

BRIEFLY



Jerry McBride/The Durango Herald via AP
Dan Bender, with the La Plata County Sheriff's Office, takes a water sample from the Animas River near Durango, Colo., Aug. 6.

Residents demand answers as mine spill fouls rivers

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Farmers, towns and tribes slammed water-intake gates shut as a sludge-laden plume from a Colorado mine spill rolled down principal rivers in the desert Southwest on Monday, prompting local officials and families to demand answers about possible long-term threats from heavy metals borne along by the spill.

Colorado and New Mexico declared stretches of the Animas and San Juan rivers to be disaster areas as the orange-colored waste stream estimated to be 100 miles long churned downstream toward Lake Powell in Utah after the spill Wednesday at the abandoned Gold King mine.

The Navajo Nation, which covers parts of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, also declared an emergency as it shut down water intake systems and stopped diverting water from the San Juan River.

The 3 million gallons of mine waste included high concentrations of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. Workers with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency accidentally unleashed the spill as federal and contract workers inspected the abandoned mine site near Silverton, Colorado.

The EPA has said the contaminants were rolling too fast to be an immediate health threat. Experts and federal environmental officials say they expect the river system to dilute the heavy metals before they pose a longer-term threat.

The EPA said stretches of the rivers would be closed for drinking water, recreation and other uses at least through Aug. 17.

Air controller study shows chronic fatigue

WASHINGTON (AP) — Air traffic controllers' work schedules often lead to chronic fatigue, making them less alert and endangering the safety of the national air traffic system, according to a study the government kept secret for years.

Federal Aviation Administration officials posted the study online Monday, hours after The Associated Press reported the findings — and noted that agency officials had declined to furnish a copy despite repeated requests over the past three months, including a Freedom of Information Act filing.

The impetus for the study was a recommendation by the National Transportation Safety Board to the FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association to revise controller schedules to provide rest periods that are long enough “to obtain sufficient restorative sleep.”

The study found that nearly 2 in 10 controllers had committed significant errors in the previous year — such as bringing planes too close together — and over half attributed the errors to fatigue. A third of controllers said they perceived fatigue to be a “high” or “extreme” safety risk. Greater than 6 in 10 controllers indicated that in the previous year they had fallen asleep or experienced a lapse of attention while driving to or from midnight shifts, which typically begin about 10 p.m. and end around 6 a.m.

Overall, controllers whose activity was closely monitored by scientists averaged 5.8 hours of sleep per day over the course of a

work week. They averaged only 3.1 hours before midnight shifts and 5.4 hours before early morning shifts.

The most tiring schedules required controllers to work five straight midnight shifts, or to work six days a week several weeks in a row, often with at least one midnight shift per week.

The study is composed of a survey of 3,268 controllers about their work schedules and sleep habits, and a field study that monitored the sleep and the mental alertness of more than 200 controllers at 30 air traffic facilities.

Grizzlies may be killed after fatal Yellowstone attack

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Two grizzly bears captured close to where a seasonal employee of Yellowstone National Park was killed could be euthanized if DNA tests determine they attacked the man, authorities said.

Lance Crosby, 63, who worked as a nurse in the park's medical clinics, was hiking alone and without bear spray when he was killed, according to park officials. His body was discovered Friday by a park ranger about a half-mile from the nearest developed trail, hidden beneath pine needles and dirt.

Crosby, of Billings, Montana, was an experienced hiker and his wounds indicated he tried to fight back, officials said.

Biologists set up a trap that snared an adult female bear at the scene that night. A cub was captured Monday, and biologists hoped to trap another cub after a camera recorded an image of two cubs in the area, Yellowstone spokeswoman Amy Bartlett said.

Park Superintendent Dan Wenk said the adult bear would be killed for public safety if DNA samples show it was involved in Crosby's death. The cubs first would be offered to a zoo or rehabilitation center, but such placements are difficult and the animals likely would be killed if no permanent home is found, Bartlett said.

Crosby was the sixth person killed by grizzlies since 2010 in the greater Yellowstone area, which has an estimated 750 of the animals and includes the park and surrounding portions of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

Shooting, protests put Ferguson back on edge

Associated Press

FERGUSON, Mo. — Ferguson was a community on edge again Monday, a day after a protest marking the anniversary of Michael Brown's death was punctuated with gunshots and police critically wounded a black 18-year-old accused of opening fire on officers.

Police, protesters and people who live and work in the St. Louis suburb were bracing for what another night of demonstrations along West Florissant Avenue might bring. The thoroughfare was the site of massive protests and rioting after Brown was fatally shot last year in a confrontation with a white Ferguson officer.

“Of course I'm worried,” said Sandy Sansevere, a retired health care worker who volunteers at the retail store operated by the nonprofit group I Love Ferguson, which was formed after Brown's death to promote the community. “What scares me are the guns.”

Several hundred people had gathered by 9 p.m. Monday, chanting and holding signs. There were no apparent signs of conflict.

