

Meeting Summary
Bonita Peak Mining District Community Advisory Group
May 19, 2026, 5:40 - 7:20 PM
Via Computer Conferencing and In Person
at Silverton City Hall Conference Room
Silverton, CO

CAG Members attending: Parker Newby, Ken Balleweg, David Palmer, Susan Livenick, and Charlie Smith. Online: Chara Ragland, Chris Hill, Jason Fast, Helen Mary Johnson and Russ Anderson.

Also in attendance: Kirstin Brown (CODRMS), Mike McKeon (USACE), Kennerly Holloway (USACE), Lisa Merrill (BLM), Christopher Goss, Rory Cowie, Mike Boeckman, Norm Fish and James Livenick. Online: Kirstin Brown (CODRMS), Mark Rudolph (CDPHE), David Jamison (NMED), Lori Nemeth (NMED), Venissa Ledesma (CDPHE), Emma Reinmann, Samantha Wright, Tom Schillaci, Jerry Jacka, Tom DeHudy, and Trice Smith.

EPA attendees: Athena Jones, Ashlin Brooks, and Joy Jenkins. Online: Jessica Dugan and James Hou.

Introductions and Announcements

Introductions were made around the room by attendees.

Parker made the following announcements:

The 2026 Animas and San Juan Watershed Conference will be held on May 27-28 at San Juan College in Farmington, NM.

The BPMD Open House is scheduled for June 17, 2026 from 5 to 7 pm at the Kendall Mountain Community/Recreation Center in Silverton. There will be a BBQ accompanying the information presentations.

Good luck to Athena Jones (EPA), who is moving on to a new EPA department. She will be an On-Scene Coordinator for emergency responses.

Kirstin announced that the Rocky Mountain Mining and Reclamation Conference's call for abstracts has been extended until May 29, 2026.

Agency Updates

BLM Summer Projects

Lisa presented draft language for a sign at Animas Forks public common area and asked for input. The sign is planned to be 11" x 17" and includes a warning about lead and arsenic in the soil.

Joy suggested the message be specific to pregnant women and young children.

Kirstin plans to install approximately 1,000 feet of fencing there. Signage is also planned at a few other locations, such as at Campground No. 4, but no fence is planned.

Chara suggested changing the tips to be more like a title. Will folks see the routes as just roads? Maybe should add the word trails as well. She asked about a deadline for comments and to whom should the comments be directed.

Lisa stated it may be another 2 weeks. Suggestions for signage should be given to Charlie or Chara.

Lisa mentioned there is a new director starting at BLM (Todd Wang).

Projects –

- American Tunnel - Northland contractors plan on interior maintenance beginning in June, as well as outside sludge management. They will probably remove the ditch and pond.
- Prospect Gulch starting in September will excavate a small portion of the county ROW for stabilization and to fill in the landscape.
Parker asked if there will be any road closure.
Lisa replied that some closure and traffic control may occur while loading.
- Lark Mine – stabilize the wall to make the repository function better, plan to put more waste there from American Tunnel; there is no design yet.
- California Gulch – install electric fence to keep sheep out of the fens to protect revegetation that was started in 2016.

EPA Plans for Summer 2026

- Gladstone IWTP; water from Gold King will continue to be treated.
- O&M will continue on the stormwater channels at the repository. Work has been completed on the culverts between channels 8 and 20 under CR 2, and part of channel 6 is in progress. They plan to complete the project with asphalt and gravel later this summer.
Parker asked if the bypass will be closed. **Joy** said yes.
Susan asked if the channels can handle flow during a wet year.
Athena said it is designed for a 24-hour rain event, so it should be fine.
The active site will have right-sized channels.
- A game fence will be installed around the leachate pond to improve appearance. They will probably remove some barrier slats and make it a game fence style.
- OU2 will be surveyed, and they will revegetate around it.
- They will conduct a treatment study with lime amendment to stabilize cell 1 then truck the sludge to the repository. It will take an estimated 2,000 truckloads to move the accumulated sludge.
Chara asked if they should try a temporary compression dryer to evaporate some of the sludge water.
Athena commented that the loads are from multiple years of sludge collection, at about 3 to 5 thousand cubic yards per year. The treatment plant is running at about 300 gpm, which means there will be fewer truck loads in the future – about 3 to 4 hundred per year. The trucks will have placards (EPA) to make them accountable for noise and dust.

