

Do You Want to Learn More?

The Carpenter Snow Creek Site is a joint effort between EPA and Montana DEQ, with EPA being the lead agency.

Scott Brown has recently replaced Rosemary Rowe as EPA's *Remedial Project Manager* for the site. Like Rosemary, Scott looks forward to meeting the residents and property owners of Neihart at public meetings and other events, such as the interviews for the CI plan. Scott and Catherine LeCours, DEQ's Project Manager for the site, are both happy to answer questions and provide information about the site.

If you need more information on the work being conducted, please call or email Scott or Catherine:

- **Scott Brown**, *EPA Remedial Project Manager*, (866) 457-2690 (toll free), brown.scott@epa.gov
- **Catherine LeCours**, *DEQ Project Manager*, 841-5040, clecours@state.mt.us.

Document Repositories

EPA maintains two site document repositories where the public can read site documents. These repositories are located at:

- **Belt Ranger Station**, Neihart, MT (236-5511).
- **Great Falls Public Library**, 301 2nd Ave N., Great Falls, MT (453-0349).

The most recent document added to the repositories is: EPA's **Data Compilation Report 2002 and 2003 Environmental Media Sampling, December 2003**, which details the results of the 2002 and 2003 sampling.

Additional documents will be added as they become available.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 - Montana Office
10 W. 15th St., Suite 3200
Helena, MT 59626
Attn: Scott Brown

Return Service Requested

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Carpenter-Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site

Neihart Operable Unit, Neihart, Montana

U.S. EPA Region 8 – Montana Office, 15 West 10th Street, Suite 3200, Helena, Montana 59226 February 2004



EPA to Interview Neihart Residents and Property Owners in February

Why Do Interviews?

As part of the Superfund process, EPA prepares a Community Involvement (CI) Plan for each Superfund site. The plan is used as a guide for communicating with the public and is an important tool for making sure that the community gets the information it wants in a timely fashion.

A CI plan typically includes a section on community issues and concerns, and the best way to develop that section is to interview interested Neihart citizens and/or property owners. To do this, we need your input. Individual responses will be confidential – no quotes will be made and no names will be included in the plan.

What Do We Ask?

Some of the questions we typically ask at these interviews are:

- Are you getting the information you need?
- Which information sources work best for you (newspaper, radio, direct mail, public meetings, email, etc.?)
- What topics interest you the most?
- Do you know of the locations of any mining sites we should sample?
- Do you have any questions or thoughts about the investigation, potential health risks, or cleanup?

There are no right or wrong answers. We just want your input. Each interview should take about 30 minutes or less. While an appointment is not necessary, people who just drop by may have to wait if someone has made an

When and Where

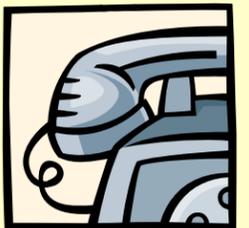
The interviews are very informal and will be conducted in Great Falls and Neihart at the following places and dates:

- **February 24, 2004** – Cascade City-County Health Department, 11:00 to 2:00, 115 4th Street South, Great Falls
- **February 25**, 10:00 to 4:00, Bob's Bar and Restaurant, 107 Main Street, Neihart

Appointments are not necessary, but to ensure we have enough time reserved, we'd like to know how many people are interested in being interviewed.

Please call **Karen Ekstrom (406-495-1414 x311)** if you would like to participate. Or, send an email to ekstromkl@cdm.com.

We would also be happy to interview you by phone, if it would be more convenient.



Please look inside for information on recent sampling events in Neihart

Sample Collection and Results – 2003 Sampling Event, Neihart Operable Unit



Carpenter-Snow Creek Site Facts

- The site was added to EPA's National Priorities List of Superfund sites in September 2001. It includes the Town of Neihart (Neihart Operable Unit).
- The site contains approximately 96 abandoned mines. DEQ identified 26 of these abandoned mines as sources of arsenic, lead, and other contaminants.
- Soil, water, and sediment samples were collected in 2002 and 2003 in and near Neihart.
- Soil samples in Neihart have elevated levels of lead and arsenic in some yards and alleys. Lead levels were also elevated in water from two springs.
- No elevated levels of metals were seen in 2002 or 2003 in surface water or sediments. Metals were elevated in only one groundwater sample in or near Neihart.
- EPA determined that a potential threat to human health exists from lead and arsenic in soils in portions of Neihart.
- Community interviews are scheduled for February 2004 in support of the Community Involvement Plan.

Don't Forget About the Interviews!

Sample Collection and Analysis

A remedial investigation (RI) is a study that defines the nature and extent of contamination in an area. New data and previously-collected data will be used in the Neihart RI to characterize the site, including its potential for risk to human health.

