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NEWS RELEASE

News Release

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Subject: Forest Service Plans Cleanup and Reclamation of Beth Lake Prospect

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Cleanup and Reclamation Planned For Beth Lake Prospect

In early June, clean-up activities will begin at Beth Lake Prospect on the Tonasket Ranger District. The abandoned mine prospect, is at Beth Lake, about eight miles southeast of Chesaw, Washington on lands managed by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

A Site Inspection was completed earlier this year under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. The inspection recommended minimizing human exposure to contaminated waste rock at the site. The rock will be capped using clean soil. After the clean soil is barged to the site and placed over the rock the area will be seeded and mulched.

“The boat ramp area and mine site will be closed during the three to four days it takes to complete the work”, said Rod Lentz, On-Scene Coordinator. “As soon as the work is finished the area will be re-opened to public access.”

Based on the known history of mining activity in the area, the Beth Lake adits were likely excavated in the early 1900's. No mineral production is known from the Site.

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 Forest Service seeks out the past operators of the mines to pay for the investigation and cleanup work. In cases where none are found, special US Department of Agriculture funding is requested. Cleanup projects are funded competitively based on a number of factors, including potential to affect human and ecological health.

More information about the clean-up activities and site inspection is available at the Tonasket Ranger District and Okanogan Valley Office of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in Okanogan, Washington. For additional information about the Beth Lake Prospect clean-up project, please contact Rod Lentz at the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's Okanogan Valley Office (509) 826-3274.

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