

Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site

October 2024



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



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

The EPA Completes the First Five-Year Review of the Remedy for the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducts five-year reviews (FYRs) of Superfund sites to make sure cleanup activities protect public health and the environment and that past cleanups still function as intended. The EPA documents FYR methods, findings and conclusions in a FYR report. These reports also identify any issues found during the review and document recommendations to address them.

The EPA completed the first five-year review of the remedy at the Bonita Peak Mining District (BPMD) site in October 2024. It found that the interim remedies at the Site will be protective once complete. In the interim, the actions completed to date are reducing risks to people and the environment.

Site Background

The BPMD site consists of historical and ongoing releases from mining operations in three drainages - Mineral Creek, Cement Creek and Upper Animas - which converge into the Animas River near Silverton, Colorado. The EPA listed the Site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 2016.

Due to the large scale and complexity of the Site, the EPA divided the Site into operable units (OUs) to manage site cleanup. While sitewide investigations are ongoing, the EPA selected interim cleanup actions for certain parts of OU1 in Interim Records of Decision (IRODs), issued in 2019 and 2021. The 2019 IROD addresses 23 mine source areas in OU1. The 2021 IROD created the Bonita Peak Repository (BPR) as a sitewide mine waste repository. The OU1 interim cleanup actions began in 2019.

Goals of the "2019 IROD" interim remedial actions are to:

- Reduce risk to people camping in recreation staging areas.
- Stabilize source areas.



A berm constructed to manage surface water near the Sunbank Group Mine

Efforts to achieve these goals have included placement of caps over mine wastes to prevent exposure to contamination, construction of surface water management features to divert water around mine wastes, improvements to mine closures

and portals, and institutional controls to restrict land use and protect remedial features. **As of October 2024, the interim cleanup actions at 22 of the 23 mine source areas in OU1 were complete.**

Five-Year Review

In October 2024, the EPA completed the BPMD site's First FYR Report. The FYR included a site inspection, interviews with federal and state government officials as well as community members, and an assessment of the OU1 interim cleanup actions. **The EPA found in this report that the interim cleanup actions for the BPMD site will be protective once complete.** In the meantime, exposure pathways that could result in unacceptable risks to human health are under control. The interim cleanup actions implemented to date are helping to prevent further impacts to the environment and are reducing risks to people camping in recreation staging areas.

In addition to the cleanup work at the 23 mine source areas, the EPA continued construction of the BPR in summer and fall of 2024. The repository is located on an existing tailings impoundment of the Mayflower Mill. The BPR will be used to store treatment generated solids (sludge) from the Gladstone Interim Water Treatment Plant and mine wastes generated in future cleanup actions.



Vegetated soil cover at tresspass Campground 4 constructed as an interim action



Drainage swale at the Vermillion Mine

Next Steps

- Interim actions at the remaining mine source area addressed in the 2019 IROD are expected to be completed in 2025.
- The EPA along with responsible federal and state agencies expect to finalize operation and maintenance plans for the mine source areas addressed in the 2019 IROD in 2025. The plans will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the OU1 interim cleanup actions.
- The EPA expects to begin filling the first cell at the BPR with sludge from the Gladstone Interim Water Treatment Plant in 2025.

Get Involved!

- Read the FYR Report and BPR Factsheet <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100015823.pdf> <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/100015559>.
- Have questions? Get in touch with the EPA using the contact information below.
- Learn more about the BPMD Community! The [Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group](#) was established in 2019 and is an independent group that serves as an informational conduit between diverse community interests and the EPA and its governmental partners. 2024 meeting agendas and other recent materials are maintained on the website.

EPA Contact Information

Remedial Project Managers

Joy Jenkins
jenkins.joy@epa.gov
(303) 312-6873

Athena Jones
jones.athena@epa.gov
(303) 312-6497