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Bunker Hill Complex, Ninemile Basin Remediation Progress Update

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Within Operable Unit 3 of the Upper Basin of the Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex Superfund Site, Ninemile Basin is one of the largest loaders of heavy metals to the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River (SFCDR). The first mining claims were staked in 1884 and mining occurred off and on until the late 1970s. Throughout the years mines produced over 20 million ounces of silver, 700 million pounds of lead, and 650 million pounds of zinc from Ninemile Basin.

The Ninemile Basin is located north of Wallace, Idaho and is a tributary to the SFCDR. The basin is best described as having a narrow valley bottom with adjacent steep mountainous slopes typical of northern Idaho. The legacy waste rock piles within Ninemile Basin contain heavy metals, including lead and zinc, which are the primary contaminants of concern.

The Coeur d'Alene Trust began conducting work within Ninemile Basin in 2011. Initial remedial actions began in 2014 and will continue through 2026. The Coeur d'Alene Trust has completed, or is in the process of completing, remedial actions at six former mine sites along East Fork of Ninemile (EFNM) Creek and Ninemile Creek. These sites include the Interstate-Callahan (IC) Rock Dumps, Success Complex, Interstate Millsite, Tamarack Complex, Dayrock Complex, and Lower EFNM Creek. At the conclusion of remediation within the Ninemile Basin, over 1.45 million bank cubic yards of mine waste will be excavated and hauled to the EFNM Waste Consolidation Area, 102 acres revegetated, and approximately 14,600 lineal feet of EFNM and Ninemile Creeks reconstructed.

This presentation will provide an update to the IC Rock Dumps (presentation at Spokane Conference in 2016) and a remediation overview for each mine site including construction elements (waste excavation, stream reconstruction, and revegetation), challenges encountered, lessons learned along the way, and post remediation water quality updates.