

October 10, 2006

Caribou-Targhee NF  
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## *Removal Action at Pole Canyon Signed*

On October 2, 2006, Regional Forester Jack Troyer selected the agency's preferred alternatives to divert Pole Canyon Creek, before it flows beneath a waste rock overburden disposal area (ODA), as part of the plan to remediate contaminant releases from the J.R. Simplot Co. (Simplot) Smoky Canyon Phosphate Mine. Pole Canyon Creek water unaffected by mine wastes will be discharged into Sage Valley below the ODA. The Site Investigation (SI) determined that significant concentrations of selenium and other hazardous substances were discharged into the environment down gradient and beneath the ODA.

Proposed actions include:

1. A 30" pipeline to divert Pole Canyon Creek around the Pole Canyon ODA.
2. An infiltration gallery to collect all water not diverted by the pipeline and to infiltrate that water into the Wells Formation aquifer.

3. A run-on ditch on the north side of the ODA to collect water before it flows onto the dump.

4. Effectiveness monitoring of parts 1-3.

The Forest Service identified the proposed action with the cooperation and assistance of the Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Simplot is expected to start construction on the project this fall to address the surge of selenium contamination into groundwater and surface water during spring runoff next year. Simplot will attempt to complete much of the major construction on the water diversion project before winter.

The decision to implement this set of alternatives is based on the Administrative Record for the Site and determined that the selected action would be implementable, effective and cost effective.

The Forest Service released a revised Engi-

neering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) for the Smoky Canyon Mine, describing the Pole Canyon ODA diversion project, to the public for review and comment in June 2006. Before issuing its decision, the Forest Service held several public meetings. Over 52,000 comments were received. A response to significant comments is included in the Administrative Record, located at the Soda Springs Ranger District Office.

The Forest Service agrees with many commenters on the project. The proposed action is not likely to fully address the releases at the Site. Rather, the proposed action is an important first step to begin reducing the releases of selenium and other hazardous substances and their impact on the environment.

Total cost is estimated to be \$3.2 million. Simplot will implement the response under the review of the Forest Service and Support Agencies

This newsletter is part of an effort to increase the public's involvement and improve communications.

### Information Highlights:

- Construction starts October 2006
- Newsletters will be sent out on a quarterly basis

For More Information and Documents:

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

## *What's Next?*

Begin on-site construction must no later than October 2006. It is expected to take 7 weeks. Installation of the diversion, pipeline an energy dissipation structure in 2006 are crucial to reduce discharges anticipated during high flow conditions during the spring of 2007.

This proposed non time-critical removal action represents the first of what are expected to be several CERCLA response actions at the Site. Pole Canyon represents only a portion of this large site. The Forest Service expects to conduct a comprehensive remedial response action at the Site.

It is expected that the draft EE/CA will result in a more comprehensive study, cleanup alternatives and capping to reduce or prevent infiltration, evaluate soil and waste amendments, improve revegetation and evaluate the need for additional surface and groundwater water treatments.

