



**COLORADO**  
Division of Reclamation,  
Mining and Safety  
Department of Natural Resources

March 21, 2024

Steven Walton Adams Living Trust  
160 Flint Way  
Broomfield, CO 80020

Dear Sir/Madame,

The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) was notified on December 18, 2023 of a mine water release along the Little Bear Creek, south of Idaho Springs. The mine was identified as the Ethel Rose Mine and/or the International Mine and you are listed as the owner of this mine on the Clear Creek County Assessor website.

We are writing to inform you that the Ethel Rose has been identified as the source of the water release and that someone has been intentionally entering the mine and caused the polluted water to spill into the local community. The Division installed a locked door in the mine adit (entrance) in 1994 as a public safety measure. It was noted during the December 20, 2023 inspection (see attached report) that the Division's lock had been cut and replaced.

This incident has also been reported to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the US Forest Service, who along with DRMS will continue to monitor the situation.

All development or extraction of a mineral from its natural occurrence is governed by the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Act, Article 32 of Title 34, C.R.S (2022) ("Act"). Any development or mineral extraction activities at the Ethel Rose Mine needs to have a DRMS approved permit **before** mining activities begin.

If you have any information or questions regarding this incident, or would like to know more about permitting a small mining operation, please feel free to contact me. This site has been assigned the number M-2024-009 for tracking purposes.

Sincerely,

Brock Bowles  
Environmental Specialist





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Division of Reclamation,  
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Department of Natural Resources

December 21, 2023

Brandy Foley  
4300 Cherry Creek Dr. South  
Denver, Colorado 80246

Re: Colorado Environmental Spills or Release Reporting Form  
Incident Report Number 2023-0838

Brandy,

On Monday December 18 DRMS was notified of a mine water release along Little Bear Creek south of Idaho Springs turning Little Bear Creek orange. The release was first noted by local resident Amy Stivers. A City of Idaho Springs Water treatment operator visited the site the same day and noted that water had flowed into the creek from the "International Mine", but that the flow had stopped. The City operator also noted that staining was present down to the confluence of Little Bear Creek and Soda Creek.

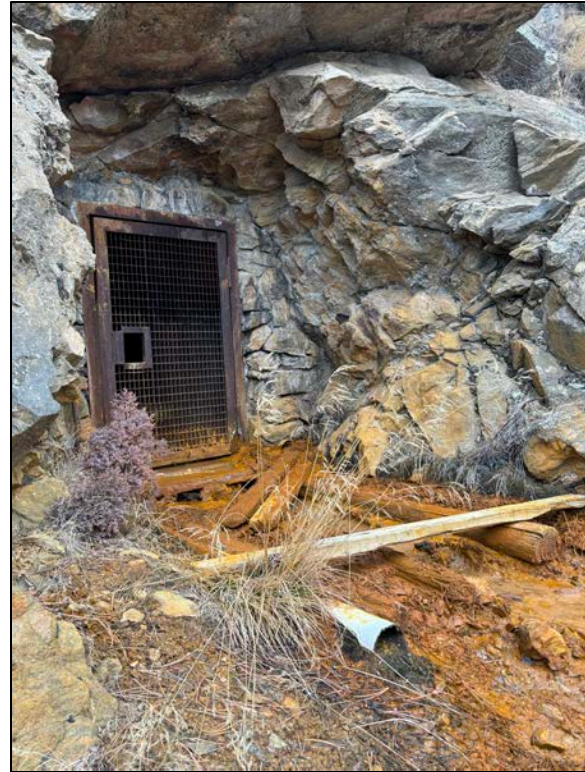
DRMS visited the site on December 20, 2023. The mine, identified as the Ethel Rose in the DRMS database, lies on Untied States Forest Service (USFS) land in the Arapaho National Forest approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles south of the intersection of Soda Creek Rd. and Little Bear Rd. (just below the switchbacks). The mine was closed with an adit door by DRMS in 1994 as part of the Little Bear project (212-2). The DRMS lock has been removed and replaced with a combination lock. Otherwise the closure is in good condition.

