



## **NEWS RELEASE** **For Immediate Release**

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*The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.*

### **NMED monitoring potential discoloration in Animas River** *No negative health or environmental effects expected*

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department is monitoring potential discoloration in the Upper Animas River caused by a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency team entering the Natalie Occidental Mine near Cement Creek in southwestern Colorado for a routine inspection.

The discoloration or “orange colored water” stems from sediment disturbed while entering the mine for an inspection. While no health or environmental effects are expected, NMED is alerting those local municipalities, businesses, tribal communities, and members of the public near the river, including outdoor recreationists, out of an abundance of caution.

As part of regular and on-going communication efforts, EPA notified NMED and other stakeholders of the planned inspection on Aug. 6, noting the potential for discoloration. EPA notified NMED of the discoloration on Aug. 7 following the site inspection.

EPA has not issued any advisories affecting municipal drinking water supplies, and systems in the area remain fully operational. Based on communications from EPA, NMED does not anticipate any adverse impacts to Animas River water quality. The discoloration is unrelated to the Gold King Mine, which is also located in southwestern Colorado.

NMED will provide additional information through its website and social media as it becomes available.

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