

**TESTIMONY OF DENNIS GREANEY**  
**PRESIDENT AND MANAGING PARTNER, ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION LLC**  
**HEARING ON HOLDING EPA ACCOUNTABLE FOR POLLUTING WESTERN WATERS**  
**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**SEPTEMBER 9, 2015**  
**RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Johnson, and other distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify on the recent incident at the Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado.

My name is Dennis Greaney. I serve as president and managing partner of Environmental Restoration. I have served in that role since the company was founded in 1997. I am degreed in ecology and had three years of graduate studies in environmental toxicology. I have worked in the field of hazardous waste site remediation and emergency response for thirty years.

Environmental Restoration is made up of nearly 400 people around the country who, like me, are dedicated to assisting companies and government agencies respond to, and clean up, sites impacted by hazardous, toxic, or radioactive materials.

We were one of the organizations involved in EPA's efforts at the Silverton site. We stand firmly behind our project management team and labor force there. That said, as professionals who have dedicated our careers to cleaning up the environment, we were heartbroken by the mine release to the Animas River.

**About Environmental Restoration, LLC**

I will briefly describe the background about our company. Environmental Restoration is an environmental remediation and response services company that provides field remediation and response services for industrial, commercial, state and federal clients. Since 1997 Environmental Restoration has worked at the direction of EPA on more than 1,300 Task Orders requiring our services. In addition, Environmental Restoration has assisted on over 10,000 environmental projects for clients including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Transportation, FEMA and hundreds of private sector companies.

We are passionate about our work and proud and honored to have provided services in some of our nation's largest responses including the Deepwater Horizon spill; the aftermaths of Tropical Storm Lee, Hurricanes Sandy, Irene, Katrina and Rita; the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster; the 2001 anthrax response to the Hart Senate Office Building and US Postal Services; and the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Our services include Emergency Response and Site Remediation. Emergency Response consists of responding to emergency hazardous material situations such as oil and chemical spills, train derailments, over-the-road accidents involving hazardous materials, industrial facility accidents, and natural or man-made disasters.

Site Remediation includes decontaminating and/or demolishing structures and facilities. It also includes contaminated soil excavation and treatment, dredging and wetlands restoration, removal of asbestos, lead and mercury contamination, mine site remediation, and groundwater and vadose zone remediation. Over the years, our crews have handled millions of tons of contaminated soil and hazardous waste.

### **History**

Our senior staff, including myself, are pioneers from the early days of environmental response and remediation work, averaging 30 years of applied experience remediating hazardous waste sites and responding to hazardous material emergencies. Our field teams include project managers, emergency response managers, health and safety specialists, site supervisors, foremen, field accountants, equipment operators, truck drivers and field technicians.

All Environmental Restoration field personnel are OSHA compliant, and many have specialty remediation training certifications. Our project managers and field staff are carefully selected based on their abilities and often possess experience resulting from long careers in this field. Collectively our management team has worked on more than 11,000 large-scale environmental projects and emergency response incidents for corporate and government clients nationwide.

Our company maintains offices across the country to provide our customers easy access to the technical and operational personnel and equipment needed for response and management of hazardous waste incidents. Our regional personnel are proven and experienced in developing and implementing solutions to meet clients' response and remediation needs. We provide deep expertise in field operations and the ability to respond efficiently and cost-effectively to projects nationwide.

Environmental Restoration has been prime contractor on approximately 20 federal government contracts since our inception. Most of these contracts required annual evaluation of our field performance by the government entities with whom we work. During these evaluations we are scored on Quality, Schedule, Cost Control and Management. Throughout our history Environmental Restoration has consistently performed at levels judged as Exceptional and Very Good, the two highest scores possible. As our safety and performance records demonstrate, Environmental Restoration is a very good contractor.

### **Safety**

As a company, Environmental Restoration is committed to providing a safe work environment for our employees. We minimize risk by instilling a 'Safe Work Philosophy' in every employee on every job site.

Each employee understands the importance of working safely, and maintaining a safe project for their co-workers.

The true test of our efforts is our safety record, where statistics demonstrate our tremendous success at minimizing accidents and on-the-job injuries. Our Experience Modification Rate (EMR), which measures on-the-job accidents resulting in injuries, is .72 compared to the industry standard of 1.0. Our demonstrated safety record is almost 30 percent better than the industry average.

Training on hazard recognition and safe work practices is an integral part of our culture. We have a robust health and safety program functioning across all levels of our organization, including hands-on training and classroom and field instruction, in accordance with, but not limited to, Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration, National Fire Protection Association, Mine Safety and Health Administration, and Department of Transportation regulations.

#### **Our work with EPA**

In 2014 approximately 52% of Environmental Restoration's work was in support of EPA's Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS) Contracts. Environmental Restoration is prime contractor to EPA in seven of the ten EPA Regions. In that role we work in support of EPA in 37 states across the country.

