



# Blue Ledge Mine Site

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## Blue Ledge Mine Proposed for Superfund List

**O**n March 10, 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed adding the Blue Ledge Mine Site (Site), located on private land within the Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest, in Siskiyou County, California (see map below), to EPA's National Priorities List (NPL), commonly called the Superfund List.

EPA identifies and ranks sites according to threats to nearby populations through actual or potential contamination of soils, groundwater, surface water, or air. Placing the site on the NPL allows EPA to use federal resources to conduct cleanup activities at the site, including investigating the sources of contamination and determining what measures may be necessary to protect human health and the environment.

Included in this fact sheet is information on the Superfund process, how you can become involved in the Superfund process, and information about future site activities.

### What is the problem?

Copper, cadmium, other metals, and acid mine drainage from past copper and zinc mining operations have contaminated sediments and surface water at levels that are toxic to aquatic organisms. Impacts include the absence of fish for more than three miles downstream from the mine property and potential negative impacts to fisheries all the way to the Applegate Reservoir, nearly eight miles downstream from the mine property. The state of California supports this proposal.

In 2006 the EPA performed an emergency response action to stabilize waste rock that was releasing into Joe Creek, just downstream from the mine. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) received \$12.4 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds plus \$1.4 million from the ASARCO Environmental Trust to place the waste rock into an on-site repository. This work began last summer. Despite the previous actions undertaken by EPA and the USFS, contamination found in Joe Creek and several mine tunnels, or adits, still need to be addressed to ensure there are no further negative environmental or possible human health risks associated with the Site. Superfund listing of the Site will allow completion of the cleanup.



*The Blue Ledge Mine is located on privately owned land surrounded by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, approximately three miles south of the Oregon-California border.*

## What is Superfund?

Superfund is the commonly-used name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), a federal law enacted in 1980 and amended in 1986. CERCLA enables EPA to respond to hazardous waste sites that threaten public health and the environment.

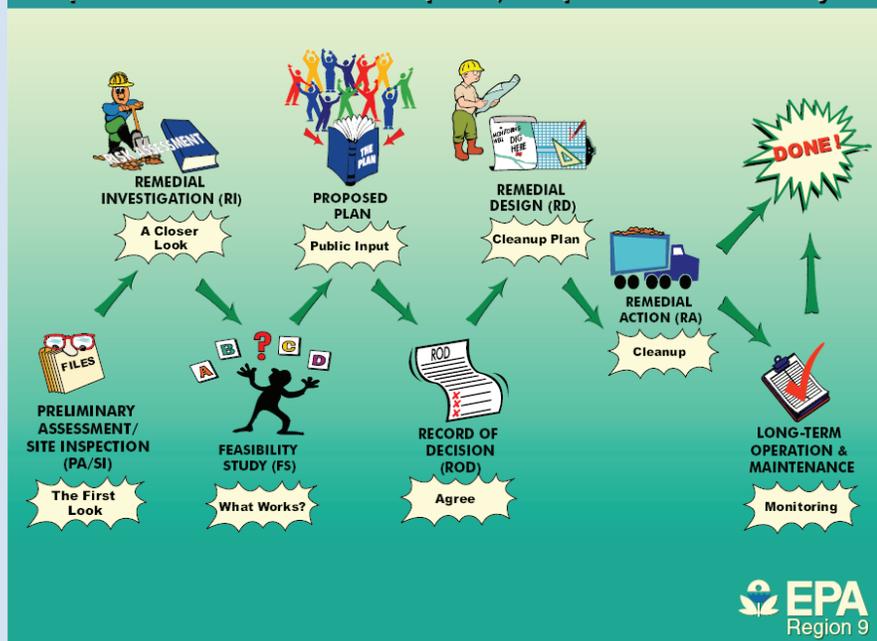
After a Superfund site is discovered, cleanup can fall under two programs: removal and remedial. Removal actions address immediate threats to human health and the environment posed by contamination. Remedial actions address sites that require extensive and potentially long-term cleanup. Under the Superfund program, a site may qualify for placement on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is intended primarily to guide EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation and cleanup.

