1.2 Environmental Justice Considerations

In response to the community's comments relating to Environmental Justice (EJ), this section has been added to identify EJ considerations that have been a part of the design and execution of the Health Study workplan.

In EPA's Community Involvement Plan (CIP) for Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit (February 2013)~~its 2012 Draft Community Engagement Plan (CEP)~~, EPA identified Butte Silver Bow County as "an area of potential EJ [environmental justice] concern" based on comparison of the percentage of persons below the poverty level in the county as compared to the state. As defined within the CI~~E~~P:

> *Environmental Justice (EJ) is focused attention on communities which are disproportionately impacted by environmental problems, with the goal of ensuring a quality environment for all citizens regardless of race, ethnicity or other socioeconomic factors, and promoting equal access to public information and participation in matters relating to human health and the environment. The EJ Program consists of technical and administrative support personnel tasked with facilitating the Region's implementation of this goal.*

The CI~~E~~P describes several ongoing and recent activities conducted by EPA to incorporate environmental justice into public engagement at the BPSOU including:

- assigning a local Remedial Project Manager;
- making public meetings accessible;
- providing information on a regular basis and in an accessible format;
- helping to set up a Technical Advisory Group or "TAG"; and
- screening environmental justice matters in conjunction with EPA's actions in the Butte Silver Bow area.

In consideration of EPA's commitment to the above, community outreach conducted in support of the public health study seeks to promote meaningful involvement of all people (regardless of race, color, nationality, or income) by providing ~~to~~ public information about and opportunities to participate in the health study process. This includes scheduling public meetings associated with the health study at times and locations that promote accessibility by all members of the community. Notices of meetings are broadly distributed multiple times to the community. Meetings are advertised using multiple media sources. Periodic distribution of fact sheets and ads in free newspapers has also been employed, along with posting health study information on the BSB and Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area websites~~'s website~~, to promote community access to health study information.

In response to the communities input, ~~A~~a representative from the Citizens Technical Environmental Committee or CTEC, the EPA-supported TAG for the Butte Site, has also been invited to participate in the study design process along with a Citizens' Advisory Committee ("CAC") and other planning team

representatives from EPA, BSB, MDEQ, ATSDR, and AR. As part of the planning team, all of these representatives are invited to participate in study design planning meetings and in review and comment of interim Work Plan drafts leading up to the Work Plan that will be submitted to EPA for final approval.

In addition to promoting meaningful involvement of all citizens in community outreach, the study design itself also aligns with environmental justice considerations. For instance, as shown in Figure 1, the study area of interest for the public health study is broad and encompasses the Butte area of potential environmental justice concern identified by EPA in the CIP~~draft CEP~~. Additionally, as detailed in section 2.1.2 below, this initial health study is focused on multiple years of blood lead data collected from Butte area children primarily through the county's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program (a program which serves low income persons) and in conjunction with the RMAP. Participation in the blood lead testing program by resident children age 6 and under as well as expectant or nursing mothers is encouraged through a variety of means, including community/education outreach efforts, in-home assessments, referrals from local physicians, and WIC. WIC services are offered free of charge to households with income at or below current WIC income guidelines which assures that participation in the blood lead testing program is available to low income households.

Finally, lead has been identified as one of the primary contaminants of concern based on EPA's risk assessments to support actions taken at BPSOU, but may also be present within the environment due to a number of other sources (i.e., industrial sources, lead-based paint, plumbing, etc.). The RMAP program investigates and remediates all potential lead sources, and is not limited to mining-related sources. Blood lead data provide direct evidence of exposure to lead without regard to individual sources of lead contributing to the exposure and with much less potential for confounding than for indicators of health impacts from environmental stressors, such as the number of illnesses attributable to lead as a percent of the community population. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) considers children living at or below the poverty line who live in older housing to be at greatest risk of lead poisoning. Thus, the RMAP's unique design attempts to address a significant health concern for children at or below the poverty line. The blood lead data addressed by this health study design represents a large proportion of children subject to both of these conditions, thus considering the most vulnerable portion of the population.