These competitively awarded EPA contracts require immediate and rapid response to emergency and time critical hazardous waste situations where human health or the environment is threatened. We are routinely tasked to respond to and remediate unstable or unsafe hazardous waste sites, and to respond to local, regional and national emergencies caused by natural disasters, abandoned facilities, chemical or oil spills, and terrorist attacks.

#### **The Gold King Mine release**

As with many EPA environmental removal projects, we were one of several organizations with specifically assigned roles to play in the effort at the Gold King Mine. Each EPA removal project is led by an EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC). The OSC serves as the lead for all responding contractors and agencies. Within this team, each contractor has contractually established roles and responsibilities, which are carried out under the supervision and direction of the OSC.

Environmental Restoration was issued a Task Order to open the portal of the Gold King Mine, rehabilitate the mine opening to allow safe passage of crews into the mine and through the caved entrance, and open and create safe access into 75 feet of the mine tunnel. Our Task Order specifically required:

- Site preparation, including construction of roads and staging areas;
- Water management of water and sludge impounded behind any blockage at the mine opening or deeper in the mine, which at the time it had been determined by others to consist only of a pool of water several feet deep;

- Rehabilitation of the mine opening; and
- Opening up 75 feet of mine tunnel.

Data provided to Environmental Restoration indicated that we were to anticipate water up to approximately 6 feet deep on the backside of the blocked entrance, and within the approximately 10 foot tall mine tunnel. This data suggested that there were approximately 250,000 gallons of trapped mine water. Based on this information, Environmental Restoration drafted a work plan establishing our method of accessing and pumping the trapped mine water, and completing our assigned Task Order work.

As is now known, there was much more water behind the blocked mine entrance than believed.

I was not personally on-site when the release occurred, but here is what I have learned: The release occurred during a preliminary trip to the mine, prior to Environmental Restoration initiating our scheduled field work. During this preliminary trip, we were directed to remove rubble and debris that had caved in over the mine opening. This was part of an effort to locate the bedrock above the mine tunnel. The removal of the material was carried out with all due caution over a two day period, and under the guidance of the EPA OSC and abandoned mine representatives from the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety's Inactive Mine Program. The Gold King Mine release occurred following the removal of rubble and debris from the entrance. It is my understanding that the release occurred approximately 20 minutes after the removal of the overburden and debris and during cleanup activities of the removed debris. It was during this cleanup phase that the initial waters were seen leaching from an area of the collapsed portal face, which was thought at that time to be above the water line within the mine. This trickle quickly escalated into the full release witnessed.

Our initial site response following the incident was focused on the immediate safety of all site workers and the public, quickly followed by re-establishing basic site access. Following the incident, the onsite team was stranded because the access road was washed out. Simultaneously the EPA OSC, with assistance from our Response Manager, used onsite radio communication to relay details on the release to the State of Colorado DRMS mine representatives. These men then implemented steps to further notify the public immediately downstream as well as officials, as discussed between the state officials and the OSC.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Gold King Mine incident is a terrible misfortune for the Animus River, and for those who live along and make their living from it, and I commend the Committee for wanting to understand the details surrounding it. While my experience does not compare to those of the people whose livelihoods or water supplies were disrupted by the blowout, it was heartbreaking for me as an environmental professional to see the release on the Animus River.

This incident in no way reflects who we are as a company. We are proud of our track record on the thousands of environmental and emergency response projects we have worked on over the years. We

are grateful that we have had the opportunity to contribute to helping safeguard people and the environment, and we hope to continue to serve in that capacity for many years to come.

I would like to thank you for the attention and time you have given to this issue, and I am happy to answer to the best of my ability any questions you might have.

## Dennis Greaney Bio

Dennis Greaney is President and Managing Partner of Environmental Restoration, LLC, a role he has held since helping to found the company in 1997.

Mr. Greaney has more than 30 years of experience in emergency response and environmental remediation. While leading Environmental Restoration, LLC, he has participated in the emergency responses to some of the most significant natural, environmental, and man-made disasters the country has faced during that period, including the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Katrina, and the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

During the course of his career, Mr. Greaney has directed a comprehensive range of technical projects including more than 1,300 EPA task orders involving all types of treatment technologies and remediation services. His experience has allowed him to gain a widespread knowledge of procuring required resources and materials, managing multi-disciplinary personnel and subcontractors on simultaneous projects, planning and scheduling development, and writing required technical plans and reports. Additionally, Mr. Greaney has worked with other government agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, and the Department of Transportation, and hundreds of private sector companies, on a wide range of environmental-related mitigation and emergency response projects.

Previously, Mr. Greaney worked with the environmental remediation firms Riedel Environmental and Smith Technology. He studied Ecology as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois and Environmental Toxicology as a graduate student at Illinois State University. Originally from Swansea Illinois, he lives in St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Greaney is active in several volunteer organizations including serving on the Advisory Board of Professional Science Master's Degree in Environmental Management at Southern Illinois University.