

Lefthand Creek Watershed Updates

Left Hand Water District Begins Work on Source Water Protection Plan

By Geneva Mixon, Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group

A Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) is a written plan that outlines source water protection measures that will be implemented within a watershed to manage existing sources of contamination and to plan to minimize future sources of contamination. Developing a SWPP is a voluntary measure water providers can take to help prevent possible contamination to their water.

A meeting will be held on October 9th at 5:30 at the Left Hand Water District (LHWD) located at 6800 Nimbus Road Longmont, CO 80503. The source water protection planning process will be outlined in detail during this meeting. We are seeking interested stakeholders to serve on our steering committee. The Steering Committee will be working to write the source water protection plan. This is a wonderful opportunity for concerned citizens to learn about our source waters and to help insure that the Lefthand Creek and its tributaries will continue to be as clean as possible. Contact Geneva Mixon at geneva.mixon@lwog.org for more information or to sign up for the steering committee.

The Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group

P.O. Box 1074

Niwot, CO 80544-1074

Important Dates:

July 31st - LWOG at Rhythm on the Rails Festival in Niwot

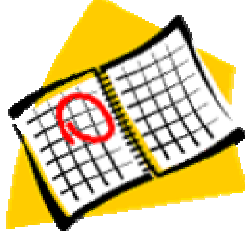
August 5th - Last day to Comment on Proposed Plan for the Captain Jack Superfund Site

August 14th - LWOG at Rhythm on the Rails Festival in Niwot

August 16th - LWOG at Longmont Farmer's Market

August 12th - before tour of the Boulder County Brownfield's reclamation at the Argo site

October 9th at 5:30 - Public Meeting for the Source Water Protection Plan for the Lefthand Water District



Creek Connections

The Newsletter of the Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group

Issue 6, Summer 2008

Jamestown Elysian Park Soil Cap Restoration

Ken Lenarcic, Mayor of Jamestown, Colorado

Elysian Park was the first name given to the Jamestown area before gold was discovered in northwest Boulder County in about 1860. The Town was incorporated as Jamestown in 1883 and the Town purchased the abandoned industrial site that later would become the park in 1970. For years the area was simply known as "the lower park". About 1995 the Town held a contest for the school children to choose a new name and it became "Elysian Park" again. The name comes from Greek mythology; Elysian Fields were believed to be the final resting place of the virtuous and heroic.

Today, Elysian Park is the final resting place of contamination, the result of ore extraction (stamping mill) activities that took place on the property over a period of many years. These waste materials were covered by a soil cap shortly after becoming the property of the Town.

Gold, it seems, is far easier to discover than to separate from the mother rock. Various techniques were used; almost all of which involved "stamping" or crushing the rock with huge iron cylinders, using water, animal or mechanical power. The pulverized rock is then treated chemically, often with cyanides, to further separate the gold from the unwanted waste material (tailings), much of which was then washed away. It was said that in the 1890's the ore from the Golden Age Mine near Jamestown was so rich that \$30,000 per day was simply washed into James Creek in the extraction process.

There were as many as eight or nine stamping mills in Jamestown during the boom. Two mills were located at the edge of James Creek and are covered today by Mill Street (CR94). The Emily Cobb was built in 1869 on the north

bank of James Creek across from Elysian Park and the Golden Age #1 was built a few years later a short distance below the Emily. Across the creek at the south end of today's park stood the Governor Mill. Built sometime before 1883 to extract gold, it may have been in use as late as the 1940's for the purposes of extracting fluorspar.

Waste from the Governor Mill, and later piped slurry from operations west of town, was deposited in a series of three settling ponds. The ponds dried up in the 1950's and dust from the sediment, contaminated by chemicals used for extraction blew around town. After purchase, the first order of business was to cap the westerly ponds with soils found locally. Over the years the soil cap began to erode.

In 1998, an EPA survey of the Lefthand watershed found concentrations of lead, beryllium and arsenic in the park but later decided that it did not warrant attention as a superfund site. The purpose of the current project is to enhance the soil cap significantly with the addition of 8 to 12 thousand tons of clean soil. The successful project will permit the enhancement of recreation facilities and provide assurance that future generations will be protected from the harmful effects of past industry.

We are currently putting together our initial work plan and identifying a qualified environmental professional to oversee our project and prepare a state approved voluntary cleanup plan and all the necessary documentation to comply with EPA, State and local requirements. We are striving to begin actual work on the site by mid or late summer.



Photo of Elysian Park, 2007.

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Captain Jack Mill Superfund Site Update

By Danny Lutz, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Proposed Plan nearing finalization

Officials at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are working to put the finishing touches on the Proposed Plan for site-wide remediation at the Captain Jack Mill Superfund Site.

The consultant, Walsh Environmental, has performed a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) on the Captain Jack Mill and surrounding area. Walsh, CDPHE and EPA have finalized the clean-up Feasibility Study, and issued the Proposed Plan in July.

