

**Community Relations Plan
Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site
Baker County, Oregon**



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Community Relations Plan

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Section 1.-Overview of Community Relations Plan

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) developed this Community Relations Plan (CRP) to encourage two-way communication between the community surrounding the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site and BLM and to encourage community involvement in the hazardous substance removal activities. This CRP has been prepared to aid BLM in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the community affected by the removal. BLM will use the community relations activities outlined in this plan as a tool for increasing communication and involvement.

Section 113(k)(2) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Re-authorization Act of 1986 (SARA), provides for the involvement of communities affected by response decisions at sites where removal actions are proposed. The objectives of the public participation process are to: 1) inform the public of the planned actions, 2) provide the community with an opportunity to comment on decisions, and 3) identify and respond to community concerns. This CRP was designed to specifically address the concerns of residents of Baker City and the surrounding communities.

Section 2.-Site Description

The Balm Creek Mine was most commonly known as the Mother Lode Mine. This mine was a consolidation of the Mother Lode, Balm Creek, Gilkeson, and Poorman workings. The Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site (the Site) is located in Baker County, Oregon, six miles from the town of Keating (See Figure 1). The Site is an abandoned mine located on federally administered land under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

The Site is located in Sections 31 and 32 of Township 7 South, Range 43 East, approximately 20 miles northeast of Baker City, Oregon. The Site can be accessed by driving east on highway 86 from Baker City, Oregon, for approximately seven miles and turning left (north) onto the Keating Road. From Keating Road, veer right onto Keating Grange Lane and head east approximately four miles to Mother Lode Road. At a fork in Mother Lode Road, go left and travel approximately 2 ½ miles to the Site.

Minerals were discovered at the Mother Lode (Poorman/Balm Creek) Mine in the 1900's. By 1920, the Mother Lode Gold Mines Company had produced \$78,516 of gold and silver. In 1924, high grade copper ores were discovered and developed by the Oregon Copper Company. Flotation tailings were sent to a settling pond. No production occurred after 1938, although exploration continued until the 1970's. During the 1990's, claims previously located were declared null and void.

The Site consists of four sub-sites all located in the Balm Creek watershed at elevations ranging from approximately 3,400 to 3,700 feet above sea level. Sites A and B are the Poorman and Gilkeson mine workings. Site A consists of waste rock and a collapsed shaft. Site B consists of waste rock and an adit with seepage. At each of these sites, Slide Creek has bisected the waste rock dumps. Site C is located on Balm Creek at the Balm Creek Mine. It consists of a shaft and headframe, a mill site foundation, waste rock and a tailings pond located adjacent to Balm Creek. The Balm Creek Mine shaft discharges water to the down gradient waste rock, and eventually seeps into Balm Creek. The Pond Site is a tailings pond located approximately 1,500 feet south of the confluence of Slide and Balm Creeks. This pond is located within the 100-year flood plain of Balm Creek, and portions of the flow from Balm Creek enter the upstream side of the pond.

The mine Site is located within a portion of Balm Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This BLM area is designated to protect and maintain natural riparian ecological systems for research and educational purposes.

Balm Creek is a trout fishery. Redband trout, a BLM sensitive species, has been found in Balm Creek upstream and downstream of the Site.

There are no federally-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate plant species known or likely to occur at the Site. On-site surveys indicated the presence of Bebb's sedge (*Carex bebbii*), a BLM designated assessment species. Efforts will be made to minimize the effects of any action taken at the Site to Bebb's sedge. No other Bureau designated special status plant species were found in the project area.

Wildlife species associated with the habitat in and around the Poorman/Balm Creek Mine site include: sage grouse, mule deer, antelope, elk, many raptor species, and a variety of neotropical migratory birds. The area is also considered reintroduction habitat for the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM sensitive species. Habitat of this species is to be managed in a manner that does not contribute to the need to list the species under the Endangered Species Act. Strategic wildlife surveys have not been conducted at the Site, and there are no plans for an official survey in the future.

