

May 10, 2007

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# Phosphate Newsletter

## *What is occurring at other mine sites?*

In 2000, the agencies and Shoshone Bannock tribes designated IDEQ as the lead agency for an area-wide study funded by the mining companies. The Forest Service took the lead agency at eight mines located largely on National Forest System Land. The area-wide studies provide a foundation upon which to build site specific investigations and response actions.

The area-wide risk management plan established action levels that would trigger a more thorough investigation, but left cleanup levels to be established on a site specific basis. Here is the status on each mine site:

**South Maybe Canyon Mine:** The Site Investigation has been completed. Nu-West Company Inc. is required to produce and present an Environmental Engineering/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) report detailing remedial alternatives.

**North Maybe Canyon Mine:** Nu-West is gathering data for the Site Investigation under Forest Service oversight. Background and pollution data is being collected for surface

water, ground water, plants, animals, etc. In 2007, additional monitoring wells will be developed.

**Smoky Canyon Mine:** Pole Canyon removal action construction is progressing. The Forest Service is negotiating the administrative order and consent with Simplot for the Remedial Investigation Feasibility Study (RIFS).

**Enoch Valley:** Monsanto, under IDEQ's oversight, started the Site Investigation in 2003. A detailed ground water investigations is planned for this year. Further investigations will occur in 2008.

**Wooley Valley, Champ, Mountain Fuel and Diamond Gulch Mines:** The Forest Service has initiated negotiations with the potentially responsible parties to investigate and releases and develop possible treatment alternatives. Rhodia LLC. is responsible for actions at the Wooley Valley and Diamond Gulch mines. Nu-West Industries will conduct investigations at the Champ and Mountain Fuel mines.

**Rasmussen Ridge Mine:** No CERCLA response actions are underway.

## *Georgetown Canyon Update*

The Industrial Site on the patent site (private land within National Forest) is under an investigation for clean-up by Nu-West and IDEQ. IDEQ and the Forest Service anticipate a CERCLA investigation for the abandoned mine site, on private and public lands to begin within the next couple of years.



*Georgetown Canyon Mine Site*

## *Interview Process*

The phosphate program interview team has been interviewing interested public on the Pole Canyon Project within the Smoky Canyon Mine. Currently, the staff is compiling the interview comments and updating the Community Involvement Plan. The comments and questions collected have been helpful as the Forest moves forward on the Pole Canyon Project and other project sites. Thank you for your participation, comments and questions!

### Information Highlights:

- Next newsletter will be in July of 2007

For more information and to download documents:

- [www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee/)
- <http://giscenter-ims.isu.edu/SISP/>

## *South Fork Sage Creek Spring*



*South Fork Sage Creek Spring*

New elevated levels of contamination have been found at South Fork Sage Creek Spring at the Smoky Canyon Mine. Currently, Forest Service personnel are working with Simplot Company to identify the source for this contamination within the existing mine. Further investigation is anticipated in a Remedial Investigation process.

## Important Facts

- Currently there are 16 CERCLA sites and 0 National Priorities List (NPL) sites.
  - 9 Forest Service lead sites
  - 1 EPA lead site (Gay Mine)
  - 6 IDEQ lead sites
- 5 companies cooperating in investigation—9 mines on Forest Service lands.
- Cleanup alternatives expected to be costly, millions of dollars per mine site.
- Currently, cleanup agreements are negotiated with companies.
- Livestock permittee grazing privileges continue to be affected near mine areas.
- Idaho produces 12-17% of total United States production of phosphate.
- 4,800 acres producing leases; 51% USDA Forest Service surface management.
- 31 phosphate mines—38,000 Federal acres leased
  - 4 active operations
  - 13 inactive mines (ore is depleted)
  - 27 inactive leases (not yet developed)
- 90% of Caribou County, Idaho is either directly or indirectly dependent on phosphate.
- 1997 studies found an average background levels in unaffected surface water <0.001 mg/L.
- Selenium has been found in the following:
  - Water
  - Soil
  - Reclamation vegetation
  - Plants and animals
  - Livestock held on pastures

## Map of Forest Service Lead Mine Sites in Southeast Idaho

