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Fall 11-15-2021

### Risk Assessment of Blackbird Mine

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# Risk Assessment of Blackbird Mines

Tinsae Alem

BIOL364: Perspectives in Toxicology (Instructor: Dr. Erin Shanley), Longwood University

## Background

- Located 25 miles west of the town of Salmon, in east-central Idaho, Lemhi County, United States.
- This is an EPA Superfund site<sup>1</sup>.
- Soil and groundwater contaminated in this area.
- Cobalt, copper, and arsenic toxic were detected in this area.



Figure 1: Map of Black Mine.

## Specific Aim

The aim of this study was to develop a perspective on the risk management of Blackbird Mines using multiple perspectives.

## Methods



## Results

Table 1: Hazard identification<sup>2,3,4</sup>

	Cobalt	Copper	Arsenic
<b>Acute hazard</b>	Irritate skin, eyes, nose, throat	Irritate nose, throat and may cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea	Irritate nose, throat and may cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes
<b>Chronic hazard</b>	Affects liver, kidney, and heart	May cause kidney and liver failure	May cause kidney and liver failure and cancer

Table 2: Dose response assessment<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Metal	In water/food (mg/L)	In air (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	In workplace (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )
<b>Cobalt</b>	0.002	0.0004	0.0001
<b>Copper</b>	1.3	1.0	0.1
<b>Arsenic</b>	0.010	~0.008	10

### Description of the surrounding community

- Surrounded by many creeks, parks, rivers, and schools
- Low income & low education statistics
- About 13.5 % of the population are in the poverty line<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusions

- To clean up the cobalt and copper, four mining companies have compromised to pay \$50 million<sup>6</sup>.
- Aquatic populations are more exposed to a high level of metals.
- The fish consumers are at risk for exposure to the hazards.
- The contamination has posed serious health risks, especially for children.

### To Prevent exposure to hazards

- The community needs to avoid consuming fish and drinking groundwater.
- Hikers, campers, site trespassers need to avoid drinking groundwater of superfund areas.
- More cleanup has to be done.

## References

1. Environmental Protection Agency. 2017. October 26. Blackbird Mine Site Profile. EPA. Retrieved October 26, 2017. <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites-profiles/blackbird-mine-site-profile>
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