Earlier in the day, the father of the suspect who was shot called the police version of events “a bunch of lies.” He said two girls who were with his son told him he was unarmed and had been drawn into a dispute involving two groups of young people.

St. Louis County Executive Steve Stenger declared a state of emergency, which authorizes county Police Chief Jon Belmar to take control of police emergency management in and around Ferguson.

Protests spilled outside of Ferguson. Almost 60 protesters were arrested around midday Monday for blocking the entrance to the federal courthouse in downtown St. Louis. Authorities planned to release them on a promise to appear later in court.

Protesters later briefly blocked Interstate 70 during the late afternoon rush hour, with an additional undetermined number of arrests made.

Among those arrested at the court-



Cristina M. Fletes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch via AP
People protest on West Florissant Ave., Sunday in Ferguson, Mo., on the one-year anniversary of Michael Brown being shot and killed by Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson.

house was scholar and civil rights activist Cornel West.

That protest, like other commemoration events over the past few days, was largely peaceful and somber. But on Sunday, several hundred people gathered in the street on West Florissant, ignoring an officer on a bullhorn repeatedly warning them to get to the sidewalk or face arrest. Eventually, a few lobbed glass bottles and rocks at officers. One officer was hospitalized with cuts to the face after being hit with a rock. Two others had minor injuries after protesters sprayed them with pepper spray.

As tensions escalated, several gunshots suddenly rang out from the area near a strip of stores, including some that had been looted moments earlier. Belmar believes the shots came from about six different shooters. What prompted the shooting was not clear, but Belmar said two groups had been feuding. The shots sent protesters and reporters running for cover.

The shooters included the suspect, Tyrone Harris Jr., whom police had been watching out of concern that he was armed, Belmar said.

During the gunfire, the suspect crossed the street and apparently spotted plainclothes officers arriving in an unmarked van with distinctive red and blue police lights, Belmar said. The suspect allegedly shot into the windshield of the van.

The four officers in the van fired back, then pursued the suspect on foot. The suspect again fired on the officers when he became trapped in a fenced-in area, the chief said, and all four opened fire.

Harris was in critical condition after surgery. Prosecutors announced 10 charges against him — five counts of armed criminal action, four counts of first-degree assault on a law enforcement officer and a firearms charge. All 10 are felonies.

All four officers in the van, each wearing protective vests, escaped injury. They were not wearing body cameras, Belmar said. Tyrone Harris Sr. told The Associated Press his son was a close friend of Michael Brown and was in Ferguson on Sunday night to pay respects. The elder Harris said his son got caught up in a dispute and was running after gunfire broke out.

Japan restarts reactor after break due to Fukushima

TOKYO (AP) — A power plant operator in southern Japan restarted a nuclear reactor on Tuesday, the first to begin operating under new requirements following the Fukushima disaster.

Kyushu Electric Power Co. said Tuesday it had restarted the No. 1 reactor at its Sendai nuclear plant as planned. The restart marks Japan's return to nuclear energy four-and-half-years after the 2011 meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in northeastern Japan following an earthquake and tsunami.

The Fukushima disaster displaced more than 100,000 people due to radioactive contamination and spurred a national debate over this resource-scarce country's reliance on nuclear power.

A majority of Japanese oppose the return to nuclear energy. Dozens of protesters, including ex-Prime Minister Naoto Kan, who was in office at the time of the disaster and has become an outspoken critic of nuclear power, were gathered outside the

plant as police stood guard.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority affirmed the safety of the Sendai reactor and another one at the plant last September under stricter safety rules imposed after the 2011 accident, the worst since the 1986 Chernobyl explosion.

The Sendai No. 1 reactor is scheduled to start generating power Friday and reach full capacity next month.

Koichi Miyazawa, Japan's industry minister, said Tuesday that the government would “put safety first” in resuming use of nuclear power.

All of Japan's 43 workable reactors were idled for the past two years

pending safety checks. To offset the shortfall in power output, the country ramped up imports of oil and gas and fired up more thermal power plants, slowing progress toward reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has sought to have the reactors restarted as soon as possible to help reduce costly reliance on imported oil and gas and alleviate the financial burden on utilities of maintaining the idled plants.

“There are very strong vested interests to reopen nuclear reactors. Accepting them as permanently closed would have financial implications that would be hard

to manage,” said Tomas Kaberger, chairman of the Japan Renewable Energy Foundation.

Utilities are seeking approvals to restart 23 reactors, including the other Sendai reactor.

The government has set a goal to have nuclear power meet more than 20 percent of Japan's energy needs by 2030, despite the lingering troubles at the Fukushima plant, which is plagued by massive flows of contaminated water leaking from its reactors. Removal of the melted fuel at the plant — the most challenging part of the 30-to-40-year process of shutting it down permanently — will begin only in 2022.

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Thursday, August 13
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Tickets are \$15 members; \$17 non-members

Advance reservations required by email to nixyaawii@live.com.