

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

November 2024



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



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

Site Updates

Field season comes to a close

As the snow is beginning to accumulate at the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site, field work is becoming more weather dependent. At the [Bonita Peak Repository](#), construction crews are focused on winterizing the site before they return next Spring for a final season of construction. Over the next several weeks, stormwater that has accumulated due to wet weather in late summer and fall will be pumped from the repository construction site, through stormwater channels to the Upper Animas River. Discharging this water is needed to minimize physical safety risks for people and animals, and damage to the partially-constructed repository during winter conditions. EPA will monitor water quality during the discharge.

Many projects will continue year-round, despite the weather, including:

- The operation of the [Gladstone Interim Water Treatment Plant](#), which continues to treat mine-influenced water from Gold King Mine year-round.
- Mine inspection and maintenance will also continue year-round, with safety being the top priority for EPA's contractors. From this point forward, many of the sites are only accessible via snowmobile and require highly trained staff to work in the high alpine winter conditions.



Accessing the Mogul Mine to monitor the tracer study

Recent Activities

EPA: Tracer Study at the Mogul Mine

In October, EPA initiated a tracer study at the Mogul Mine, in order to understand how quickly mine-influenced water drains from the Mogul Mine portal. This work included adding a salt solution to a shaft in the Mogul mine and uses special equipment to sense when the solution drains from the portal. The project will help EPA to determine feasible cleanup options for the Mogul Mine.



Collecting flow measurements in the Animas River above Silverton



Collecting groundwater samples from a monitoring well on the Mayflower Mill Tailings Impoundment #4

Spotlight on OU2: Understanding how water moves through the Mayflower Mill area

EPA contractors collected the routine semi-annual groundwater and surface water samples at Mayflower Mill Tailings Impoundments, or Operable Unit 2 (OU2) in October 2024. Groundwater samples were collected from the Mayflower Mill area, Tailing Ponds (TP)1, TP2, TP3, TP4 (location of the Bonita Peak Repository), and surface water locations in the Animas River.

Sampling EPA's extensive network of monitoring wells help characterize the nature and extent of metals contamination at the site, specifically how metals are entering the Animas River.

In addition to soil and groundwater monitoring, in October 2024, EPA contractors also installed soil moisture probes and lysimeters on TP1, TP2, and TP3. This equipment helps EPA understand whether the current cover material is effective at preventing infiltration of water (via rain and snow) into the impounded tailings. If the cover material is not effective, metals can leach out of the impounded tailings and enter the Animas River.

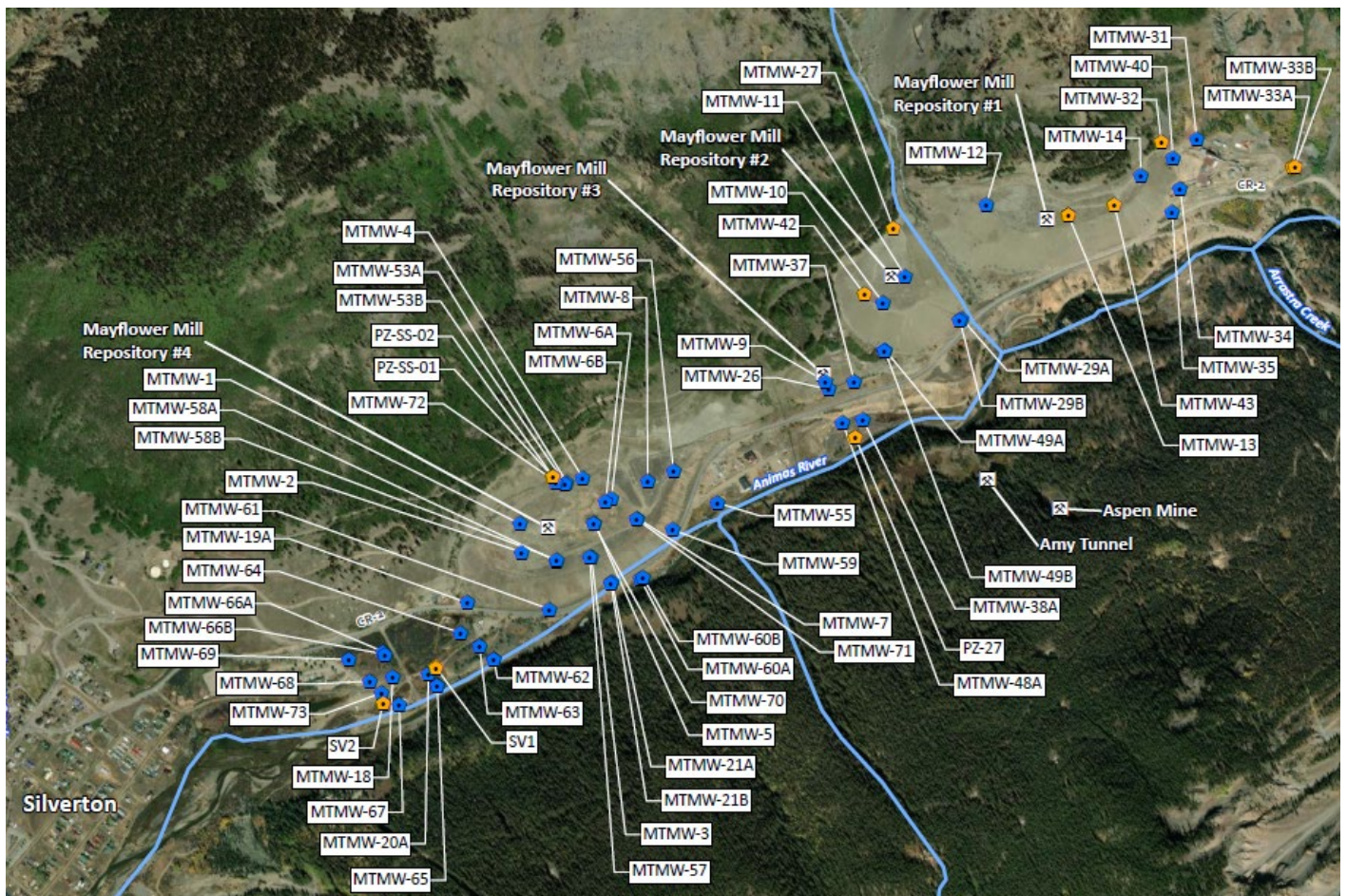


Figure of the 2024 OU2 groundwater well sample locations

New Communications

New on the Web

- [Final Field Sampling Plan - Mogul Mine Tracer Study and Workings Inspection](#) (PDF)
- [2019 Five-Year Review Report](#) (PDF)
- [2019 Five-Year Review Factsheet](#) (PDF)

New Email Delivery System

EPA is transitioning to a new email service provider, govDelivery, in the coming months. EPA will migrate all current email subscribers over to govDelivery. EPA's newsletter will come from the following address:

EPARegion8@public.govdelivery.com.