The surface hydrology of the Site includes Balm Creek and its tributary, Slide Creek. As seen in Figure 1, the Poorman Mine is located on Slide Creek and the Balm Creek Mine is located on Balm Creek. Below the Site, Balm Creek flows south approximately seven miles to the Powder River, which flows east to the Snake River.

The major structures remaining at the Site include the foundations of the flotation processing mill, two tailings impoundments, two shafts, two adits, and one headframe. The headframe is unstable and may be demolished during site cleanup activities.

Section 3.- CERCLA Background Information

In 1980 Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) also known as Superfund. It arose out of the need to protect the public and the environment from hazardous waste sites. As required by Section 105 of CERCLA, the National Contingency Plan (NCP) was developed. The NCP (40 CFR 300) outlines the steps that BLM must follow when responding to releases or threats of releases to the environment. There are two ways that BLM may respond: removal actions or remedial actions. The need for a removal action is based on eight criteria in the NCP (40 CFR 300.415). If the need for a removal action is determined and implementation of the action is not required for six months after this determination, the next step is the preparation of an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) report as required in 40 CFR 300.415. The EE/CA establishes the removal action objectives, analyzes cost-effective removal alternatives, and recommends a preferred removal alternative. For non-time critical removal actions, the NCP requires a 30-day public comment period on the EE/CA. Following the comment period, the Action Memorandum (AM) will be prepared for signature by the Vale District Manager.

Section 4.- Need for Removal Actions

Mining activities have probably influenced the Site's ecology since the 1860's. Tailings generated from mining activity have contributed heavy metals into air, water, and soils. The area is used currently for agricultural activities, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Recreational demands are expected to increase at the Site where the potential exists for exposure to elevated metal concentrations in tailings, stream sediments, and surface waters.

To address these issues, BLM developed acceptable multi-media risk management criteria for the chemicals of concern as they relate to human use and wildlife habitat on or near BLM lands. A streamlined risk assessment for the Site was completed to establish the magnitude of risk to human health and wildlife from the tailings and waste rock.

The human and ecological chemicals of concern for the Site are principally copper and zinc. The most important exposure pathway is leaching and erosion of the contaminants to surface water, yielding potential exposure to aquatic life. For tailings, copper is moderately high risk, and cadmium and zinc are low-moderate risk. For surface water, the "Pond Site" shows high risk for copper and moderate risk for cadmium, silver, and zinc.

The tailings dams are in the 100-year flood plain and a significant flood event would be expected to breach one or more of the dams, releasing tailings to Balm Creek. While there are no human receptors in the immediate path, such a release would impact the aquatic wildlife and increase the cost of cleanup. Expedient containment of the tailings will eliminate risks from direct contact to humans and wildlife and will reduce release of metals to the Balm Creek.

In August 2001, BLM began the development of the Poorman/Balm Creek EE/CA. This study will allow BLM to achieve a better understanding of the extent of contamination at the Poorman/Balm Creek Site. Regulatory guidelines for site cleanup will be addressed in the EE/CA. Various alternatives for removal of the contaminated material will be assessed with an opportunity for public input.

Section 5.- Community Background

Chronology of community involvement

Pertinent Poorman/Balm Creek Site documents are available to the public in the Administrative Record File located at the Vale District Office, 100 Oregon St, Vale, OR 97918 and in a repository established for the Site at the Baker City Library. An announcement of the availability of the Administrative Record File will be published in the Baker City Herald.

As work on the non-time-critical removal progresses, BLM will continue to keep the community informed as further described in Section 7. Such activities may include documents and fact sheets regularly updated at the Baker City repository located at the Baker County Library and through news releases to the local media.

Summary of key community concerns

At present, the community has identified no concerns regarding the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site.

Section 6.- Highlights of the Community Relations Program

BLM designed the CRP for the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site non-time-critical removal to promote two-way communication between citizens and the Agency. The goals of the plan include the following:

- Establish and maintain effective communication between BLM and the community.
- Provide information about site-related activities and issues to concerned citizens and government officials to increase their awareness and understanding of the cleanup activities.
- Foster community participation in the activities in the Site removal activities.

