

NMED

New
Mexico
Environment
Department



GOLD KING MINE SPILL UPDATE

Feb. 10, 2016

Ryan Flynn
Secretary
New Mexico Environment Department

Gold King Mine Spill

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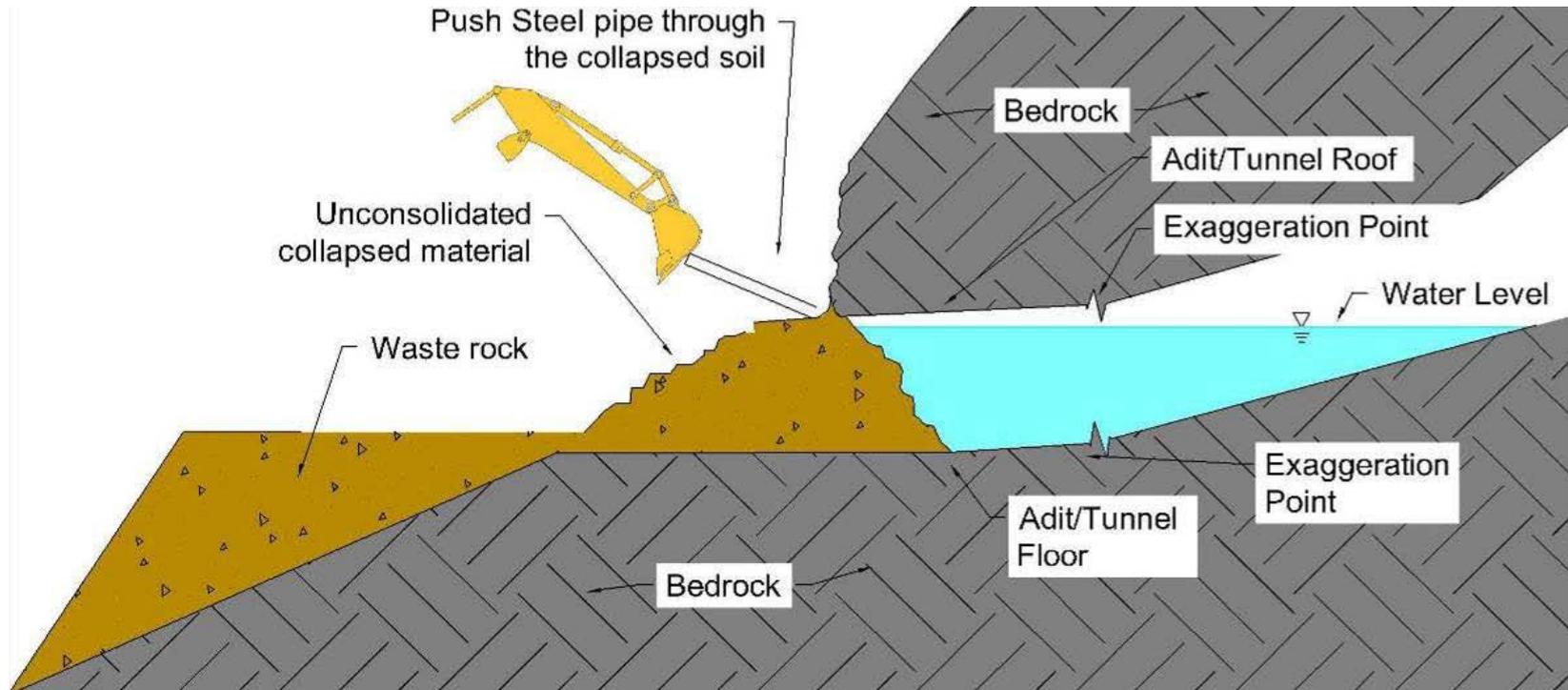
Gold King Mine Spill

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Cause of Mine Blowout

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EPA Contractor Flagged Issue in 2014

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“The Gold King Mine has not had maintenance of the mine working since 1991, and the workings have been inaccessible since 1995 when the mine portal collapsed. *This condition has likely caused impounding of water behind the collapse...Conditions may exist that could result in a blow-out of the blockages and cause a release of large volumes of contaminated mine waters and sediment from inside the mine, which contain concentrated heavy metals.*”



EPA's Credibility Issues

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EPA statement regarding the Animas and San Juan Rivers (November 13, 2015):

“...metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury in surface water and sediment have returned to pre-event conditions...”

