



Community Fact Sheet

Hoodoo Mine and Mill Site

Sawtooth National Forest, Custer County, Idaho

Site Summary

The Hoodoo Mine and Mill Site is an abandoned lead/silver/zinc mine and mill located adjacent to Hoodoo Creek and Slate Creek at the end of Forest Service Road #666, within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). The Site includes several dilapidated structures, a substantial tailings (ore waste) pile covering approximately three acres, and a smaller quantity of waste rock (overburden). The Forest Service has investigated the Site in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and has found a release of hazardous substances (metals). Action is warranted to mitigate risks from elevated levels of metals to wildlife, and to a lesser extent, human visitors. Action is also warranted to mitigate physical safety hazards.

In the draft final Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA), the recommended alternative includes removing structures and refuse from the Site, and consolidating the tailings and waste rock in a capped, on-site repository. The preliminary cost estimate is approximately \$1.7 million. Due to limited funding available, no action is currently planned.



Risk Analysis

A streamlined risk analysis was performed in accordance with guidelines developed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for abandoned mine sites. The analysis indicates that the primary environmental threat is to terrestrial wildlife, with cadmium and zinc levels in the tailings and waste rock posing a high to extremely high risk. The waste poses only a moderate risk to humans, from cadmium, considering a camper scenario. Water quality does not appear to have been impacted by the Site.

Funding Status

Nationally, the Forest Service receives approximately \$11 million each year to clean up contaminated sites, with an estimated nationwide need of \$1 billion. Sites are prioritized based on several factors, with the primary factor being risk to human health. Given the relatively low risk to human health at the Hoodoo Site, funding is not likely to be obtained for this project for quite some time.

Next Steps

Although Site access is limited due to a road washout, the Forest Service will evaluate whether limited access can be achieved in order to mitigate safety hazards and remove refuse within the next couple of years. When CERCLA project funding becomes feasible, the Forest Service will formally request public comment on the draft final EE/CA. After considering public comments, the Forest Service will document the selected response action in a CERCLA Action Memorandum, and then implement the action.

Questions? Contact:

Dean Morgan, CERCLA On-Scene Coordinator
(208) 879-4157
dmorgan04@fs.fed.us