

Incident Briefing
US Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Region 8 Response Unit

Camp Bird Mine
Ouray, CO

August 7, 2017

Site Description

The Camp Bird Mine is located 6 miles south of the Town of Ouray in Ouray County, Colorado. There are three large tailings deposits outside Level 14 of the Camp Bird Mine. The two tailings piles located on the south side of Canyon Creek are associated with historic milling activities that date back to the early 1900s. A third tailings pile is located on the north side of Canyon Creek and was last used for disposal in the late 1990s. This modern tailings pile is located within the boundary of an active mining permit administered by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS). The Camp Bird Mine became a part of bankruptcy proceeding in 2014. An agreement has been reached for Caldera Mineral Resources to purchase the property provided they perform certain response actions that are designed to prevent the downstream migration of contaminated tailings deposits.

Site Assessment

Three perennial streams flow in direct contact to the tailings outside Camp Bird Level 14: Sneffels Creek, Imogene Creek and Canyon Creek (Canyon Creek is formed by the on-site confluence of Sneffels and Imogene Creeks and flows downstream to the Town of Ouray). The tailings containing heavy metals are being actively eroded into all three creeks and there is a potential that this erosion may dramatically increase due to increased runoff, streamflow and/or the mass failure of existing slopes.

Progress to Date

An Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) and Work Plan has been developed in coordination with a Caldera Mineral Resources, EPA, DRMS, the Bankruptcy Trustee and the Department of Justice.

Planned Actions

The objectives of this effort are to:

1. Prevent erosion of tailings from flood events into the adjacent perennial streams.

2. Prevent erosion of tailings from wind, storm water runoff, and side drainages into the adjacent perennial streams.

Work will be conducted in two phases: Phase 1 will be conducted with EPA oversight and addresses erosion and erosion potential at the historic tailings. Phase 2 will be conducted with DRMS oversight under an active mining permit and will address erosion and erosion potential at the modern tailings.

The tasks for Phase 1 include:

- Obtain restoration materials including topsoil, cover material and rip rap.
This task may include improving County Road 361 between Camp Bird Level 14 and the US Mountain rock glacier.
- Stabilizing the historic tailings deposits.
- Enhancing and reinforcing the streams adjacent to the historic tailings.

Additional Information

[Link to Website](#)

[Link to Map](#)

[Link to Image 1](#)

[Link to Image 2](#)

[Link to Image 3](#)