Charlie noted there is much more traffic on Cement Creek road; should need traffic signage because of the contractors up there.

Jessica said that signs are anticipated in the traffic control plan.

- Long-term monitoring of macroinvertebrates will continue in 2026.
- Bandora Mine well sampling and water level measurements will continue.
- Bulkhead inspections at the usual 10 - 11 sites are planned for August 3 - 7, 2026, as well as monthly mine inspections.
- EPA's Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions (OASES) is conducting a field test on mine waste near the Bandora Mine. They applied a surface coating on the mine waste to inhibit leaching.
- The Remedial Investigation (RI) at Mayflower OU2 this year will include:
 - soil moisture probes (lysimeters to track where water goes from runoff and snow melt; may also be from stream flow).
 - groundwater well sampling this month.
 - risk assessment this summer; retest soil in any residential area that used to be industrial.
- The RI at OU3 (Sunnyside pool) will include:
 - collect and evaluate carbon packets for Lake Emma organic fluorescent tracer study.
 - piezometers at North Fork Animas River, American Tunnel, and Lake Emma wells.
 - passive in-situ treatment pilot program at Mogul Mine.
 - potential USGS stream tracer study at upper Cement Creek and North Fork Animas River, time to be determined.
 - continue Red and Bonita Mine valve closure and monitoring until negative triggers are observed.
 - Red and Bonita Mine shed repair is planned between August and September.
 - Gold King road short term maintenance where mass wasting and erosion have occurred; probably get help from the state on those repairs.

Susan asked how many sample locations for the tracer study.

Rory stated about 32 locations, some upgradient and some downgradient. These locations have been studied for decades so their history is well known.

He reported that there is progress in the tracer test. The Red and Bonita Mine is currently at 170 feet of head, and it raised about 0.5 psi in the past few weeks.

There is not much recharge, and the current drought may be helping the research.

They expect some drainage through local seeps. Red and Bonita is currently discharging about 30 gpm, and estimated discharge of about 40 kg/day of zinc. Water tracking through springs should show less metals compared to water from mine workings. He observed that the Red and Bonita (30 gpm) is not connected to the Gold King (300 gpm) at this time, but it may be because this is a dry year.

CDPHE Update

Mark commented that his replacement will be on board June 15, 2026.

They are making some minor improvements on stability at Gold King Mine.

The draft RI/FS for the ASARCO trust site bankruptcy is coming out for review. A copy will be sent to the CAG for review. There are two BPMD sites as part of the settlement: Legal Tender tunnel and Amy tunnel.

Kirstin described planned field activities that will use DRMS and CDPHE funds:

- Maggie Gulch safety closure project – conducted by Horizon Environmental Servies.
- Buffalo Boy upper tram house – cross-bracing using historic-looking wood.
- Ophir Pass closure in late September for work on the New Dominion mine, also working with USFS.

Mark asked where this is located.

Kirstin said at the top of the pass east of Ophir, but it will be open on weekends.

Other BPMD sites include Black Hawk and Silver Wing:

- Monitoring unplanned releases contract is in place with Alpine Water (AWR).
- Benthics study with Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) – bug sampling.
- Inspections at 2 or 3 sites – five sites are due.
- May coordinate some Good Sam work.

Administrative Items

Parker provided the following updates:

Surface water sampling update – we are sampling location A72 approximately weekly.

Sampling down Animas Canyon will be conducted in June.

Susan asked who was funding the sampling.

Parker replied that funds were available from Trout Unlimited (TU) and through Southwest Water Conservation (SWCD).

The next CAG meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2026 in Durango.

There is no meeting scheduled for July.

Future planned meetings include: October 20 in Silverton; November 17 in Durango.

Rory asked if he could get data downstream from A72 [i.e. A73RB, A75Dcw and A75Ba].

Joy and **Kirstin** will work with Green Analytical and EPA to get data into SCRIBE format so it can be downloaded to SCRIBE.

Susan and **Joy** agreed that the data from Green should be validated, and CAG should get duplicates on occasion.

Parker said we usually get one duplicate per year, and he will try to get a duplicate this summer.

7:20 PM

Adjourn