

# *Problem and Opportunity Statements*

24 February 2004 Public Meeting  
Picher, Oklahoma

# Problem Statements

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- The problems in the Tar Creek and Spring River Watersheds are:
  - Public health problems due to lead contamination in the region.
  - Decreased public safety due to the risk of subsidence, abandoned mine shafts, and a degraded environment.
  - Extensive mining under the towns of Picher and Cardin and to the west of Commerce causing subsidence throughout the region, including at:
    - Highway 69 east of Picher
    - The McNeeley Ranch

# Problem Statements

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- Abandoned mine shafts that are open or improperly sealed, including:
  - South and West of Commerce through Picher and Cardin to the Kansas boarder
  - Scattered between Picher, Cardin and Quapaw, north to the Kansas boarder
  - Along Alternate Highway 69 North, northeast of Quapaw to the Kansas boarder
  - Between Alternate Highway 69 and Spring River
  - 25 shafts open in the Picher city limits, including:
    - Cherokee Street
    - East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
    - Central and Frisco

# Problem Statements

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- Contaminated groundwater throughout the region.
- Flood damages in the Miami, Commerce, Picher, and Cardin areas along Tar Creek.
- Impaired ecosystem due to mine seeps in the region:
  - East of North Miami, along the east Highway 69
  - South of Commerce, west of Highway 69
  - Southeast of Quapaw
  - West of Highway 69 between Commerce and Cardin
  - McNeeley Ranch
- Severely impaired ecosystem, including the loss of plants and animals, in Tar Creek and Spring River.

# Problem Statements

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- Degraded stream corridor along Tar Creek from the headwaters to the creek's confluence with the Neosho River, as well as its tributaries.
- Degraded stream corridor along Spring River and its tributaries from the headwaters to the confluence with Grand Lake.
- Degraded riparian corridor along Tar Creek, Spring River, and their tributaries.

# Problem Statements

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- Contaminated ecosystem downstream of the Tar Creek Superfund site to Grand Lake.
- Contaminated culturally significant Native American lands.
- Large piles of chat remain in the watersheds
  - Fisher Pile
  - Eagle-Picher Central Mill
- Abandoned mill ponds in former milling areas may contain chemicals and concentrated metals that contaminate the environment.

# Opportunity Statements

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- The opportunities in the Tar Creek and Spring River Watersheds include:
  - Improve public health and safety in the watersheds.
  - Improve water quality throughout the region.
  - Decrease flood damages in the Miami, Commerce, Picher, and Cardin areas along Tar Creek.
  - Increase wildlife and plant habitat throughout the region.
  - Improve the overall ecosystem of the watersheds.

# Opportunity Statements

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- Improve the stream and riparian corridors to a more natural state.
- Increase public safety by properly sealing mineshafts in the region.
- Decrease subsidence risk by stabilizing the abandoned mines.
- Decrease the amount of chat contaminating the area.
- Decrease contamination from abandoned mill ponds.