

Highlights of the 2010 Summer Tour
Sponsored by the High Altitude Reclamation Committee

This year's tour was hosted by Committee Member Lynn Kunzler, Senior Reclamation Specialist with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining

The Tour began August 5th, with a brief safety training sponsored by Kennecott Utah Copper. The group then proceeded to the Kennecott tailings ponds where KCC described their construction and reclamation activities of the tailings ponds west of Salt Lake City. Several stops were made to view the north (new) tailings pond as well as the South Tailings Pond (reclaimed).

We then proceeded to Barney's Canyon Mine. This was a cyanide heap leach gold operation. Mining activities ceased about 9 years ago. Most of the disturbance has now been reclaimed, however there is still residual flow from the last heap, producing about 8-10 ounces of gold per day. KCC plans to finish reclamation this year.

After lunch, we then proceeded to the Bingham Canyon mine, making several stops to review reclamation activities at the Bingham Canyon waste dumps, the Triangle Domino test plots, East side test plots and a stop at the Visitor's center to view mining activities in the 'pit' and tour the visitor's center to learn about the history of the mine. The final stop was at Daybreak Development (an old tailing area that was reclaimed with a post mining land use of a residential area. Here the group was treated to a fantastic barbeque consisting of pulled pork, BBQ chicken, creamy dutch oven potatoes, backed beans, cole slaw, and a killer chocolate strawberry/mango short cake.

On day two of the trip, we met at the highschool in Eureka, Utah, where we were joined by the EPA, Army Corp, and Shaw Environmental to view efforts of the Eureka superfund clean-up. We learned a little about the mining history of Eureka and why this area was put on the Superfund list. Most of the town had been contaminated with high levels of lead and arsenic. Children were being tested (blood tests) on a quarterly basis to monitor the lead and arsenic levels. The project started in 2001, and will be completed by December of this year. Already, the success has been significant with lead and arsenic levels being reduced to where the children are now being subject to the blood testing on an annual basis.

Remediation activities included permitting a limestone quarry to provide inert material to bury old mining waste dumps, and steeper slope areas that were contaminated. Flatter slope areas and residential areas were reclaimed by removing 18 inches of the contaminated soils, and replacing them with borrow material and seeding to establish vegetation. The Union Pacific Railroad and Chief Consolidated Mining also participated in the cleanup activities.

After lunch, we traveled to the Mercur Mine, which had been operated by Barrack Gold. Barrack operated an open pit mine for about 11 years before depleting economically viable deposits. Reclamation consisted of regrading dumps, pits, and leach pads, and a tailing pond. Reclamation is now complete with the exception of the tailing pond which still has an estimated 5,000,000 gallon of water. Utah State University has been experimenting with microbial digestion of arsenic, and is in the process of setting up a pilot project, Barrack has tried several methods to remove the water, including using snow making cannons to evaporate the water. Initially this worked well, however, water levels have now stabilized, resulting in looking for additional ways to remove the water. Most of the tails have been reclaimed. After letting them dry for several years, finger dikes were constructed into the pond proper for access to cap the tails and apply topsoil was made.

With over 40 participants, this year's tour had one of the larger groups participating in several years. Participants came from Utah, Nevada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Most participants felt that the tour was well worth the time and effort they made to attend.

Attached are selected photos taken on the tour.

Thanks again to the folks at KCC, Barney Mining Company, Daybreak Development, EPA, Army Corp, Shaw Environmental, and Barrick for making the tour possible and successful, and a special thanks to our Caterer, Pete Barger, and to Bowman/Revex Company for providing social hour and barbeque beverages for us and Nilex Environmental Inc. for helping sponsor the barbeque.

