

# Bonita Peak Mining District Update

February 2019



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment



<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>

## Upcoming Activities

- To gather data about the area surrounding the Bonita Peak Mining District (BPMD), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) requested that the ASARCO Trust perform an unmanned aircraft system (UAS or drone) survey of the mine features around Silver Lake to document historical mine features and current conditions. The survey will include the collection of high-resolution aerial photographs and three-dimensional digital models of site features. The survey is planned to encompass up to 2,000 acres and will be conducted in the summer of 2019. The imagery will be incorporated into an online web-mapping platform that will be shared with stakeholders.
- In 2018, EPA established an interim sludge management location at the Kittimac Tailings area. At this location, sludge from the Interim Water Treatment Plant at Gladstone was mixed with the existing tailings. A berm was created with the sludge/tailings mixture. The sludge is immobilizing heavy metals found in the tailings, reducing human health and environmental impacts. Most of the work was done in 2018 with the remainder to be completed this summer. To monitor known groundwater metals contamination related to the existing tailings deposit as well as the effectiveness of the newly constructed berm, six groundwater monitoring wells are planned to be installed at the site this spring. These are in addition to two existing monitoring wells. The monitoring wells will be positioned to intercept groundwater in the shallow aquifer at up-gradient and down-gradient positions surrounding the Kittimac Tailings area. One monitoring well will also be installed in a position immediately adjacent/down-gradient of the newly-constructed berm (see diagram below).



- Save the date: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment will offer 40-hour health and safety training May 13–17, 2019, in Silverton. Hours and locations are to be determined.

## Recent Activities

- EPA is pleased to announce that the Bonita Peak Mining District has been selected for one of six adaptive management pilot studies across the nation. The 12-month pilot study will include the development of a site management plan, with an emphasis on project planning for site characterization and early response actions. It will include the development of high-level site remediation goals that focus on water quality improvements within the BPMD. The site management plan will also provide a framework for achieving these goals by identifying the most significant sources of contamination, prioritizing source areas for future response actions, and describing how results will be monitored and evaluated.
- The site team made significant progress toward understanding water movement throughout the Bonita Peak Mining District in 2018. High-resolution flow monitoring equipment was deployed to several mines chosen because of their contributions to overall metals loading in the district, their proximity to each other, and their relationship with the Bonita Peak groundwater system. Data collected will help the team understand how: 1) the water flowing from mines, streams, seeps, and springs changes over time; 2) hydrologic features relate to each other; and 3) water systems respond to weather and climate. It will also be compiled to develop a water budget for the site, which will be used to understand the relationships between precipitation (water inputs) and stream and mine discharges (water outputs). It will assist in identifying priorities for remediation activities and gauging the effectiveness of those efforts. In this effort, EPA has benefited from support and expertise from Mountains Studies Institute, CDM Smith, Environmental Restoration, Deere and Ault Consultants, Inc., U.S. Forest Service, and Colorado Department of Reclamation Mining and Safety.
- A Community Advisory Group (CAG) is being formed for the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund site. The purpose of a CAG is to provide a forum for stakeholders and the site team to share information and discuss issues related to the Superfund decision-making process. The next CAG meeting, which is open to the public, will be held on February 28, 2019; the time and location are to be determined. For more information visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xECCD>.

## New on the Web

- Bonita Peak Mining District Update, November/December – Spanish (Novedades del distrito minero Bonita Peak, Noviembre/diciembr de 2018) <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005825>
- 2018 Year in Review Presentation, November 2018 <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005764>
- BPMD Organization Chart, November 2018 <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100005682>