Section 7.-Community Relations Activities and Timing

To effectively achieve and maintain community relations objectives, BLM recommends the community relations activities described in this section for the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site non-time-critical removal. BLM will conduct these activities through the entire cleanup process to ensure that the public is knowledgeable about site activities and developments.

Provide a Community Relations Spokesperson

BLM has designated a Community Relations Spokesperson to provide accurate and timely responses to residents, officials, citizens' groups, businesses and the media. The Community Relations Spokesperson will establish and maintain open communication between BLM and the public and for handling inquiries and concerns regarding the project. David Porterfield will be the Community Relations Spokesperson and his address and telephone number can be found in Appendix A.

Maintain an Information Repository

BLM will establish an information repository to ensure that accurate site-related information is available to the public. During the removal action stages of work at the Site, BLM will regularly update the repository with site-related documents and fact sheets as they become available, so that the community is aware of on-going site activities and developments.

The Baker City repository will be located at:

Baker County Library
2400 Resort Street
Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-6419

The Administrative Record is located at the BLM Vale District Office, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon. This file is a record of regulatory and decision documents. Documents are also available to the public for review and copying at the Vale office.

Prepare Fact Sheets

BLM will prepare informational fact sheets to provide the community with information about the cleanup activities. Fact sheets are an effective means of establishing and maintaining communication with the public. Fact sheets inform the public of current site status, future site activities and development in the cleanup. BLM will mail the fact sheets to those people or groups on its mailing list. Please contact Dave Porterfield, if you would like to be added to the Site mailing list. Additional copies will be made available at the information repository.

Conduct Community Interviews and Personal Visits

BLM may conduct community interviews or personal visits with area residents to gather information on residents' concerns and needs, the types of information residents want to receive and how BLM can meet these information needs most effectively. These interviews provide an effective way for BLM to learn about community concerns and to answer questions about the Site non-time-critical removal.

Maintain a Mailing List

To disseminate information easily and effectively to interested parties, BLM will maintain a mailing list of those individuals, businesses or organizations interested in the site. The mailing list, developed from meeting sign-in sheets, telephone requests, and letters from the public, includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of area residents and businesses, local, state and federal officials, and other interested groups.

Provide News Releases to the Local Media

To ensure that the public receives accurate and timely information on the non-time critical removal at the Site, BLM will maintain contact with the local media. As site activities progress and significant site events occur, BLM will provide information to the local news media about the purpose, location, and time of public meetings. BLM also will inform the local media about the availability of site-related information at the site repository. BLM will send notices announcing these events to the newspaper that serves the local community.

Hold Public Meetings for Residents and Local Officials

BLM may hold meetings or open houses to address community questions and/or concerns about the draft final EE/CA, as public interest warrants.

Maintain Contact with Local Officials

BLM will maintain regular contact with local officials to inform them of the schedule of activities and major findings at the Poorman/Balm Creek Site. By maintaining contact with local officials, BLM and local officials can work together to address public concerns effectively as they arise.

Maintain E-mail Access for Residents

The BLM will provide email access for residents' inquiries. Refer to Appendix A for the e-mail address of the Community Relations Spokesperson.

Section 8.-Technical Assistance Grants

BLM believes it is important for communities to be involved in decisions related to nearby contaminated sites. For this reason, community outreach activities are underway at each of the BLM sites requiring environmental cleanup.

In 1986, Congress established the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program to help affected communities understand and comment on site-related information, and thus participate in cleanup actions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers these grants.

Technical Assistance Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to eligible community groups to hire a technical advisor to help the community understand site-related technical information. The EPA Region 10 Office is available to answer any questions you may have about the TAG Program. EPA Region 10 address is U.S. EPA, Region 10, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA, 98101. EPA Region 10 phone number is (206) 553-1200.

