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Supplemental Environmental Project/Wastewater Enforcement: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Mullan, Idaho Mine Operator Enter into Consent Agreement

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and Hecla Limited (“HL”) entered into a Consent Agreement (“CA”) addressing alleged violations of a Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (“NPDES”) Permit. See Docket No. CWA-10-2024-0027.

The CA addresses a mine owned and operated by HL denominated the Lucky Friday Mine (“Facility”) in Mullan, Idaho.

The Facility operates pursuant to two NPDES Permits.

A representative of EPA conducted a compliance inspection of the Facility on June 10, 2019, to determine compliance with one of the NPDES Permits. A representative from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality is stated to have conducted a compliance inspection on April 6, 2021, to determine compliance with the other NPDES Permit.

The Facility discharges pollutants from three outfalls which discharge into the South Fork Coeur d’Alene River.

The CA alleges the following violations:

- Lead exceedances.
- Zinc Exceedances.
- Copper Exceedances.
- Failure to submit annual Best Management Practices certification.
- Failure to monitor E. Coli.
- Failure to conduct Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing.

HL has agreed to implement a Supplemental Environmental Project (“SEP”) which is described in detail in Appendix A to the CA. The SEP is generally described as a riparian restoration consisting of:

...restoring native plant habitat to provide shade benefits intended to reduce instream water temperatures and increase inputs of leaf litter and large wood to the stream environment to help maintain diverse and productive stream biota.

HL is required to spend to no less than \$299,000.00 on implementing the SEP.

The CA also assesses a civil penalty of \$174,300.00.

HL neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations contained in the CA.

A copy of the CA can be downloaded [here](#).