

NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE, Colville National Forest, 765 South Main, Colville, WA 99114
For immediate release

Date: February 22, 2008

Subject: Forest Service Plans Cleanup and Reclamation of Oriole Mine

Contact: Donna Nemeth, Colville National Forest, Public Affairs Office, 509-684-7177

Colville National Forest is proposing a project that would clean and restore the Oriole Mine site, located about 1.5 miles northwest of Metaline, WA, under provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA).

The proposed project would remove building material, equipment and debris from the site. Drainage from a seep at one end of the mine would be diverted to a small sump located as far from Linton Creek as feasible. Material from two wasterock piles and an ore pile would be combined into one mound, then shaped, covered with soil, seeded, fertilized and mulched. A quarter mile spur road to the mine site would need to be improved to allow vehicle access and would be closed upon completion of the project. No other changes would be made to access in that area.

The Oriole Mine was active from 1911 until the early 1950s, producing mostly zinc. No current claimants have been found. Although the United States is not liable for contamination left behind on National Forest System lands by miners operating under the 1872 Mining Law, the Colville National Forest is proposing this project to minimize human health risks.

The site contains three adits or horizontal entrances that have already been sealed to provide for public safety. Other features include two wasterock piles, a collapsed building, and an ore bin. A site inspection and the subsequent Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EECA), dated May 2007, determined that metal concentrations in the wasterock piles and material in the ore bin exceed acceptable limits in state and federal criteria. Minor elevations were found in metal concentrations in sediment and surface water near the mine.

Interested citizens have until April 28, 2008, (a 30-day period) to provide comments on the EECA, which includes a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for the Oriole Mine. Copies of the EECA are available for review at the Metalines Community Library and the Sullivan Lake Ranger District office in Metaline Falls, WA. A copy is also at the Colville National Forest Headquarters in Colville, WA. The documents are also available online at www.fs.fed.us/r6/colville.

Written comments can be sent to: Rick Brazell, Forest Supervisor, Colville National Forest, 765 South Main Street, Colville, WA 99114. E-mail comments may be sent to Kim Di Rienz, Forest Minerals Administrator, at kdirienz@fs.fed.us.

For additional information about the Oriole Mine, please contact Rod Lentz, Project Coordinator, at the Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest, 1240 South Second Avenue, Okanogan, WA 98840, phone (509) 826-3274, email rtlentz@fs.fed.us.

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