Appendix A.-Contact List of Key Community Leaders and Interested Parties

EPA Regional Officials

EPA Region 10
Dan Opalski, Director
Oregon Operations Office
811 SW 6th Ave, 3rd Floor
Portland, OR 97204
503-326-3250
opalski.dan@epamail.epa.gov

Federal Elected Officials

U.S. Senators

Senator Ron Wyden [D]

DC Office: 516 Hart SOB

Phone: 202-224-5244

Website: www.senate.gov/~wyden/

State Office: Portland; 503-326-3386

Senator Gordon Smith [R]

DC Office: 404 Russell SOB

Phone: 202-224-3753

Website: www.senate.gov/~gsmith/

State Office: Portland; (503)326-3386

U.S. Representative

Congressman Greg Walden [R] - District 2

DC Office: 1404 Longworth HOB

Phone: 202-225-6730

Email: greg.walden@mail.house.gov

Website: www.house.gov/walden/

District Office: Medford; 503-776-4646

State Elected Officials

Governor: Ted Kulongoski

Office of the Governor

State Capitol, Room 160

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301-4047

Fax: 503-378-6827

Attorney General: Hardy Myers
Oregon Department of Justice
1162 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-4096
(503) 378-4400

State Senator

District 30 Ted Ferrioli
Address: 750 W. Main
 John Day, OR 97845
Office Phone: 503-986-1730
E-mail: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us

State Representative

District 60 R. Thomas Butler
Address: P.O. Box E
 Ontario, OR 97914
Office Phone: 503-986-1460
E-mail: rep.tombutler@state.or.us

Tribal Government

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Gary Burke
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
P.O. Box 638
Pendleton, OR 97801

Community Organizations

Eastern Oregon Mining Association
Ed Hardt, President
P.O. Box 932
Baker City, OR 97814
www.eoma.org

Gregory Dyson
Ecosystem Defense Coordinator
Hells Canyon Preservation Council
P. O. Box 2768
La Grande, OR 97850
(541) 963-3950
Email: hcpc@hellscanyon.org

Jim Kauth
President, Baker County Historical Society
P.O. Box 83
Baker City, Oregon 97814

Chary Miers
Coordinator
Oregon Trail Regional Museum
2480 Grove Street
Baker City, Oregon 97814

Citizens' Groups

Blue Mountain Environmental Council
C/O Barry Carter
2319 Balm
Baker City, Oregon 97814
(541) 523-3357

City/County Governments

Baker County

Baker County Sheriff's Office
3410 K Street
Baker City, OR 97834
(541) 523-6415

Baker County Administrative Office
1995 Third, Suite #130
Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-8207

Baker County Board of Commissioners
1995 Third
Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-8200
Chairman: Mr. Fred Warner

State of Oregon

Department of Environmental Quality
811 SW Sixth Ave

Portland, OR 97204-1390
(503) 229-5696
deq.info@deq.state.or.us

Mark Ferns
Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
1510 Campbell Street
Baker City, OR 97814

Jay Carr
Baker County Extension Agent
2610 Grove St.
Baker City, OR 97814

BLM Officials

Dave Porterfield
Community Relations Spokesperson
Civil Engineer Technician/Hazmat Coordinator
Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, OR 97918
(541) 473-6268
dave_porterfield@or.blm.gov

Judy Reese
Geologist
Baker Resource Area
3165 10th St.
Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-1425

Ted Davis
Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist
Baker Resource Area
3165 10th St.
Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-1431

Penny Woods
Baker Field Manager
Baker Resource Area
3165 10th St.

Baker City, OR 97814
(541) 523-1337

Dave Henderson
Vale District Manager
100 Oregon St.
Vale, OR 97918
(541) 473-3144

Media/Newspapers

Baker City Herald
Fax: 541-523-6426
bakercityhearld.com

La Grande Observer
Fax: 541-963-7804

The Oregonian
Fax: 541-963-8890

Hells Canyon Journal
Fax: 541-742-7933

Malheur Enterprise
Fax: 541-473-3268

KBKR 1490 AM, KKBC 95.3 FM
Fax: 541-963-3117

Appendix B.- Location of Administrative Record

Bureau of Land Management
Vale District Office
100 Oregon St.
Vale, OR 97918

Appendix C.-Glossary of Technical Terms

Action Memorandum - A document which provides a written record of the decision selecting a removal action and authorization of the chosen remedial action.

