

Bunker Hill Superfund Cleanup

Protecting Yourself and Your Family



US EPA Region 10, Seattle, Washington

September, 2008

The Coeur d'Alene Basin in Northern Idaho is a beautiful place to live and raise a family. At one time the upper Basin, or Silver Valley, was one of the largest silver producing districts in the world. As a result, the Basin has been contaminated by the release of metals like lead and arsenic, which are widespread. Environmental cleanup has been under way since 1986.

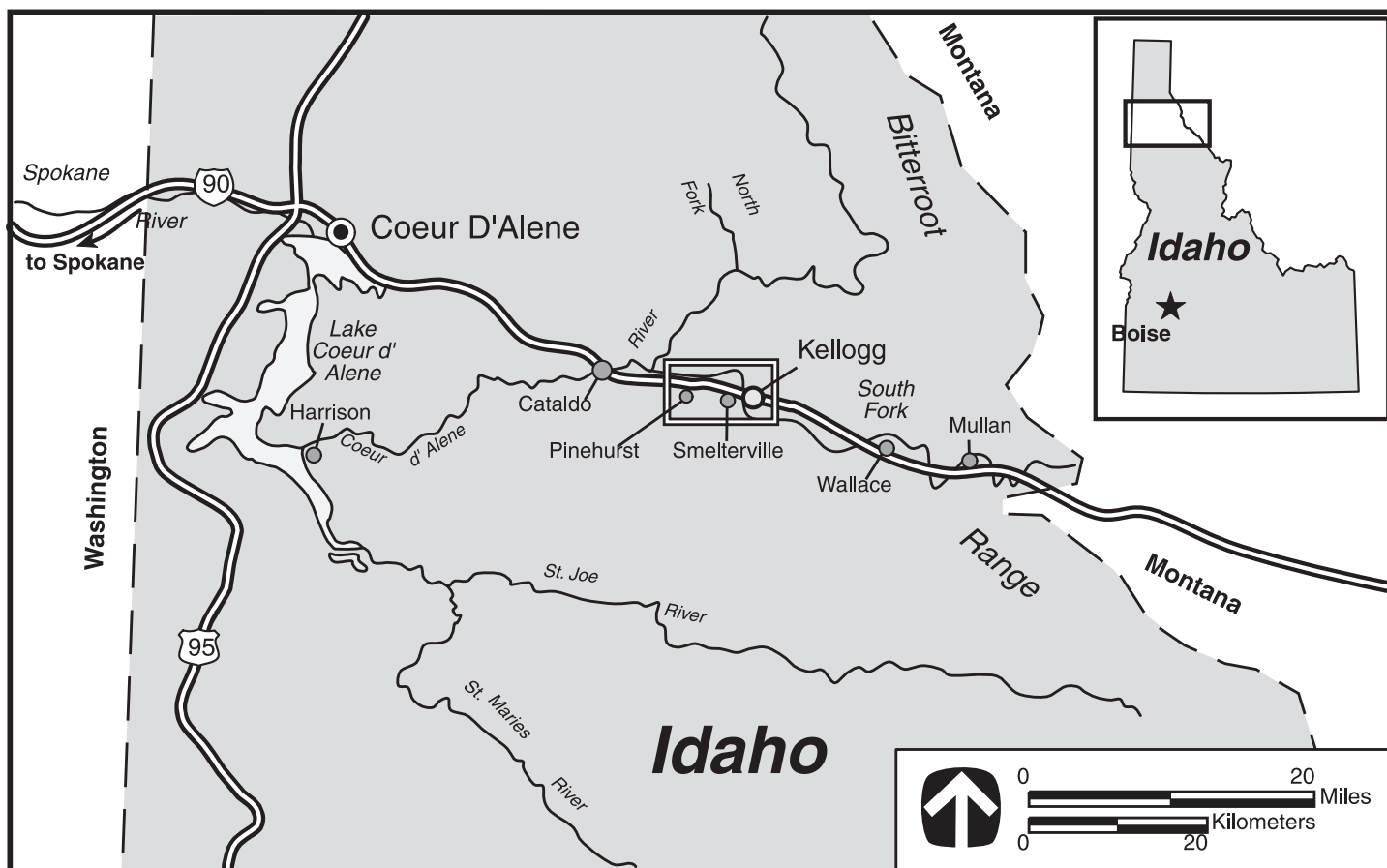
Much cleanup has already taken place, and many of the worst areas have been cleaned. However, lead and other contaminants still remain in the Basin. This brochure

describes the cleanup, gives simple ways to protect your family's health, and tells you how to learn more.

