

Fall 2007

Friends of Coal Creek is a joint effort of the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition and the Standard Mine Technical Advisory group. See page 4 for more details.

Editors

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By the Numbers...

Number of sampling events organized by the CCWC in 2007:
5

Number of sites sampled by the CCWC in 2007:
28

Number of samples collected in 2007 by the CCWC:
180

Estimated amount of waste rock and tailings material moved by the EPA in 2007:
45,000, yd³

Estimated remaining amount of contaminated materials to be removed in 2008:
20,000 yd³

Estimated flow of contaminated waters leaving the Level 1 portal at the Standard Mine:
40 gallons per minute

Welcoming Logan Reese to the Coalition



To assist the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) in implementing the Coal Creek Watershed Protection Plan the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety provided funding for a VISTA member for two years. VISTA, short for Volunteers in Service to America, though similar to Americorps in some regards differs largely due to the full time, year-long commitment made by its members. Four VISTA members were funded throughout Colorado.

In the spring of 2007 the CCWC selected Logan Reese for the VISTA position. Logan grew up in a rural Connecticut town, her family's property abutting the Saugatuck Reservoir and Bridgeport Hydraulic Company land which is responsible for protecting the Saugatuck watershed. Logan went to school at the University of New Hampshire, where she gained valuable scientific skills and knowledge in the Natural Resources Department, graduating with a major in Wildlife Management and a minor in Forestry. Throughout her college term, Logan worked with different agencies within the natural resources field, and was involved in field sampling and forest monitoring.

In May Logan moved to Gunnison where she began an internship at Curecanti National Recreation Area with the National Park Service (NPS). Her work here has involved Blue Mesa Reservoir fishing surveys

that contact the public while they visit the area and communicate with them about their fishing experience, and questions and concerns about the Park. Logan has also been helping with Resource Science and Stewardship research projects conducted by the NPS.

With this introduction to public outreach, Logan felt compelled to find a position enabling her to communicate with people about natural resource concerns. She feels strongly about protecting environmental integrity, and is aware of the tenuous relationship between modern industry and the conservation of natural resources. She has worked for federal, state, and university employers. She sees the CCWC as a new avenue to pursue her goals and calls the CCWC "a small, hard-working community group striving to protect and restore their local environment, a group with big goals and a small budget."

Logan's fulltime position starts in November. She will assist with newsletters, grants, fundraising, and community involvement. Logan will also recruit and organize volunteers to implement specific aspects of the Watershed Protection Plan. She will play an important role in developing an abandoned mine inventory and expanding the scope of the organization's water monitoring program. The CCWC is extremely pleased to have her on board.





Come play in Coal Creek during our next sampling event.

The final water sampling event of 2007 is scheduled for October 16th. Volunteers are needed. All volunteers are trained in sampling procedures and will be provided with lunch during these events. See Page 4 for contact information.



The EPA made major strides in removing contaminated materials from the Standard Mine site.

Water Sampling Update - Summer 2007

The end of summer sampling event that took place on Tuesday, August 21st gathered water quality data throughout the Coal Creek watershed.

Samples were collected throughout the watershed and included sites within the Town of Crested Butte, below Irwin, and points in between. Volunteers for the sampling event included citizens, CCWC staff, and National Park Service (NPS) interns. The NPS provided two experienced interns

and provided water quality sampling equipment for one team.

The community is encouraged to participate in water sampling events - it's a great chance to learn something new, get your hands dirty, and have fun doing it. The last sampling event of 2007 is scheduled for October 16th. Training and lunch are provided. For more information please contact the CCWC at coordinator@coalcreek.org.

Standard Mine Remediation - Submitted by the SMTAG

The Standard Mine Technical Advisory Group (SMTAG) was formed in 2006 to monitor the remediation of the Standard Mine through the EPA's Superfund program. Members of the SMTAG attend community meetings related to the cleanup and provide input to the EPA on remediation efforts. The final community meeting of the fall was hosted by the EPA on September 26th. The meeting provided a forum for discussion of cleanup progress at the site and detailed the EPA's plans for winter stabilization of the site. The EPA also hosted a site visit for members of the public attending the meetings on September 27th.

Through two summer work seasons there has been significant progress at the site. Last year, waters in the tailings pond were treated to remove contaminants and then released. The pond was then capped for the winter and the remaining solid materials in the pond were removed in the summer of 2007. Those materials were combined with waste rock from the site and placed in a permanent storage location called a repository. This repository site was chosen from several potential locations adjacent to the Standard Mine. Ideal for its stability, distance from Elk Creek and the absence of other sources of water, the repository will be temporarily protected by a liner, with a permanent cover to be installed next summer. The remainder of the contaminated materials from the Standard Mine will also be removed at that point.

During the first week of October the EPA plans on stabilizing the site for the winter. The EPA will

grade the remaining soils at the site to prevent erosion. These features will be used to catch sediments and hold them in place at the site.

The EPA conducted two sampling events this summer in July and September. Water and sediment were collected throughout the Coal Creek watershed and at the Standard Mine site. Fish surveys were completed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. These data combined with information on macroinvertebrates communities will be used to determine how contaminants from the mine affect the aquatic life. Data from these events will be available in the near future.

The EPA finalized the construction a pilot scale biochemical reactor (BCR) to treat contaminated waters released from the adit at Level 1 of the Standard Mine. The BCR will remove toxic metals from the water by using bacteria to create a chemical environment which removes metals from the water and renders them inert. The EPA installed automated water sampling equipment to monitor water quality throughout the winter. For more information please visit the EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/region8/sf/co/standard/> or for information on the SMTAG and please visit: www.coalcreek.org.