- ❑ EPA has not defined background conditions.
- ❑ EPA's own data suggests the metals in surface water and sediment have not returned to pre-event conditions.



EPA Credibility Issues

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EPA's FAQ Website:

“We are certain that crops are safe for consumption. When the plume came through, irrigation ditches that impacted crops and livestock were shut down.”



**Willett Irrigation Ditch
Farmington, NM
August 8, 2015**



EPA Risk Levels for Lead in Sediment

mg/Kg (parts per million)

EPA has been using the 20,000 mg/Kg screening level for comparison with sediment data, while virtually disregarding other risk screening levels designed to protect human health in residential areas as well as plants and wildlife.

EPA Screening Level for GKM Spill	EPA Screening Level for Residential Soil	EPA Screening Level for Plants	EPA Screening Level for Soil Invertebrates	EPA Screening Level for Birds	EPA Screening Level for Mammals	EPA Superfund Cleanup Level (Dallas, TX site)
20,000	400	120	1,700	11	56	500



Why EPA's Credibility is a Problem

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- ❑ **Examples discussed above are consistent with an agenda to deny and downplay the severity of the GKM Spill.**
- ❑ **EPA is not holding itself to the same high standards for site investigation and remediation that it routinely imposes on the regulated community.**
- ❑ **An independent long term monitoring plan is needed to protect and inform the communities impacted by the GKM Spill.**



Path Forward for New Mexico

- 1) **Reimbursement for Emergency Response Costs**
- 2) **Long Term Monitoring Plan for Watershed**
- 3) **Remediate Abandoned Mines in the Upper Animas Watershed**

NM's Response Costs

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- **New Mexico spent \$1.6 Million on emergency response effort**
- **New Mexico will need \$5 million to fully implement long term monitoring plan**
- **EPA estimates its response effort will cost over \$19.6 Million**



New Mexico's GKM Spill Long-Term Impact Monitoring Team



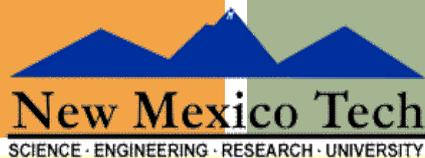
New Mexico Department of Agriculture



All About Discovery!
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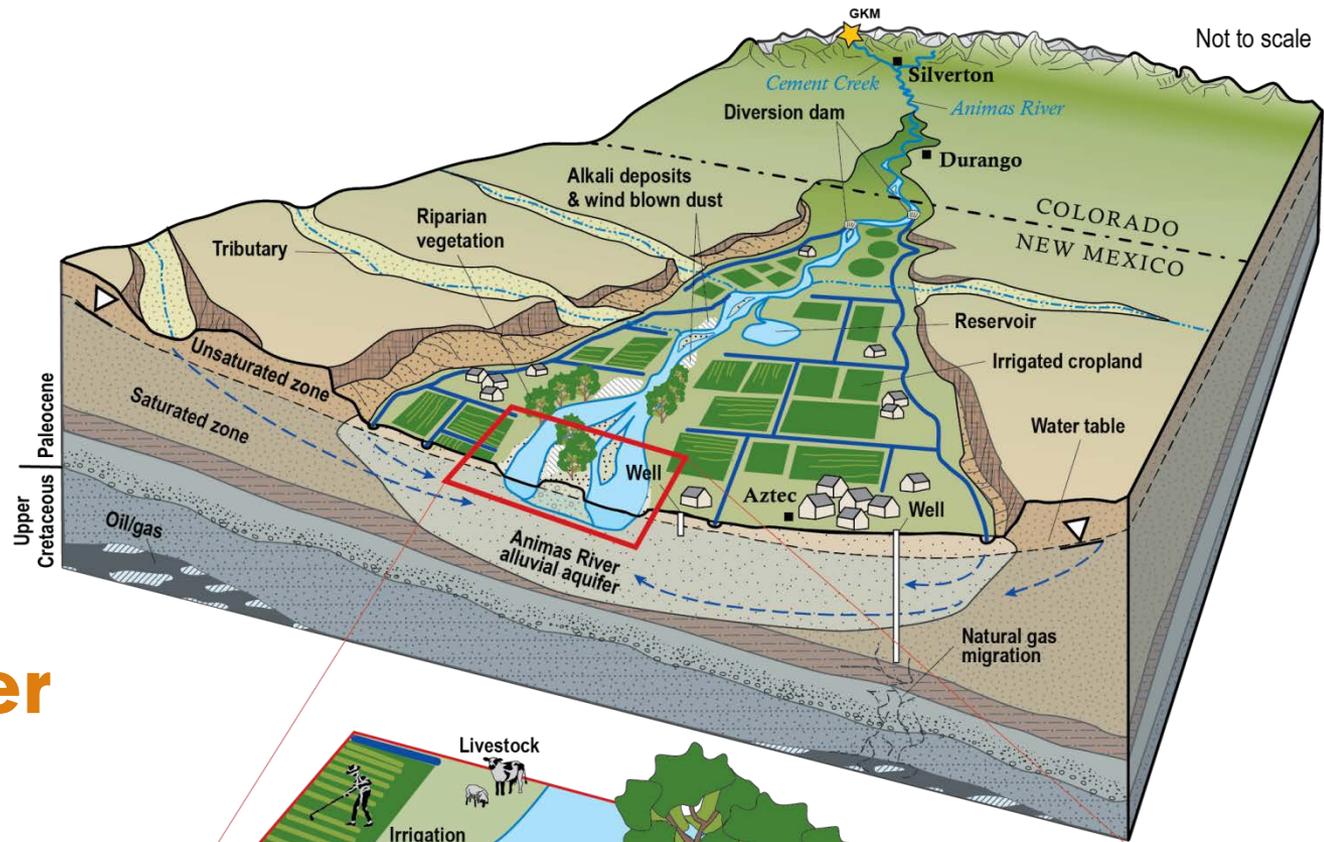