The Site

The "Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Site" was listed as a Superfund site in 1983. The site covers parts of northern Idaho and eastern Washington. It is made up of two areas: the original 21-square-mile "Box" and mining contaminated areas in the "Coeur d'Alene Basin." You may also hear the Coeur d'Alene Basin called "Operable Unit 3."

The Bunker Hill Superfund Site covers parts of northern Idaho and eastern Washington.



The Cleanup

Project staff and contractors are cleaning up people's yards, commercial properties, street rights-of-way, recreation areas, and other contaminated areas. Contaminated soils and related materials are being disposed of in secure places called repositories.

Cleanup of areas where people live, work, and play will take several more years. The agencies' goal is to do the cleanup as efficiently as possible, and leave the area cleaner and safer for living and recreating. Property cleanups are complete in the Box. Cleanup is well under way in the rest of the Basin.

During the current cleanup, up to one foot of soil is removed from properties where contaminants test above cleanup action levels. The contaminated soil is replaced with clean soil and vegetation. Even where the cleanup is done, lead and other contaminants are likely to remain at depth, underneath the cap or protective barrier. This is why the Institutional Controls Program (ICP) was put in place. Some areas will not be cleaned up at this time as they may become recontaminated through flooding or erosion. These areas include some beaches and hillsides.

Follow the Institutional Controls Program

The ICP is a locally enforced set of rules and regulations to control contamination. It is run by the Panhandle Health District (PHD). The ICP was set up to make sure clean soil and other protective barriers stay in place over contaminated soil, and that contaminated materials are not released. This will protect human health and the environment.

The ICP offers information to the public, property owners, and contractors about limiting exposure to metals-contaminated material. The ICP gives information on properties sitewide to assist with land sales and loan refinancing. The ICP also tracks completed cleanups and sampling results, and requires permits for excavation activities. Land and building development in the Coeur d'Alene Basin above Harrison requires ICP permits. The free ICP permit program ensures that property owners and contractors know how to protect public health and the environment, and safely handle metals-contaminated material. Remember to comply with the Institutional Controls Program (ICP) when digging on any property in the ICP administrative area. For details, call **Panhandle Health District** at **208-783-0707**, or visit <http://www.phd1.idaho.gov/icp.html>.

Get Your Yard Tested

All properties in the Box are cleaned up where the property owner has consented. In the Coeur d'Alene Basin, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) continues to clean up hundreds of residential yards and commercial properties each year. Properties where young children or pregnant women live are cleaned up first. If you would like your yard tested, call **Mark Stromberg**, DEQ, at **208-783-5781**.

Lead Information for Property Owners

Lead-contaminated *soil* is part of federal lead disclosure requirements. To learn about obligations to disclose before the purchase and lease of housing built before 1978, download a brochure at <http://epa.gov/region10/leadsoil.pdf>. The brochure is called *Lead-Contaminated Soil — Residential Real Estate Transaction Disclosure Requirements: Information for Owners, Landlords & Sellers, Buyers and Renters, Real Estate Agents*. It explains the terms "lead-based paint hazard" and "soil lead hazard." The brochure lists the obligations of the seller, landlord, and real estate agent. For a hard copy, call EPA at 206-553-1200 or 800-424-4372. Contact: **Barbara Ross**, EPA, **800-424-4372, x1985**.

To find the document *Guidelines for Property Owners Affected by Mine Waste Within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site* visit: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/bh/Fact+Sheets> This document helps property owners understand possible Superfund liability for mining-related waste on properties within the site. Contact: **Anne McCauley**, EPA, **800-424-4372, x4689**.

Protect Your Family

Great strides have been made in cleaning up contaminated soils. However, people still could be exposed to lead in soils and house dust. The health risk is greatest for young children and pregnant women.

