“WQS... we’re supposed to meet standards?”

Working with other agencies and programs on abandoned mine cleanups
Overview of the Issue

There are many state and federal agencies tasked with mitigating abandoned mine risk.

Each agency and program has their own set of priorities, goals and limitations.

How can the attainment of surface water quality standards be included as a goal regardless of who oversees the cleanup effort?

What can be done when water quality standards are not met post remediation?
Private 16%
Federal 43%
State 13%
Tribal 28%
USFS Coordination

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place

Meet annually with Arizona and regional USFS hydrologists
  Agency updates
  Nonpoint source pollution activities

Meet annually with On-Scene Coordinator
  Priority discussion
  Coordinate efforts
  Review completed and proposed actions

We receive notification CERLCA related USFS actions
USFS removal actions

Purpose: protect public health and welfare and the environment

Objectives: reduce or eliminate...

...the downstream movement of tailings and waste rock as well as acid mine drainage

...exposure of wildlife and humans to contaminated soil

Targets:

Arizona Soil Remediation Level for Non-residential uses

Background soil or water concentrations

Water quality standards are rarely mentioned
McCleur Mine


Water quality concerns: copper, zinc cadmium

Sources: mine tailings, waste rock, adit discharge, natural background
World’s Fair Mine

USFS (cap 2006, plug 2011)

Water quality concerns: copper, zinc, cadmium, pH

Sources: mine tailings, waste rock, adit discharges, artesian well, natural background
Gibson Mine

Private and USFS (2006, 2013)

Water quality concern: Copper

Sources: mine tailings, waste rock, adit discharges, natural background
Refocused collaboration

Provide greater focus on WQ attainment when commenting on planned activities.

Request monitoring activities include collection of water quality rather than just visual assessments of project stability.

Seek commitment to revisiting project if goals and objectives are not met.

Develop statewide MSGP permit for federal and state agencies to formally document annual priorities and actions (current and future).

Effective communication needed.
Questions and Discussion