Adit - A horizontal or nearly horizontal passage driven from the surface to an underground mine working.

Administrative Record - The body of information used by the Agency to select a response action. It serves two purposes: 1) it is the basis for judicial review, and 2) it provides the public with access to the information used in the selection of the chosen remedial action.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) - a federal law enacted in 1980 and commonly known as "Superfund" that provides the authority through which the Federal Government can compel people or companies responsible for creating hazardous waste sites to clean them up. It also created a public trust fund, known as the Superfund, to assist with the cleanup of inactive and abandoned hazardous waste sites or accidentally spilled or illegally dumped hazardous materials.

Concentration - The amount of a chemical in a given volume of air, water, or other medium. An example is 15 parts of carbon in a million parts of air (15 ppm).

Contaminant - Any element, substance, compound or mixture, which after release into the environment and upon exposure, ingestion, inhalation, or assimilation into any organism, will or may reasonably be anticipated to cause death, disease, behavioral abnormalities, cancer, genetic mutilation, or physical deformations. It does not include petroleum or crude oil.

Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) - A study conducted as part of a non-time critical short-term cleanup. The EE/CA identifies the objectives of the cleanup and analyzes various cleanup alternatives in terms of cost, effectiveness, and ease of implementation. The EE/CA is made available for public review and comment prior to the

publication of an action memorandum, which outlines the selected cleanup alternative.

Exposure - Coming into contact with a substance through inhalation, ingestion, or direct contact with the skin; may be acute or chronic.

Hazardous waste - By-products or waste materials of manufacturing and other processes that have some dangerous property; generally categorized as corrosive, ignitable, toxic, or reactive, or in some way harmful to human health or the environment.

Health risk assessment - Scientific evaluation of the probability of harm resulting from exposure to hazardous materials.

Heavy metals - Metals such as lead, chromium, copper, and cobalt that may be toxic at relatively low concentrations.

Tailings - The portion of washed ore resulting from the milling and chemical extraction process that is regarded as too poor to be treated further.

National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) - The federal government's blueprint for responding to both oil spills and hazardous substance releases. The NCP is the result of efforts to develop a national response capability and promote overall coordination among the hierarchy of responders and contingency plans.

Non-time-critical actions - A type of short-term cleanup in which, based on an evaluation of the site, EPA determines that more than six months is available before on-site activities must begin. A non-time-critical action includes a more extensive study of the contamination and cleanup options, called an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA), and more formal public participation prior to the publishing of an action memorandum authorizing and outlining the cleanup plan.

Removal action - A cleanup process that addresses immediate threats to public health and the environment that typically consists of less complex or less extensive contamination problems than those which require a long-term cleanup. There are three types of short-term cleanups: emergencies (e.g., fire or explosions), time-critical actions, and non-time-critical actions.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) - A Federal law whose primary goals are to protect human health and the environment from the potential hazards of waste disposal, conserve energy and natural resources, reduce the amount of waste generated, and ensure that wastes are managed in an environmentally sound manner. Management of solid waste (e.g., garbage), hazardous waste, and underground storage tanks holding petroleum products or certain chemicals is regulated by RCRA.

Risk - A likelihood or probability of injury, disease, or death as a result of exposure to hazardous substances.

Sampling - The collection of representative specimens analyzed to characterize nature and extent of contamination at a site.

XRF - An instrument called a portable X-ray Fluorescence spectrometer used to analyze the level of metals in soils, waste rock, and tailings.

Appendix D.-Community Interview Questions

- How long have you lived in this community?
- Are you aware of the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site cleanup?
- What issues do you think have received the most attention locally?
- Who do you consider to be local leaders in your community?
- Do you think residents in the community believe that their health, safety, or water supply could be impacted by the tailings/waste rock piles from the Poorman/Balm Creek Abandoned Mine Site?
- What are your current concerns about the project and the planned work?
- What do you think are the best ways to communicate and provide information to the local community?
- What are the primary sources of information in this community?
- Can you suggest any other individuals or groups that you think should be contacted for additional information or to be included on the mailing list?