



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

OCTOBER  
2020

## TELLURIDE VALLEY FLOOR FACT SHEET

TELLURIDE VALLEY FLOOR, CO | REGION #8



### Upcoming Work in Your Neighborhood

An Emergency Response action at the Telluride Valley Floor, within the floodplain of the San Miguel River just outside Telluride, Colorado is being taken by EPA, in coordination with the United States Forest Service (USFS), starting November 2, 2020 and will last about 3 weeks depending on weather conditions.

This action will address stabilization of the tailings above the bridge at Boomerang Trail. EPA plans on further response action at this Site, and to address additional tailings downstream, in 2021.

EPA will be utilizing Environmental Restoration, with offices in Denver and Salt Lake City, as their contractor for removal activities.

The Site is approximately two acres. The San Miguel River flows east to west through the Site.

Fluvial mill tailings deposits exist within the floodplain of the San Miguel River. Mining for a variety of heavy metals occurred in the upper basins for over 100 years beginning in the 1860's.

The fluvial tailings resulted from historical mineral processing operations upstream of the Site. The tailings were transported by the San Miguel River and its tributaries during normal seasonal flow and flood events and deposited in downstream areas.

The EPA has assigned Federal On-Scene Coordinator, Joni Sandoval, to oversee all activities related to this response.

EPA expects minimal disruption to the existing trails with potential re-routing around construction areas. Should this occur, there will be signage and personnel directing recreators around the work

activities to ensure safety of workers and recreators. Work will be done in the river so there may be a slight discoloration of the water due to heavy equipment. EPA will ensure precautions are taken to limit any disruption of the water for downstream users.

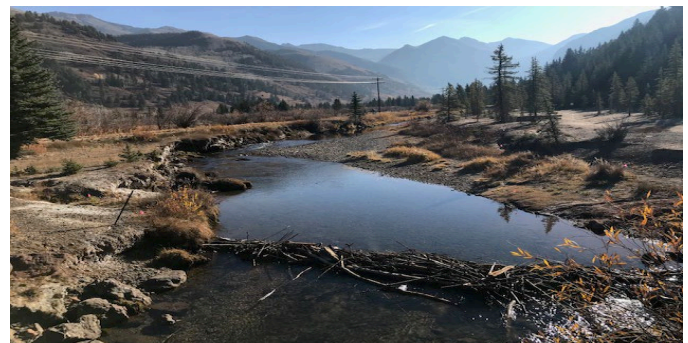


Photo of San Miguel River, above bridge at Boomerang Trail where construction activity will occur in Telluride, Colorado.

### About the Telluride Valley Floor Site

The Site is located along the San Miguel River approximately one mile west of Telluride, Colorado on lands under the jurisdiction, custody, and control of the United States Department of Agriculture and USFS within the boundaries of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests.

The Site is accessed along Boomerang Road/Trail south from State Highway 145 Spur. An existing footbridge crosses the San Miguel River at Boomerang Road. The Town of Telluride Valley Floor property, which is being preserved as open space by a conservation easement, adjoins the Site to the east, north, and west.

The Site is used for recreational purposes by hikers, mountain bicyclists, and runners primarily

along existing trails. The Telluride Valley Floor Trail, which extends west from Telluride, is adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site, with a user-created trail loop located in the western portion of the Site.

South of the river across the existing footbridge, the Boomerang Trail continues along the steep southern hillside to Mountain Village. A trail also exists along the alignment of the historical railroad grade.

A user-created bicycle area near the intersection of the Boomerang and Telluride Valley Floor Trails is located south of the San Miguel River and east of the footbridge. Fishing also occurs from the river stream banks throughout the Site.



Photo of tailings next to San Miguel River where bikers frequently ride despite warning signage in Telluride, Colorado.

There will be gravel and logs placed on and around the tailings just South of the River and East of the bridge where many bike tracks are found.

The goal of this is to reduce erosion and dust exposure until a permanent remedy can be taken next year.

A small scraping of tailings along the North bank of the River, just upstream of the bridge will occur to prevent continued erosion. The tailings will be

transported to Newmont's facility and placed in a repository.

There will be a two-axle haul truck transporting the tailings that will only have to make a few trips through town.

Special care will be taken to ensure no tailings are lost by sweeping off any loose debris on the truck, securing a tarp on top of the load and driving carefully.

A geo-textile liner, that allows water, but not solids to pass through will be placed and then the bank will be armored with rock for stability. This area is actively discharging tailings due to erosion. The remaining stream bank will be armored with rock, as needed to mitigate any other vulnerable areas.

Next year's plan is for a more comprehensive removal and is still in planning phases. More information will be distributed before then.

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## Contaminants of Concern?

Metals concentrations associated with the tailing's deposits are a potential source of harmful exposure to human health and the environment.

Lead and Arsenic are considered contaminants of concern (COC) at the Telluride Valley Floor. COCs are chemicals that need to be addressed by a cleanup action because they are a potential threat to human health or the environment.

## Arsenic

Arsenic is a common heavy metal found in mine tailings.

The planned cleanup action will address the arsenic because it is a potential threat to human health and the environment. The exposure pathways can be from ingestion and inhalation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) also has a series of contaminant-specific fact sheets, called ToxFAQs. You can find a ToxFAQ on arsenic at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs).

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Lead contamination at Superfund sites presents a threat to human health and the environment. Lead is a naturally occurring element. However, most lead found in the environment is due to human activity.

Lead can be harmful to humans, especially children, if people come in contact with it. A person can come in contact with lead through ingesting (eating or drinking) something with lead in it or through inhaling (breathing) lead dust.

Lead is a common heavy metal found in mine tailings.

For more information about lead, please visit: [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) also has a series of summaries about contaminants, called ToxFAQs. You can find ToxFAQs on lead at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs).

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Photo of tailings next to San Miguel River where bikers frequently ride despite warning signage in Telluride, Colorado.

## EPA Contact Information

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**Joni Sandoval**  
**On-Scene-Coordinator**  
EPA Region 8  
[Sandoval.Joni@epa.gov](mailto:Sandoval.Joni@epa.gov)

**Dana Barnicoat**  
**Public Information Officer**  
EPA Region 8  
[Barnicoat.dana@epa.gov](mailto:Barnicoat.dana@epa.gov)