Clark Fork River Operable Unit of the Milltown Reservoir Clark Fork River Superfund Site

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River Review

November2013

Phase 1 Construction Update

The Clark Fork River Reach A, Phase 1 cleanup has been underway for just over nine months, beginning on March 4, 2013. As of October 31, over **300,000** cubic yards (90% of the Phase 1 project total) of mine waste has been removed from the floodplain of the river and placed in the BP Waste Management Area. To date, approximately **139,000** cubic yards of both vegetative dirt and alluvium (rock) (approximately 75% of the Phase 1 project total) has been placed on the reconstructed floodplain. After the contamination was removed and backfill was put in place, crews began adding microtopography (woody debris) to the finished floodplain areas to create roughness and places for native seed to collect and start to grow. Over 9,000 plants have been planted and seeding has occurred in various areas in the floodplain. Planting will continue in the spring and fall 2014, for a total number of 130,000 plants. These will be protected with browse protectors and wildlife fencing until they become established. Construction is progressing according to schedule and should be completed by the end of 2013.

Near the end of October, Helena Sand and Gravel diverted 420 feet of the existing river channel to remove deep contamination from the banks and under the channel bed. The process included diverting that portion of the river into a temporary diversion channel; this allowed for excavation of material but still allowed fish passage. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks rescued fish that got stuck in pools in the original river channel during this process.

Public safety is our number one concern on this project. Please be aware of traffic laws and remember that haul trucks cannot see you if you are following too closely. There will be increased patrols for traffic violations. DEQ apologizes for any delays and inconveniences that have been caused by this project and we appreciate your assistance and patience during hauling activities on public roads.



Left: Temporary diversion channel.



Right: Aqua barriers (temporary inflatable dams filled with water) were placed upstream and downstream of the existing channel. This created a dam to push water into the diversion channel to allow for the excavation of contamination.

See page 2 for more pictures of the channel diversion.

Stakeholder and Landowner Meetings

DEQ will hold the final stakeholders meeting on November 20 at 1 pm. Private landowners and the public are invited to attend. Please meet at the Eagle entrance to the Warm Spring Ponds wildlife management area, located off Morel Road. If you plan on attending or need more information, please contact Katie Garcin at KGarcin@mt.gov or 841-5042 by **November 18 at 5 pm**. Please wear long pants and closed toe shoes for the on-site tour.

Clark Fork River Diversion Channel Continued

**"Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs.
I am haunted by waters." - Norman Maclean, A River Runs Through It**



The excavator operator works to shape the streambed materials in the rebuilt Clark Fork River channel.



Double vegetated soil lifts were constructed to form the new channel banks.



The crew builds streambanks along the newly rebuilt river channel.



Clean channel bed rock of appropriate native material size was used to rebuild the streambed.

The Clark Fork River Operable Unit (CFR OU) is part of the Milltown Reservoir/Clark Fork River Superfund Site. The CFR OU includes the Clark Fork River from its headwaters near Warm Springs Creek to Milltown Reservoir, just east of Missoula. The heavy metals (Cadmium, Copper, Zinc, and Lead) and arsenic in the Clark Fork River are from historic mining, milling and smelting processes linked to the Anaconda Company operations in Butte and Anaconda. The majority of the cleanup will occur along a 47 mile stretch of the river from Warm Springs in Anaconda/Deer Lodge County downstream to Garrison in Powell County. This is known as Reach A. The primary sources of contamination are tailings mixed with soil in the stream-banks and historic floodplain. These sources threaten human health and animal and plant life. The 2004 Record of Decision (ROD) describes the cleanup approach, or Selected Remedy. In addition to the ROD, the Natural Resource Damage Program developed a restoration plan to expedite the recovery time for injured aquatic and terrestrial resources in and along the Clark Fork River.