

**NMED Discussion Bullets for 2017 Gold King Mine
Citizens' Advisory Committee Meetings
March 27, 2017**

During its January 2017 meeting, the Gold King Mine (GKM) spill Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) identified several topics for possible presentations at future meetings. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) offers the following discussion of these suggested topics for consideration by the CAC:

- NMED is not aware of any river cleanup, but EPA has done some source control at the GKM site.
- The public comment period for NMED's draft Long Term Monitoring Plan for 2017 ended on March 3. The final Monitoring Plan for 2017 will describe the strategy and scheduling of testing soil, water, water wells, air, crops, wildlife and the food web.
- NMED and NMSU have launched a rigorous program of testing agricultural soil and crops for the 2017 growing season.
- EPA issued a report on the fate and transport of metals in the watershed, and NMED is conducting geochemical modeling to test some of the EPA conclusions. Our current understanding of the role of jarosite in transporting and releasing soluble metals has not substantially changed since our last briefing to the CAC, but jarosite will be included in our geochemical modeling.
- Ongoing monitoring of groundwater levels confirms that the aquifer is influenced by seasonal irrigation practices. While monitoring of well-water quality has not yet identified any impacts caused by the GKM spill, we want to test additional wells that may be influenced by seepage from irrigation ditches, and in the area north of Aztec where river water seeps into the aquifer during the winter.
- Fortunately, mercury was not a significant contaminant of the GKM spill and lead does not bioaccumulate in fish tissue to the extent that mercury does. Multiple fish tissue surveys in both New Mexico and Colorado have not identified any fish tissue contamination caused by the GKM spill. Fish consumption advisories that had been issued before the GKM spill for mercury and PCBs, however, remain in place.
- The N.M. Department of Health issued the attached state regarding lead testing issues.
- The Spring Runoff Preparedness Plan is being updated for 2017 and a training session for first responders has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Farmington Civic Center. The Preparedness Plan includes communication protocol so that all stakeholders will be notified of any potentially dangerous or adverse river conditions.
- We understand that the Navajo Nation will be heavily involved with sampling efforts during late March, but we will invite the Navajo Nation to update the CAC on their investigation and testing programs at a meeting later in 2017.
- We are interested in discussing how NMED and the CAC can enhance our mission of distributing information to the public.

Additionally, NMED will implement the following suggestions made by the CAC:

- NMED will post meeting agendas and minutes prior to CAC meetings on the GKM website.
- NMED is open to suggestion on how to request EPA reconsider its decision to deny all damage claims from the GKM spill. We can request that EPA appear before the CAC to discuss this issue.