The final remedy will take a two-pronged approach. One part of the remedy will clean up the site's surface contamination sources, while the other targets subsurface contamination sources, specifically the acid mine drainage from the Big Five adit, or mine entrance. Using assorted treatment technologies, the remediation project will permanently reduce the toxicity, mobility and volume of source materials constituting public health and ecological risks at the site.

Once the regulating agencies consider the Proposed Plan ready for release, CDPHE will make it available for public review in the Ward Library, the Boulder Public Library and CDPHE's Hazardous Materials Records Center. There will be a 45-day public comment period, during which CDPHE will solicit both written and oral comments from the community. During the public comment period the state will hold a public meeting, inviting the community to learn more about and discuss the remediation proposal. The meeting will most likely take place in Ward.

Health Consultation released

CDPHE's Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology

Boulder County to Begin Work on the Argo Site

By Bridgette McCarthy . Boulder County Parks and Open Space

Boulder County Parks and Open Space (Parks and Open Space) is close to beginning clean up activities at the Argo Mine site. Parks and Open Space hired Smith Environmental and Engineering (Smith) to act as the environmental consultant to develop the cleanup plan. Boulder County staff is working with Smith in drafting the Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). Additionally, Smith will prepare the Voluntary Cleanup Plan and Limited Impact Special Use applications that are required by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Boulder County.

Division completed a health consultation concerning surface water and sediments at the site in December 2007. The study concluded that current and future chronic exposures to iron sediments at the Captain Jack Mill site present a public health hazard. It also detailed exposure pathways for other contaminants.

Based on the consultation findings, CDPHE plans to erect another sign, as an interim measure to reduce or eliminate exposures while site cleanup is ongoing. The goal of posting the sign is to reach as many site visitors as possible, alerting them to behaviors that can reduce their risk of exposure to onsite metals such as copper, manganese, arsenic and lead.

To read the full Captain Jack Mill Health Consultation report, as well as the 2006 consultation on surface soil and groundwater, see the CDPHE Environmental Health Assessment website at: www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/ehs/healthconsult.html



Concerned citizens walk past the Big Five Tailings pile during a tour of the Captain Jack Mill Superfund Site.

Parks and Open Space anticipates presented the ABCA plan with the Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group to the Jamestown community in early July 2008. Boulder County Land Use's Limited Impact Special Use Review will occur in August 2008 where it is expected that the County Commissioners will approve the course of action that Parks and Open Space has recommended. Cleanup activities should begin in September 2008.

The Evening Star Mine, which is adjacent to the Argo Mine site was cleaned up under a collaborative effort with EPA's Emergency Response program during the fall of 2007. The access road to the mine site is the last area to be reclaimed at this property. Current plans are for Boulder County staff to remove and revegetate the road this fall.

Lefthand Canyon Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Restoration

By Geneva Mixon, Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group

The James Creek Watershed Initiative (JCWI) received grant money to begin restoration of the popular OHV area located in Roosevelt National Forest. Restoration techniques include grading roads, installing post and cable fencing to keep OHV users on established roads and out of streams, and restoring vegetation in an effort to reduce the sediment load entering the Lefthand Creek from Forest Service lands.

Accomplishments to date:

- 5,000 feet of post and cable fencing has been constructed along the road corridor to keep vehicles out of stream channels and from driving over restored forest lands
- Over 134,000 square feet of degraded land has been restored by installing erosion control matting where necessary and reseeding all disturbed areas
- Boulders were used in several locations to block vehicle access to the stream channel
- Numerous hill climbs were restored
- 400 volunteers have contributed over 2,356 hours of work to the restoration project since 2006
- Partners include US Forest Service, Wildland Restoration Volunteers, Big Thompson 4x4 Club, Trailridge Runners, Americorps, the Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group, and the Left Hand Water District



Volunteers apply erosion control fabric to stabilize an eroded hillside.

Searching for volunteers:

Wildland Restoration Volunteers is seeking volunteers for two restoration projects in the Lefthand Canyon OHV Area. The first is scheduled for September 17, 2008 volunteers will be installing post and cable fencing. Then on September 20, 2008 volunteers will be working to restore forest habitat and reduce severe erosion. Visit www.wlrv.org for more information or to register.

You Can Help the Lefthand Creek Watershed!

LWOG is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to assess, protect, and restore the quality of the Lefthand Creek watershed, and to serve as a hub of communication about watershed issues through the fostering of stakeholder collaboration. You can help the LWOG's continued efforts to protect the watershed by becoming a supporting member.

Members are invited to the LWOG's annual barbeque to share good food and company.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

\$100 \$50 \$35 \$20 Other \$ _____

Yes, I'd like to be a volunteer!

Please make checks payable to LWOG. All contributions are tax deductible. Thanks for your support!