



Environmental Public Health Tracking

USING EPHT DATA AND RESOURCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

West Fork Mine

What was the problem/situation?

The West Fork Mine is an active lead mine. There was a subsidence event at the mine that caused changes to the groundwater flow. This caused several issues, including the formation of multiple sinkholes in the area. The sinkholes changed the course of streams and damaged a large dam that is holding back lead-contaminated lead waste materials. If released, this mine waste material would enter an Ozark stream and potentially contaminate a large area.

How was Tracking involved?

Missouri EPHT first got involved by looking at testing results to make sure mining related contaminants were not showing up in private drinking water wells or in the nearby stream. Private wells of 15 homes in the area were tested for heavy metals with an estimated 50 people affected. No evaluations above drinking water standards related to mining were detected. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) asked for Missouri EPHT's assistance in fish testing the in the nearby stream. They asked for our partnership in choosing fish species to sample, where to sample, assistance in getting a lab to test the fish, and in interpreting the results.

What action was taken to resolve the problem?

Potential mining related contaminants did not show up in the private wells in the area. Potential mining related contaminants did show up in the nearby stream; however, the levels are below recreational standards. Missouri EPHT and MDC have tested dozens of fish and have only found low levels of contaminants relating to mining. EPHT's efforts have given residents in the area information about their wells and nearby stream. These efforts also provided background and baseline data on the environment in this area should additional events happen and the situation worsen.



The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program
Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) is a program within the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. EPHT is part of a larger initiative to establish Environmental Public Health Tracking systems at the national and state levels.