The first step in the RI of the Neihart Operable Unit was the 2003 collection of soil and groundwater samples from residential properties. The goal was to fill gaps in the existing database by sampling the soils at all remaining residential properties in Neihart for which access had been granted and to collect groundwater samples from natural springs and residential wells.

Samples were collected from 39 residential properties and were analyzed for metals and metalloids, including lead, arsenic, and cadmium.

Water samples were analyzed for total and dissolved metals and arsenic, alkalinity, total dissolved solids, sulfate, chloride, bicarbonate, carbonate, ammonia, nitrate, nitrite, and phosphorous. Field measured parameters for water were pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, turbidity, specific conductance, and oxidation-reduction potential.

What's Next?

The data collected in 2002 and 2003 will be used, in conjunction with other data, to evaluate the nature, degree, and extent of contamination. Work will include a human health risk assessment and a remedial investigation report (December 2004). A feasibility study will be prepared in 2005 that will address potential cleanup options. These documents will all be available to the public at the local document repositories. Additionally, EPA will hold at least one public meeting in 2004 in addition to the interviews to discuss progress and results.

It is possible that the documents described above might be delayed by the collection of additional residential data, should more people come forward to grant access to their property. EPA would like to include as much data as the budget allows in the RI to ensure completeness.

Sample Results

Results from the 2003 sampling show that there are elevated levels of lead, and sometimes arsenic, in soils throughout the old portion of Neihart. A little less than half of the properties sampled had at least one soil sample above the risk-based screening levels for lead (400 parts per million (ppm)) or arsenic (120 ppm).

Lead is the primary contaminant of concern, and the data indicate that its concentrations in soils are significantly elevated in three areas: near the Community Center (average of 3,349 ppm); near mine waste in the northeast part of town (average of 2,698 ppm); and at the Neihart Tailings north of town (average of 10,180 ppm). Caution should be used when working or playing in these areas.

Lower, yet still elevated, lead levels were seen in the alley one block west of Main Street (average of 481 ppm). The remainder of Neihart, which includes mostly residential property, had an average soil lead level (342 ppm) that was below the screening level. However, individual lead concentrations in this area ranged from 42 to 2,210 ppm, indicating that portions of some yards have lead concentrations greater than the health screening level.

Lead levels exceeded primary drinking water standards in groundwater from springs in the east side of the Neihart valley. Water quality in the domestic wells sampled was good. However, because there is a strong *potential* for adverse affects to groundwater from former mining activity, EPA plans to install two groundwater monitoring wells in 2004.

Do You Know of Any Mine Waste?



If you have property in the older section of Neihart and have NOT had it sampled, or if you live elsewhere in Neihart and suspect you have mine waste on your property, EPA needs your input! Please call Scott Brown at the phone number on the back page.

Who Pays for Cleanup?

If the risk assessment shows that cleanup is necessary in Neihart, that cleanup will be performed by the EPA at **no cost to the residential property owner**. Cleanup will follow completion of the RI and Record of Decision.

Participation in any cleanup will be voluntary. Property owners who participate will be provided with a "comfort letter" that explains the work that was done and the reasons for doing the work. At other sites, such letters have proven valuable to property owners during real estate transactions. Once EPA is finished with any cleanup activity, there will be no further opportunities for owners to have a cleanup conducted by EPA.

Questions?

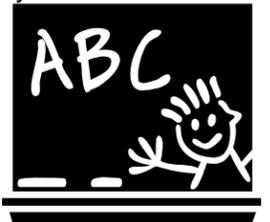
If you have questions about sample results in general, or on your property, please call EPA (see back page) or come to the community interviews on February 24 in Great Falls or 25 in Neihart (see front page) to talk to a member of the technical team.



Exposure Precautions

Precautions to avoid exposure to lead in soils should be taken in the three major areas listed as having very high lead levels, as well as in other areas for which specific lead concentrations are not known. This is especially true for young children, who may have greater exposure and be more susceptible than adults.

- Always wash hands before eating.
- Keep non-food items out of children's mouths.
- Reduce household dust by wet mopping and dusting with a damp cloth.
- Use a door mat for people to clean their shoes before entering the house.
- Wash root vegetables prior to eating.
- Test private drinking water wells for contaminants.
- Minimize contact with dirt.
- Maintain grass cover in areas where children play.
- Use clean sand in sand boxes or play areas.



Sample Results Letters

In January 2004, sample results were mailed to each of the 39 property owners who participated in the sampling.

The letters explained the work done and the results of the analysis. If you were expecting a letter and did not receive one, please call EPA.

