

NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE PROGRAM: IT'S ROLE IN RESTORATION IN THE UPPER CLARK FORK^{1 2}

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Abstract. Decades of mining and mineral processing operations in and around Butte and Anaconda released substantial quantities of hazardous substances, such as metals, into the Upper Clark Fork River Basin (UCFRB) between Butte and Milltown. These hazardous substances extensively harmed the area's natural resources. On behalf of Montanans, the state filed a natural resource damage lawsuit, which was partially settled in 1998. As a result, the Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARCO) paid the State approximately \$130 million to restore or replace the Basin's public natural resources, particularly its fish, wildlife, vegetation, groundwater and rivers and streams. The State of Montana is presently using these settlement monies to restore or replace the injured resources in the UCFRB. Projects funded over the last three years total over \$20 million dollars for projects such as revegetation of riparian habitat and development of a greenway trail corridor along Silver Bow Creek, waterline replacement projects, acquisitions, and tributary restoration. The settlement also resulted in an additional \$80 million for remedial cleanup by Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) along Silver Bow Creek. The Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) is working closely with MDEQ on restoring Silver Bow Creek.

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² A poster presentation will display some of the injuries pursuant to the lawsuit with explanations of pending claims. Also displayed will be photos and explanations of restoration projects approved for funding over the last three years in the basin. Restoration projects, that involve the restoration or replacement of injured groundwater, aquatic and terrestrial resources, will be the main focus of poster displays.

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