

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

December 2022



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



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

Site Updates

- On December 12, 2022, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Research (ATSDR) released a [Health Consultation](#) on exposure to mining-related environmental contamination during camping activities at the BPMD. The purpose of the report is to determine whether people might get sick if they come into contact with lead and other metals in the environment while camping at the Bonita Peak Mining District. Questions or comments about the report should be directed to 1-800-CDC-INFO.

CDC/ATSDR is a federal public health agency with the National Center for Environmental Health of the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. The agency's mission is to protect communities from harmful health effects related to exposure to chemicals in the environment. The report concluded that:

- Camping in some BPMD dispersed backcountry camping areas (camping areas not designated as an official camp sites) are not safe (even if camping only one day a week for several consecutive weeks) because of the amounts of lead in surface soil.
- After boiling, treatment, or filtration, it is safe to use surface water for drinking water at dispersed backcountry camping areas. The amount of metals in the surface water will not make people sick.
- Coming into contact with metals in surface soil and groundwater at the USFS South Mineral Creek Campground will not harm people's health.



Campground 7 | Photo Source: EPA

ATSDR recommends:

- Limiting camper's contact with surface soil contaminated with heavy metals at dispersed backcountry camping areas with historic mining activity.
- Raising awareness on the dangers of lead exposure for pregnant women and families with young children who may camp at dispersed backcountry areas.

Recent Activities

- Field work has concluded for the season. In late October, EPA had ESAT collect groundwater and surface water samples at the Mayflower Tailings (OU2) area as part of the on-going remedial investigation at OU2.

- In early December, the Silverton Miners Oral History Project interviewed ten Silverton locals about their role in the Silverton's mining industry. The DRMS-led project was commissioned to offset cultural impacts from reclamation of high lead soils at Campground 4 (Pride of the West Mill #1) and burial of mill building foundations. The interviews captured a wide variety of perspectives from the miner, mucker, driller, mill operator, geologists, safety officers, engineers, and management. Interviewees shared stories about Lake Emma, the flooding of the Sunnyside Mine workings, and growing up in Silverton. Interviewees spoke of their love of Silverton and why they still live and work there today. The interview content will be pieced together to help tell the story of Silverton's mining history, and the video will be available on YouTube when completed in the Spring of 2023.

Upcoming Training

- A free 40-Hour HAZWOPER Health & Safety Training will be offered in April 2023 at Kendall Mountain Recreation Center. The training is required for those working on Superfund sites and will prepare local residents for employment opportunities that may become available in the Bonita Peak Mining District. For more information, please contact Mark Rudolph at 303- 692-3311 or mark.rudolph@state.co.us.

New on the Web

- [Health Consultation: Exposure to Mining-Related Environmental Contamination During Camping Activities at Bonita Peak Mining District](#)
- [Annual Construction Summary Report - 2022 Interim Remedial Action](#)
- [2021 Goals 2 & 3 Sampling Activities Report](#)