Abandoned and Legacy Mine Issues

Western States Water Council
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Gold King Mine Release – August 2015

Post Gold King Mine Release Incident: Conceptual Monitoring Plan for Surface Water, Sediments, and Biology - Potential Sampling Sites
Historic and ongoing discharge from Bonita Peak Mining District

- Estimated release of 8.6 million tons of tailings discharged to river system over life of the mines
- EPA estimates 5.5 million gallons per day of releases
- 1974 – 116,000 tons
- 1978 - 500 million gallon release

Figure 7.—Photograph showing the seepage outflow from the drain pipe at the American Tunnel at Gladstone, Colorado, as it appeared on September 3, 2015, with about 100 gpm of acid water flowing out.

Figure 11.—Photograph showing acid drainage flowing out of the Red and Bonita Mine on September 3, 2015.

Figure 12.—Photograph taken on September 15, 2015, of drainage from the Silver Ledge Mine, which is located south of the Gold King Mine.
Tibble Fork Sediment Release
**Sediment Contamination – A Regulatory Gap?**

American Fork Sediment Contamination: Aquatic Life Screening Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Location</th>
<th>Site Description</th>
<th>Collection Date</th>
<th>Collection Time</th>
<th>EPA Aquatic Life Screening Values</th>
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</thead>
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<td>5912840</td>
<td>NPK American F.K.</td>
<td>6/26/2010</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Aluminum : 2  Arsenic : 0  Arsenic : 2  Barium : 0  Chromium : 0  Copper : 0  Iron : 0  Lead : 0  Mercury : 0  Nickel : 0  Selenium : 0  Silver : 0  Vanadium : 0  Zinc : 0  Molybdenum : 0</td>
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<td>Abandoned Mine Drainage in American Fork Canyon</td>
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</table>

Abandoned Mine Drainage in American Fork Canyon
Abandoned Mine Management in Utah

- Multiagency management
  - Federal: USFS, BLM, EPA (CERCLA)
  - State: Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining; Division of Water Quality
- Implement BMPs primarily for safety
- Identify streams impacted by abandoned mines through assessment
- Inventory and characterization of discharging abandoned mines
  - Initial work Wasatch Mountains of Salt Lake County
- UPDES permitting
Discussion: WSWC Draft Position Elements

- Western Governors Association Position on good Samaritan protections
- Support for the Office of Mountains, Deserts, and Plains and/or specific initiatives for the office
- Renewed commitment and dedication of resources from federal land management agencies
- Close the funding and regulatory gaps between CERCLA and Clean Water Act programs
- EPA to assist states with CWA Sediment Standards
- $16 billion identified in American Jobs Plan for “union jobs plugging oil and gas wells and restore and reclaiming abandoned coal, hardrock, and uranium mines.”