



The EPA unveils a plan

The Environmental Protection Agency has unveiled its preferred alternative for the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site, that would involve a huge repository at the Mayflower Tailings ponds, operated for more than 100 years.

And on Tuesday evening, Aug. 11, the agency conducted a virtual public comment session on the plan, and even accepted some public comment. The EPA, in a written report, stated that the proposed repository “would provide a much-needed capacity for disposal and long-term management of mining-related wastes generated and managed from response actions at the site,” including massive amounts of sludge stored at the Gladstone interim water treatment plant.

Due to newspaper production problems this week, the Standard’s coverage is limited. A more thorough report will be in next week’s Standard. A public comment period continues until Aug. 27.

The EPA’s report indicates about 992 pounds per day of contaminants “of potential ecological concerns.” And the treatment process creates 4,600 to 6,000 cubic yards of sludge per year, containing heavy metals and requiring safe disposal.

Gina Myers, director of Reclamation Operations for Sunnyside Gold Corp., said Tuesday, Aug. 11 that the corporation “will not impede or interfere with EPA efforts to make a repository at the Mayflower a reality.

“SGC has offered Mayflower, specifically Impoundment No. 4, for use as a repository since 2016 and has previously provided EPA with prospective design drawings,” Myers said. “However, we are disappointed EPA has failed to negotiate the use of Mayflower in the four years since we first offered it, and will instead use its coercive power under Superfund to take the property from SGC after we completed years of significant reclamation and remediation work, Myers said in an e-mail.

“We also believe EPA’s repository proposal at Mayflower is inefficient and substantially more costly, and believe using Impoundment No. 4 is the sensible long-term and cost-effective plan. SGC has a long and successful history of improving Animas River water quality, and we look forward to collaborating with EPA and the community to make a sensible repository a reality.”

Rob Parker, remedial project manager for the EPA, said the agency is studying four alternatives, along with a “no-action” alternative.”

He said “the over-arching goal is protecting human health and the environment” from acid-mine drainage from abandoned mines in the San Juans.

Parker said the long-term plan would involve a \$31 million project over the next century, with construction starting as early as the fall of 2021.

“We aren’t assuming that we will have to treat leachate forever, but that is a possibility,” Parker said.

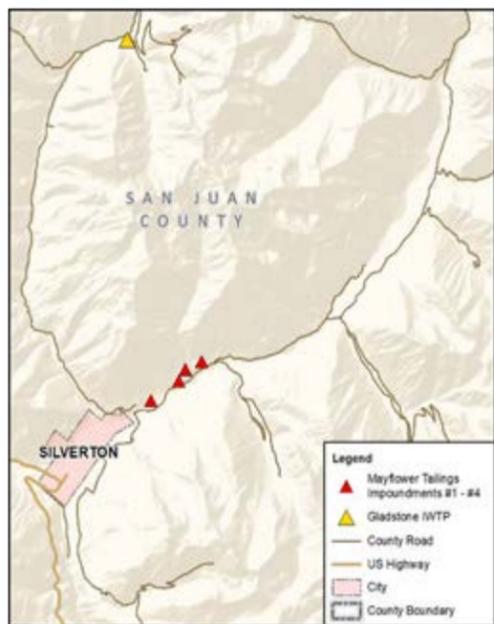
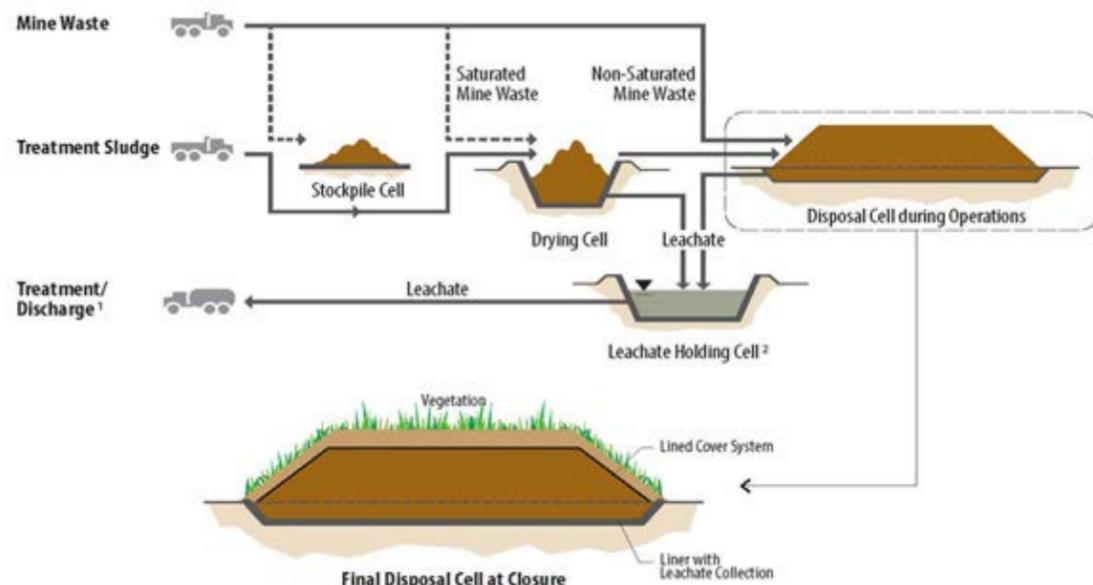


Exhibit 4. OU1 IRA Locations with Mining-Related Wastes Identified for Potential Interim Storage



Graphics provided in the EPA’s proposed plan for the Bonita Peak Depository include:
 ABOVE: A map showing Silverton, the treatment plant at Gladstone, (yellow triangle), and the Maflower Mill tailings impoundments (red triangles).
 ABOVE, RIGHT: Various mining-related wastes identified by the EPA for potential interim storage.
 RIGHT: The tailings impoundments at Gladstone.
 BELOW: Graphic shows how the trailings impoundments would eventually be capped and revegetated.



Repository components shown are conceptual and will be evaluated during remedial design. Initial approach for treatment/discharge is treatment and discharge at Gladstone IWTP. A leachate holding tank could be considered in lieu of a leachate holding cell.