

# FACT SHEET

## COEUR d'ALENE RIVER BASIN, IDAHO

 **EPA** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

OCTOBER 1998

## EPA Invites Your Comments on the Community Involvement Plan

With input and ideas from many community members and leaders, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to provide for citizen input and participation in the Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study (RI/FS) currently underway in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin (Basin). This plan has now been released in draft form for your review and comments. Please give us your feedback on this draft CIP by November 30, 1998.

This CIP is intended to serve as a guide to help ensure that two-way communication is maintained between EPA and the citizens of the Basin, and that an effective and coordinated community involvement program occurs during EPA's study of contamination in the Basin.

The CIP summarizes the questions and concerns we heard from people during the public meetings and community interviews conducted earlier this year. The plan also lays out a schedule of key RI/FS milestones and the activities proposed to keep you involved and informed throughout the project.

### Talk To Us

In order to ensure that EPA is correctly hearing and interpreting your input, we want to hear your thoughts and comments about this CIP. Please provide us with your input about the CIP in general, and send us your comments and answers to the following specific topics and questions:

- Have we accurately characterized community concerns and questions about the RI/FS?

- Are the community involvement activities we have planned over the course of the RI/FS appropriate?
- Can you suggest other mechanisms for communicating with you and for involving other Basin residents in our process?

### Comment Period

*Your comments are invited through November 30 concerning the draft CIP.*

EPA will meet with people in the Basin to discuss the plan and allow for one-on-one feedback. Review copies of the draft CIP are available at the information repositories listed on page 4.

Following the comment period, EPA will make changes as needed based on comments, and finalize the plan. The CIP will be placed in the Information Repositories.

Because concerns and issues will change throughout the RI/FS process in the Basin, the CIP will also change. It is meant to be a flexible, "living" document.

*To receive a copy of the CIP or to send your comments, contact:*

*Marianne Deppman,  
EPA Community Involvement  
Coordinator, by phone: 1-206-  
553-1237 or toll-free at 1-800-  
424-4EPA; fax: 1-206-553-1775;  
e-mail: [deppman.marianne@epamail.  
epa.gov](mailto:deppman.marianne@epamail.epa.gov); or mail them to:*

*EPA Region 10 (ECO-081)  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101*

## **Project Status Report**

### **Recent Court Ruling**

You may have seen news stories earlier this month about the federal District Court's ruling on Natural Resource Damage Claims. There has been a lot of speculation about what the ruling means.

The ruling does not affect EPA's authority to conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in the Basin. Work on the RI/FS is proceeding as planned. The purpose of the RI/FS continues to be to evaluate heavy metal contamination in the Basin and to determine where cleanup is needed.

Because work is proceeding, community involvement efforts for the RI/FS will also continue. At this time, we are asking for your input on the best ways to get information out to citizens of the Basin and how to ensure that people are involved in the decision making process.

### **Sampling Update**

This past summer and early fall, EPA collected field samples in both the upper and lower Basin areas. The sampling effort will help us identify areas where further study and/or cleanup is needed and areas where further action is not needed. Data from this sampling effort will be coming back from the laboratory over the next few months. We will have information to share about areas around Lake Coeur d'Alene in November and will have data from sampling in the upper Basin later this winter.

## **Summary of Citizen Concerns**

We have summarized below (and in more detail in the CIP) some of the main citizen concerns and issues as expressed during interviews and the series of five public meetings held earlier this year. The primary concerns were categorized into these nine key areas:

- Public Confidence/Trust
- Economic Impacts
- Communication/Access to Information
- Tribal Involvement
- Preventing Recontamination
- Health and Environmental Effects
- Timeline
- Oversight/Local Control
- Washington State Involvement

Although the CIP does not list all possible issues and concerns, the CIP does summarize the major concerns that were expressed to EPA.

## **Two-Way Communication**

Outlined within the draft CIP is a proposed community involvement program for the RI/FS in the Basin. This program outlines various ways EPA will get information out to citizens in the Basin and also includes ways you can participate in the decision-making process. We want to be sure you have the information you need from us and we want to hear from you throughout the RI/FS process. The CIP is intended to promote two-way communication through a variety of mechanisms. These include:

- Briefings
- Public Meetings
- Newsletters
- Fact Sheets
- Educational Workshops
- Public Comment Periods

### Interested in Participating in a Community Work Group?

Another way to ensure that citizens in the Basin can participate in the RI/FS process in a meaningful way is to establish a citizen's advisory group representing the diverse interests and stakeholders in the Basin. Such a group would ensure that all interested and affected parties are able to provide input and comments throughout the process and in an effective manner. This group would also serve as a forum for on-going information exchange and dialogue as we move through the process and would allow us to discuss and resolve RI/FS related issues as they arise. The group could also enhance coordination among all those who are involved in or affected by the RI/FS. A group like this could be coordinated

with existing groups in the Basin, such as the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Project Citizens Advisory Group. We are particularly interested in your ideas about how such a group could be most successful.

### Tailoring Our Efforts to the Community

During the public meetings and interviews it became clear that the Basin is made up of diverse individuals and communities, each with their own concerns and questions. As much as possible throughout the RI/FS process, we will work with individual communities to address their specific questions and needs for information.

## Coeur d'Alene River Basin

