination, larger remediation efforts are still being planned pursuant to the Record of Decision issued in 2009. Field efforts in 2011 almost completed the Remedial Design for the properties and roads in and around Neihart. In addition, metals concentration in tailings, soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater throughout the mining district are being characterized to identify the extent of material that may require a response action.

## Upcoming Activities for the CSCMD Site

To finish designing the final remedy for the town of Neihart, sampling of ground water, surface water, and sediment areas in wetlands will continue in and around Neihart. The sampling areas include the Neihart slope and Belt Creek from above the town of Neihart to the confluence with Carpenter Creek. This sampling will support the larger remediation effort to come. It is known that elevated levels of lead and arsenic are found in both surface and subsurface soils in and around the community of Neihart.

There are also several important aspects to the sampling efforts in 2012 within the watershed. These aspects may take multiple sampling efforts to complete. One of the aspects is to determine the types and amount of metals in the creek side mine waste. Another important part of sampling will be performed to better understand the actual volume and chemical composition of mine tailings and waste rock in the Carpenter Creek, Snow Creek, and Neihart slope drainage areas. Additionally, ground water and surface water will be collected and sampled to better understand, and eventually minimize, mine waste contact with water. Remediation of these areas will be necessary if concentrations of contaminants in tailings, soil, sediment and water pose unacceptable risks to human health or ecological receptors. Response actions may include, but are not limited to mine waste removal and reclamation-in-place actions.

In order to determine a suitable location for all of the waste, geotechnical characterization data will be collected. This means that scientists will collect geological and geographic information to find the most appropriate area to hold the amount and type of waste that will be removed from Neihart and the Mining District.

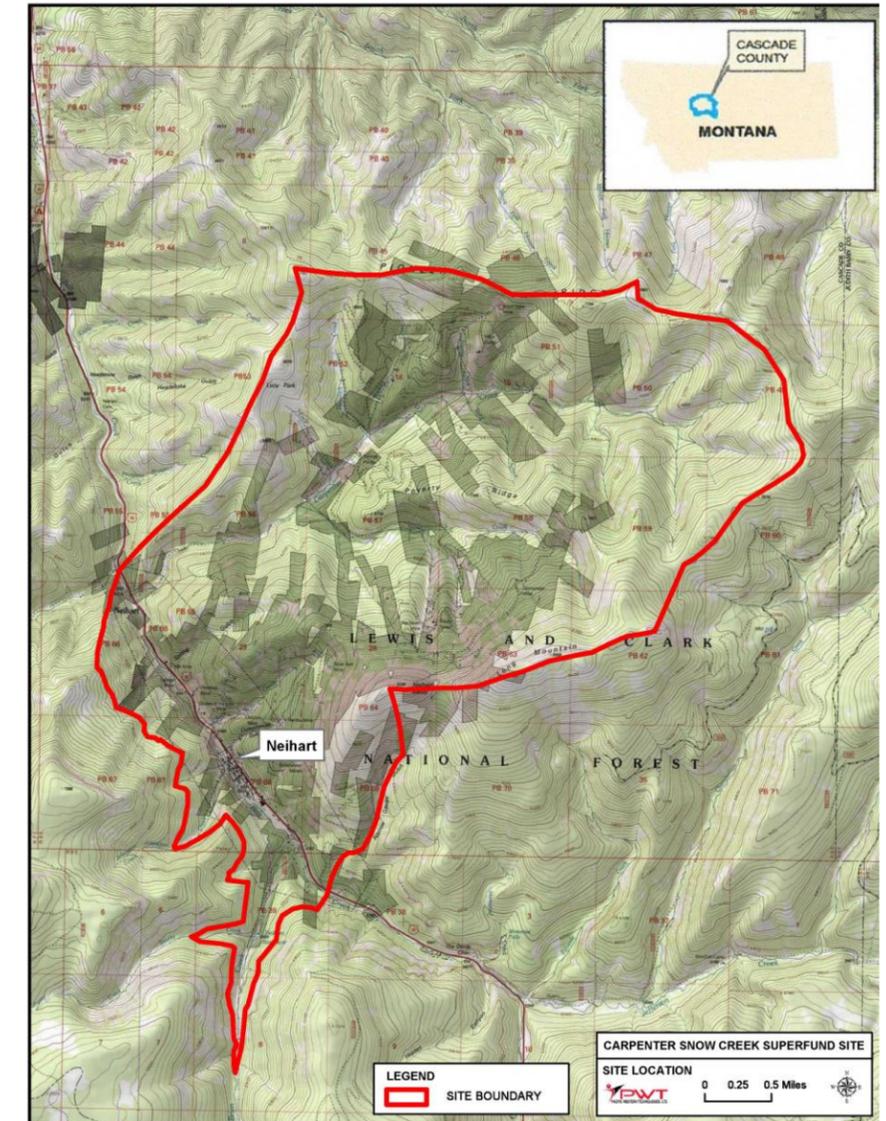
## Cleanup Delay for Neihart Properties

An appropriate repository for the waste from the entire CSCMD is still being determined, so the planned remediation schedule for Neihart is delayed. The Evening Star Mine and Mill Site, located just outside Neihart on Highway 87, was evaluated as a potential repository. The site was determined to be not feasible because of the cost to develop the property as a repository and insufficient size to handle all of the waste.

Without a place to move the waste from the entire CSCMD, the EPA will not be able to begin the Remedial Action, as planned, in 2012. There are additional repository locations in the Carpenter Creek watershed currently being evaluated.

The EPA is notifying the community of this delay but can't confidently state what the new schedule will be for the Remedial Action for Neihart until a potential repository within the mining district has been identified to accept all the waste that will require some action to address threats to public health and the environment.

***The EPA will hold a public meeting to discuss the Site and answer questions. Please see other side of pamphlet for details.***



**Map of Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site Area**

## Community Meetings Information

On April 3, 2012 at 3:00 p.m., EPA, DEQ, and Cascade City-County Health Department representatives will be meeting with the Cascade County Commissioners to discuss the Carpenter Snow Creek Site; the remedial delay for Neihart; results from last year's sampling; and plans for 2012. Later that evening, the representatives will be at the Town Council meeting in Neihart at 7:00 p.m. for similar discussions.

The EPA plans to sponsor a community meeting later this spring to discuss both the Carpenter Snow Creek and Barker-Hughesville Superfund Sites. Residents and stakeholders will receive a postcard announcing the meeting and a notice will be placed in the Great Falls Tribune.

## Web Links

**More information on the Carpenter Snow Creek Site:**

[http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/mt/carpenter\\_snow\\_creek/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/mt/carpenter_snow_creek/index.html)



## This Sheet Contains Important Facts about:

- ✓ *The Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site History*
- ✓ *Current information about remediation activities at the Site.*
- ✓ *New Information about the remediation schedule*
- ✓ *Ways to learn more about the Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Site and related topics*
- ✓ *Contact Information for Site representatives*
- ✓ *Web Links to more information*

## Contact Information

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