October 20, 2011

Forest Service Plans Cleanup and Reclamation Longshot Mine

Colville, WA- Cleanup activities will begin October 20, 2011 at the Longshot Mine on the Three Rivers Ranger District. The Longshot abandoned mine site is located on the South Fork Mill Creek Road (County Road 4954) approximately 11 miles northeast of Colville, Washington.

An Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) was completed in 2008 under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980. The EE/CA recommended minimizing human and ecological exposure to metals-bearing waste rock and soils at the site. Higher-risk contaminated waste rock will be removed and placed into a mined-out cavity called a stope which is open to the surface. The backfilled stope will be, covered with clean cover and soil material, and revegetated. Lower-risk mine waste that is not already supporting diverse vegetative cover will be covered with clean soil and revegetated. Hazardous mine openings will be closed using bat-friendly gates or cable nets where necessary.

"For public safety the Longshot mine and vicinity will be closed for approximately three weeks or until the work is completed," said Rod Lentz, On-Scene Coordinator. "This includes a portion of Forest Service Road 150 located off of the South Fork Mill Creek Road." Lentz Added.

This cleanup is part of an ongoing program in the Forest Service to address impacts associated with abandoned and inactive mine sites on National Forest System lands. Inventory work in Washington State identified about 2,200 abandoned and inactive sites within the National Forest Service boundaries. Some 250 of these may involve hazardous wastes. Initial cleanup efforts have focused on the worst sites and those in key fisheries watersheds.

The EE/CA and other documents are also available online at http://www.fs.usda.gov/colville under the Land & Resource Management section. For more information about the Longshot Mine clean-up activities and site inspection information, please contact Rod Lentz at the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's Okanogan Valley Office at (509) 826-3274.

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Background:
Historical records indicate that the Longshot Mine site was first located in 1940 by George S. Watson and Robert L. Ferguson of Spokane, Washington who were prospecting for lead and zinc. The greater part of property development took place between 1951 and 1955 during which time a 40 ton-per-day mill was constructed and operated. Actual production from the mine was approximately 1,750 tons of ore containing zinc, lead and minor silver and gold.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to State and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. The USDA is an equal opportunity employer.