Why Lead Poses a Risk

Lead is most dangerous to children six years old and under, as it can affect their brains and developing nervous systems. It can cause learning disabilities and behavior problems. Lead also poses a risk to unborn children.

Get Your Kids Blood-Lead Tested

Each summer, Panhandle Health District (PHD) provides free blood-lead testing for young children living throughout the site. PHD also provides information on how to reduce exposures to lead contaminated soils and house dust. Where high house dust concentrations are discovered, PHD assists residents upon request on how to reduce lead exposures. Where children are found to have high blood-lead levels, PHD follows up with visits. For information, call **208-783-0707**.

Easy Ways to Protect Yourself and Your Family

Tips to help prevent exposure to lead.

- Get your kids' blood tested for lead every year. It's free.
- Wash hands before eating, napping, and bedtime.
- Keep floors washed and vacuumed.
- Dust regularly.
- Remove shoes before entering your home.
- Feed your kids a healthy diet rich in iron and calcium.

Panhandle Health District Offers Brochures and Vacuums

The PHD office at 114 W. Riverside in Kellogg offers information about lead. Topics include how lead affects the body; how it can affect pregnant women, unborn children, and young children; and other important health topics. PHD also loans vacuum cleaners to site residents. Vacuuming often is one way to reduce in-home exposure. For more information about lead, visit EPA's web page: <http://www.epa.gov/lead>

What's Going On Now?

Many important projects are under way at the Bunker Hill site.

They include:

- East Mission Flats, a new repository for contaminated soil and related material from Lower Basin property cleanups
- Continuing residential yard cleanups in the Coeur d'Alene Basin
- Working in the non-populated areas of the Bunker Hill "Box"
- Reestablishing safe feeding habitat for wild birds and other wildlife
- Cleanups at some recreational areas

Who is Involved?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DEQ, PHD, the Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe have made great progress on the site and continue to work closely together. Many other federal, state, and local agencies, environmental groups, and local community members have also been involved in this complex cleanup — tracking progress and providing comment.

Get Involved

To learn more about opportunities to get involved in the cleanup:

Andrea Lindsay, EPA Community Involvement
800-424-4372, x1896; lindsay.andrea@epa.gov

Debra Sherbina, EPA Community Involvement
800-424-4372, x0247; sherbina.debra@epa.gov

Tina Elayer, DEQ Community Involvement
208-373-0563; tina.elayer@deq.idaho.gov

Get on EPA's Basin Bulletin mailing list. The Bulletin gives updates and information about the cleanup three times a year. To get on the mailing list, fill out and mail the form below.

Join the Citizens' Coordinating Council (CCC). The Basin Commission invites you to join the CCC. Information about the scope of the CCC and applications to join are at www.basincommission.com/CCC.asp. For details, contact John Snider, CCC Chair, 208-664-9773; or Tom Beierle, CCC support contractor, 206-447-1805.

For More Information

Angela Chung, EPA Seattle
800-424-4372, x6511; chung.angela@epa.gov

Ed Moreen, EPA Coeur d'Alene
208-664-4588; moreen.ed@epa.gov

Rob Hanson, DEQ
208-373-0290; rob.hanson@deq.idaho.gov

Jerry Cobb, PHD
208-783-0707; jcobb@phd1.idaho.gov

Terry Harwood, Basin Commission
208-783-2528; terry.harwood@deq.idaho.gov

Web Resources

Visit the following web pages for more information about the cleanup and preventing lead exposure:

Panhandle Health District
<http://www.phd1.idaho.gov/>

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/>

The Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission
<http://www.basincommission.com>

EPA - Coeur d'Alene Basin
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/basin/coeur+d'alene+basin>

EPA - Bunker Hill Box
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/box/Bunker+Hill+Box>



Want updates on the environmental cleanup?



The *Basin Bulletin* is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency three times a year. It offers updates about activities related to Superfund cleanup in the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

For more information about the Bulletin, call Andrea Lindsay at 800-424-4372, x1896, or Debra Sherbina at 800-424-4372, x0247.

If you would like to be on the mailing list, please fill out and mail this form to the address in the box below.

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