At the time of the site visit the mine was draining at approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon per minute. The mine discharge was clear with no visible turbidity. According to conversations with USFS representative Trez Skillern this flow is consistent with this mine's normal discharge. There was a shovel outside of the adit door and a modern postal service type tote and plastic buckets just inside the mine portal. Reddish orange staining extended approximately 4 inches up the sides of the mine entrance and the grated adit door. No chunks or pieces of ice were present in the portal.





*Figure 1 - View of Sediment and staining from the Ethel Rose mine water release 2023-12-20.*



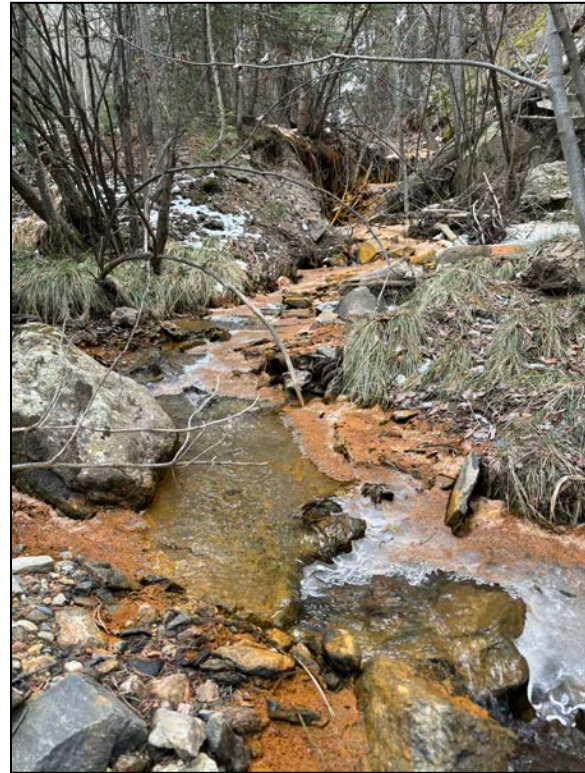
*Figure 2 - Reddish orange staining and sedimentation emanating from the mine portal. DRMS installed the adit door in 1994.*

The mine release deposited reddish orange sediment in a triangular shaped wedge down the 60 foot rock slope below the adit. The wedge is approximately 10 feet wide at the top of the slope and 40 feet wide at the bottom. The flow was then funneled into a culvert underneath a 4x4 road and into Little Bear Creek. From where the discharge entered Little Bear Creek there is heavy visible reddish orange staining and sedimentation along the stream channel and banks for approximately 1,000 feet to just below the intersection of Little Bear Rd and Warren Gulch Rd. Downstream of Warren Gulch Rd. patches of reddish orange sediment and stained snow can be found primarily in shallow pools along the stream channel. Much of the channel was snow covered at the time of the site visit so the underlying stream channel could not be observed. Where observed visible staining and sediment steadily decreased while following Little Bear Creek downstream. The last observed reddish orange sediment found approximately 100 ft upstream of the confluence of Little Bear Creek with Soda Creek. This is a distance of approximately 4,200 feet from the mine opening.





*Figure 3 – Heavy sedimentation and staining in the stream channel. View looking downstream on Little Bear Creek approximately 250ft below the mine portal.*



*Figure 4 - Although reduced, staining and sedimentation are readily visible 1000ft downstream of the mine portal. View is looking upstream.*

There appears to be some current claim staking going on in the Little Bear Creek drainage as evidenced by recently placed signage and a recently placed stake at a nearby DRMS closure (212-1). In discussing the release with Mrs. Skillern, she mentioned that this is not the first mine water release from this mine and that a past large release was intentional. The details of the past intentional release were not immediately available. DRMS will coordinate with USFS to determine the details of the past release of water from the mine and if any official permission for prospecting has been granted.

Regards,

Jeremy D Reineke  
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety  
Inactive Mine Reclamation Program