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

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River Review

DECEMBER 2013

Phase 1 Construction Update– The Clark Fork Has Begun Its Return Home.

The Clark Fork River Reach A, Phase 1 cleanup began on March 4, 2013 and is nearing completion. As of December 20, over **330,000** cubic yards (100% 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 **189,000** cubic yards of both vegetative dirt and rock (100% of the Phase 1 project total) has been placed on the reconstructed floodplain. As contamination has been removed and backfill put in place, crews have added 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 of 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 December 2013.

A Photo Journey Through the Clark Fork River Phase 1 Remediation Project

March 4, 2013– December 20, 2013



Left: Mine waste tailings in the floodplain of the Clark Fork River prior to removal.



Right: Severely eroded banks containing tailings were along the Phase 1 project area. These were removed and re-built using bio-engineered techniques.

On behalf of MT DEQ, NRD and all of our partner agencies, we would like to send out a huge thank you to all the members of the public and stakeholders for their support and patience throughout this phase of construction. Without your cooperation this project would not have gone as great as it did.

A Photo Journey Through Phase 1 of the Clark Fork River Cleanup



Dead and decaying woody vegetation existed along the river banks, creating undesirable habitat and instability along the streambanks.



Woody material (decaying willows) was removed and stock-piled for eventual placement in the floodplain to create roughness and natural seed bed niches.



Above: Tailings are being excavated from the streambanks in order to install double vegetated soil lifts for stability.



Above: Area where tailings have been excavated behind the existing stream bank.



Left: Tailings were loaded into haul trucks and taken to the BP Waste Management Area. 330,000 cubic yards of tailings were removed and replaced with 189,000 of clean alluvium and vegetative fill in the floodplain.

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A Photo Journey Through Phase 1 of the Clark Fork River Cleanup



Completed streambanks along the river and point bars will gather native seeds during high flow and help create plant diversity.



Over 11,000 containerized plants were planted this fall, with over 100,000 more to be planted during the spring and fall of 2014.



Streambanks along the newly rebuilt river channel.



New willow growth started to appear in early June where willows had been trimmed and preserved, or contamination removed.



The river channel bed being built after removals.



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

A Photo Journey Through Phase 1 of the Clark Fork River Cleanup



The excavator operator works to shape the streambed materials in the rebuilt Clark Fork River channel where deep tailings were removed.



The river was diverted in order to remove deep tailings. Here, the river has been put back in the original channel and returns home to clean streambanks.



The view looking downstream from the Morel Road Bridge. The streambanks were excavated, re-built using bio engineered techniques, and revegetated with a variety of native trees, shrubs and a native seed mix.



The view looking upstream from the Morel Road Bridge. The bulldozer works to push vegetative fill around the floodplain. This material will provide a good growth medium for vegetation.

Attention Contractors

To be considered for a future bid, a contractor must meet several criteria, including but not limited to, being bonded and insured; a registered contractor with the State of Montana; and trained (40 hours) in emergency hazardous waste operation (HAZWOPER). The DEQ will develop designs for various stages of the work. Phase 5 & 6 is currently moving forward in the design process. When a design is complete, the construction project will be put out for bid on the DEQ website at www.deq.mt.gov.

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 streambanks 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.

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