



Rumsey Mill Site

Philipsburg, MT

Background about Rumsey Mill Site

The Rumsey Mill Site (site) is located in Phillipsburg, Granite County, MT and is a former mill site. The site is approximately 40 acres in an agricultural and timber land use area containing one residential home and the abandoned Rumsey Stamp Mill. The mill structures are no longer on site, but the footprint of the mill remains.

The Rumsey Mill began gold and silver stamping operations in 1889. During the early years of its operation, ore was transported to the mill primarily from the Granite Mine by rail cart. During operation, tailings from the mill were collected in a tailings yard directly below the mill in the Fred Burr Creek drainage.

Previous investigations have documented that historical mining activities have impacted soil, sediment, surface water, and groundwater in the area with concentrations of heavy metals that could potentially exceed area background concentrations and pose a risk to human health and the environment.

In 2021, EPA's Site Assessment program conducted an inspection and identified elevated levels of arsenic, lead, and mercury at the former mill site. The goal of this assessment was to determine the source or sources of contamination that if remediated, would improve the water quality of Fred Burr Creek. EPA's Removal Program conducted additional sampling to further define vertical extents of contamination, as well as to further investigate the tailings yard.

The Story of Investigation at Rumsey Mill Site

2021

EPA's Site Assessment program performed an expanded site inspection identifying elevated levels of arsenic, lead, and mercury at the former mill site.

More investigation was needed to determine the extent of contamination.

2023

EPA's Removal Program conducts sampling at the former mill site as well as tailings material that had been deposited downstream.

More investigation was needed to understand the source of contamination.

2024

EPA's Removal Program will conduct a geophysics analysis to further understand the source of the contamination. Results will be presented to the community in Fall 2024.

Results from Investigations

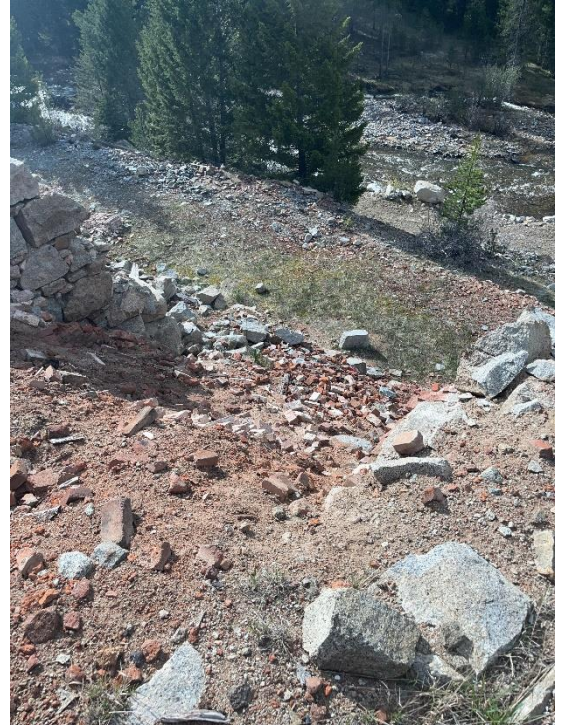
EPA's 2023 investigation identified elevated levels of arsenic, lead, and mercury on portions of the former mill Site. It also found elevated levels of the same metals in Fred Burr Creek as it flowed from the former mill past the former tailings yard.

EPA's 2023 investigation evaluated potential impacts on Fred Burr Creek from the former tailings yard as well as both a mine opening (adit) at the former mill as well as debris from the former mill. There was no indication that either the adit or former tailings yard had a significant impact on the creek at the time of sampling.

This investigation also identified and assessed an apparent foundation drain from the former mill. This drain showed substantially elevated levels of the same metals found at the mill site, indicating that this drain feature is the main source of contamination in Fred Burr Creek.

The 2024 investigation will focus on further evaluating this drain feature and its hydraulic relationship to both the former mill area and Fred Burr Creek. It will also provide information necessary to select and implement a remedy, if needed.

During our meeting, we shared the sampling data and recent reports. You can view the reports on our website under [Site Documents](#) and the [summary table with sampling locations](#).



About Lead and Arsenic

Both lead and arsenic are Contaminants of Concern (COCs) at the site because they present a risk to human health. Lead and arsenic are both naturally occurring, but can be harmful to humans, especially children.

For more information on these two COCs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a series of summaries about contaminants, called ToxFAQs. You can find ToxFAQs on lead at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs.

Questions? Contact us!

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