For a site to be included on the NPL, it has to score sufficiently on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). The HRS evaluates exposure pathways and the potential risk to human health and the environment. Those sites that score high enough on the HRS are eligible for the NPL.

EPA responds to a hazardous waste site by identifying those that are responsible for contaminating it, then requiring them to perform cleanup activities, with EPA oversight. If EPA is unsuccessful in identifying responsible parties to perform cleanup activities, EPA may use Superfund monies to perform the cleanup itself.

If a responsible party is not identified, a site cannot undergo a remedial cleanup unless it is listed on the NPL.

## Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act



## Community Involvement

A 60-day public comment period is underway to receive community input on EPA's proposal to add the Blue Ledge Mine Site to the National Priorities List (NPL). The documents that form the basis for EPA's evaluation and scoring of the Blue Ledge Mine site are contained in public Dockets located at EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC, in the Regional offices, and by electronic access at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

A CD containing all of the documents that support the evaluation of the Blue Ledge Mine site is also available at:

**Jackson County Library,  
Ruch Branch**  
7919 Hwy 238  
Ruch, Oregon 97530  
(541) 899-7438

For more information about the site you may also visit EPA's Blue Ledge Mine Site website at:

[www.epa.gov/region09/blueledgemine](http://www.epa.gov/region09/blueledgemine)

EPA considers all comments received during the 60-day public comment period following the publication date of March 10, 2011, in the *Federal Register*.

During the comment period, comments are placed in the Headquarters docket and are available to the public on an "as received" basis. A complete set of comments will be available for viewing in the Regional docket approximately one week after the formal comment period closes.

EPA will make final listing decisions after considering the comments received during the comment period. These decisions are provided in a rule-specific support document that includes all sites that are being finalized to the NPL for which comments have been received.



*Blue Ledge Mine Site*

Once a site is finalized on the National Priorities List, an in-depth cleanup investigation is then performed, followed by an analysis of ways to address the contamination. EPA then identifies the preferred cleanup remedy and shares this in a public meeting which is accompanied by a comment period. After all public comments are reviewed, EPA documents the selected remedy in a document called a Record of Decision (ROD).

Following the ROD, the PRP or EPA designs, constructs, tests, operates and/or performs the necessary cleanup activities. The public is encouraged to share its issues and concerns throughout the Superfund process.

**Public Comments Must Be Postmarked By May 9, 2011.**

Please send comments, identified by FDMS Docket Number EPA-HQ-SFUND-2011-0057 by one of the following methods:

- Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>
- E-mail comments to [superfund.docket@epa.gov](mailto:superfund.docket@epa.gov)
- Mail comments (no faxes or tapes) to:  
**Docket Coordinator, Headquarters**  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 CERCLA Docket Office  
 (Mail Code 5305T)  
 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.  
 Washington, DC 20460

For more information on submitting comments please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/pubcom.htm>

## Future Site Activities

EPA plans to supplement the investigations and removals completed by the Forest Service. Top priorities include preventing any further release from the adits or tunnels at the mine and assessing possible impacts to Joe Creek, Elliot Creek and the Applegate Reservoir. We expect to plan fieldwork for Summer/Fall 2011.

## Contacts

**Bonnie Arthur**

Remedial Project Manager  
 U.S. EPA Region 9  
 75 Hawthorne St. (SFD 7-3)  
 San Francisco, CA 94105  
 (415) 972-3030  
[arthur.bonnie@epa.gov](mailto:arthur.bonnie@epa.gov)

**Leana Rosetti**

Community Involvement Coordinator  
 U.S. EPA Region 9  
 75 Hawthorne St. (SFD 6-3)  
 San Francisco, CA 94105  
 Tel: (415) 972-3070  
[rosetti.leana@epa.gov](mailto:rosetti.leana@epa.gov)