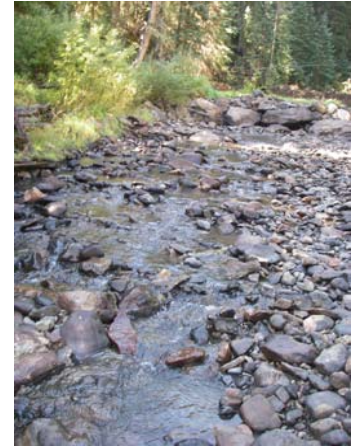
Lucky Jack Project Update

The Lucky Jack Project is a proposed underground mining operation on Mt. Emmons, and would occur within the Coal Creek watershed. In August the Water Quality Control Division released a revised discharge permit for the waste water treatment facility in operation at the Lucky Jack site since 1981. A final permit will be issued by the Water Quality Control Division in the near future with a 30-day appeal period to follow.

The Coalition participated in a joint sampling effort in September with EnviroGroup Ltd., a consultant to the Lucky Jack project. The purpose of this event was to gather water quality data at the site during low flow conditions. EnviroGroup was also at the site in May to evaluate high-flow conditions.

Representatives from the Lucky Jack Project have stated they are prepared to submit a Plan of Operations to the U.S. Forest Ser-

vice and the public in the fourth quarter of 2007. The Lucky Jack Project hosted two community meetings on September 25th and 26th in Crested Butte and Gunnison respectively. The purpose of these meetings was to gather input from the local communities on the Plan of Operations and the socio-economic study report. At the meetings, representatives from the mine and their consultants were present to discuss the Plan of Operations, the socio-economic study report, the waste water treatment facility and geologic information. Submission of the Plan of Operations to the U.S. Forest Service will lead to the opening of the public comment period on the proposal. For more information contact the Lucky Jack Project at (970) 641-4996 or visit www.luckyjack.us.



Above: October water sampling will help document conditions during low flow periods.

HCCA Community Forum - October 23rd

High Country Citizens' Alliance (HCCA) will be hosting community forums on Tuesday, October 23rd at 6:30 pm at the Crested Butte Center for the Arts and on Wednesday, October 24th at 6:30pm at the Gunnison County Fairgrounds. HCCA will present information on what is known about the proposed mining plan including: planned construction activities, travel routes, potential environmental impacts, and potential impacts to the local

community and economy. The forums will provide residents of the Gunnison Valley an opportunity to discuss the proposed molybdenum mine on Mt. Emmons. HCCA will provide updates on their efforts to follow the permitting process for the existing waste water treatment and how they are supporting mining law reform. For more information on this event please contact HCCA at (970) 349-7104.

The Other Colorful Bowl; Redwell Basin – By Logan Reese

Redwell Basin can offer the same type of wonderful views as seen from the top of Red Lady. Precarious peaks streak into the skyline in gray wash colors, plummeting valleys diffuse into greens of all shades, and an alpine ecosystem sprawls along the flanks.

The Daisy Mine, located on the northwest flank of Mt. Emmons, was once operated to mine the same metals from the mountain as the Standard Mine, and like the Standard Mine, was abandoned without being properly closed to avoid future environmental contami-

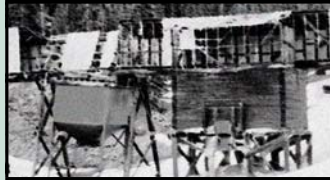
nation. Due to this contamination the Slate River and Oh-Be-Joyful Creek were recently added to the 303(d) list, a tally of all polluted waters needing cleanup.

The EPA contacted the CCWC to see what the community's interest is in cleaning up the site. The EPA is currently assessing the site and will be working with the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety to find a remedy for the issues at this site. Keep checking the Friends of Coal Creek for updates on these efforts.

The Lucky Jack Project intends to submit its Plan of Operations to the U.S. Forest Service in the fourth quarter of 2007.



Above: Abandoned mine structures at the Daisy Mine.



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Mission Statement: The mission of the SMTAG is to assure that Standard Mine clean-up activities and the final outcome of the clean-up process are beneficial to the environment and to affected persons and communities; to assess and protect the quality of water in Elk Creek and Coal Creek; to serve as a hub of communication about abandoned mine cleanup efforts; to help foster positive relationships between citizens and the state and federal government; and to educate the community about environmental and health issues concerning Elk Creek and Coal Creek and the cleanup of abandoned mine sites.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Coal Creek Watershed Coalition is to restore and protect the environmental integrity of the watershed to provide high-quality water for wildlife, aquatic life, and human life.

Goals:

- Provide high quality water quality data to facilitate cooperative water quality assessment in order to identify and address water quality concerns in a proactive manner.
- Enhance the Coal Creek Watershed by reducing or eliminating existing and potential water quality problems and restoring degraded habitats.
- Communicate water quality and watershed related information that increases public awareness of watershed issues.
- Expand the public's participation in protection of the watershed.
- Develop a strong and diverse funding structure to ensure the long term stability for funding core programs.

Volunteers Needed

The Coal Creek Watershed Coalition is in need of volunteers for a variety of functions including public outreach, water sampling, grant writing, and general administrative functions. The final water sampling is to take place on October 16th. Volunteers are trained in sampling procedures and will be provided with lunch during sampling events. Come join us for a day of fun in the sun. For more information contact Anthony Poponi at (970) 596-7496 or coordinator@coalcreek.org or visit www.coalcreek.org and click on our "Volunteer" page.



Quotable Quotes:

"High quality water is more than the dream of the conservationists, more than a political slogan; high quality water, in the right quantity at the right place at the right time, is essential to health, recreation, and economic growth."

EDMUND S. MUSKIE,
U.S. Senator, speech, 1
March 1966