

GEM HILL WATER USERS

The Gem Hill Water Users filed a statutory claim in 1983 from a groundwater source. They dated the priority as circa 1916 with statements dating it back as far as 1888. They also stated the water was from Bell Gulch and a tunnel. There have been multiple adjudication claims with different sources and priority dates all claiming that they are on a shared system with the water coming from somewhere up Bell Gulch. IDWR has conducted a field inspection to verify that the water currently and has always come from Bell Gulch Creek. It originally came from the creek at a mine portal. That is where some of the people got the idea of groundwater. It did not come from the mine portal. It has always come from the creek. In 1891 Milwaukee Mining Company (currently owned by Hecla Limited) started using water out of Bell Gulch with a different point of diversion then the Gem Hill Water Users. Some time before 1960 after a road wash out event the Gem Hill and Hecla points of diversion were combined about 100 Yards below the mine portal. Looking at the earliest Sandborn map dating April of 1896 there were bunk houses in the current location of the Gem Hill Water Users and the water supply for the gem mill owned by the Milwaukee mining company received water from the "South Fork Coeur d'Alene River and a mountain stream that never freezes". IDWR is considering the mountain stream that never freezes Bell Gulch Creek. IDWR is going to recommend claims that are on the gem hill water users system an April 1896 priority date out of Bell Gulch Creek based on the information found in old records and during a site inspection conducted on August 21, 2012.



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