San Juan Soil and Water
Conservation District





Not to scale



Animas River Watershed System

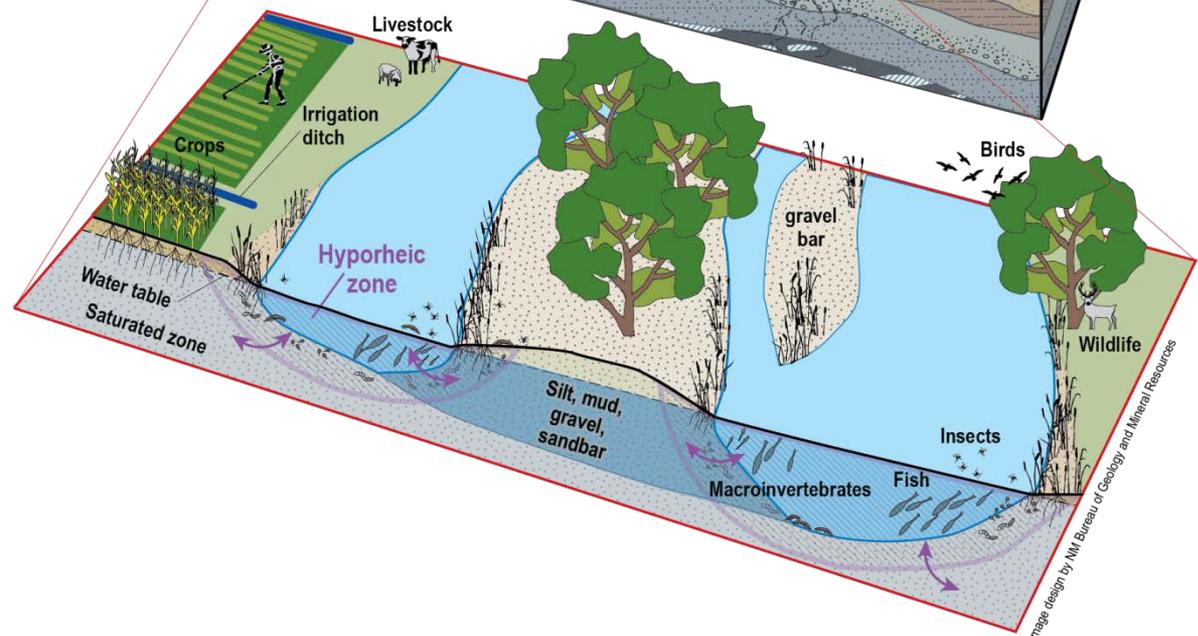


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CONCLUSION