Baseline Documentation Checklist For Communities Facing Existing or Proposed Mining Activities

Establishing strong, organized baseline documentation before mining or expansion begins is one of the most powerful tools communities have. This checklist helps residents gather clear, consistent, and defensible information about environmental, health, and community conditions **before** impacts occur.

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1. Community & Location Information

- ☐ Community name and geographic area being documented
- ☐ Contact information for local coordinators or documentation leads
- ☐ Map(s) of the area, including:
  - ☐ Residential clusters
  - ☐ Water sources (streams, wells, springs, ponds)
  - ☐ Sensitive locations (schools, cemeteries, farms, historic sites)
  - ☐ Existing industrial sites or previous mining
- ☐ GPS coordinates for key locations or monitoring sites

2. Existing Land Use & Physical Conditions

- ☐ Current land uses (residential, agricultural, forested, recreational)
- ☐ Photographs of landscape from fixed reference points
- ☐ Soil conditions and visible erosion or sedimentation issues
- ☐ Presence of abandoned mine lands or known hazards
- ☐ Notes on any prior mining or reclamation activity

3. Baseline Water Quality Documentation

A. Visual Observations

- ☐ Current land uses (residential, agricultural, forested, recreational)
- ☐ Photographs of landscape from fixed reference points
- ☐ Soil conditions and visible erosion or sedimentation issues
- ☐ Presence of abandoned mine lands or known hazards
- ☐ Notes on any prior mining or reclamation activity

B. Measurements (if available)

- ☐ pH
- ☐ Conductivity/Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)
- ☐ Temperature
- ☐ Turbidity
- ☐ Iron/manganese staining presence

C. Water Sources

☐ List of private wells, springs, and household water lines
☐ Well depth and construction details (if known)
☐ Date of last water test

D. Photographic Documentation

☐ Photos of water bodies upstream and downstream of proposed mining area
☐ Photos of outfalls, culverts, drains, or seeps

4. Baseline Air Quality & Noise

A. Observations

☐ Odors (chemical, sulfur, diesel, particulate)
☐ Visible dust on vehicles, porches, windowsills
☐ Frequency and type of noise (trucks, blasting, heavy machinery)

B. Instruments (if available)

☐ PM2.5/PM10 measurements
☐ Noise level readings (dB)
☐ Weather notes (wind direction, humidity, temperature)

C. Photographic Documentation

☐ Photos/video of dust plumes
☐ Photos of machinery or haul roads (if applicable)

5. Ecological Baseline

☐ Inventory of wildlife commonly observed
☐ Noted presence of amphibians, fish, pollinators, or sensitive species
☐ Vegetation inventory near streams and forest edges
☐ Any invasive species already present
☐ Evidence of hunting, fishing, or recreation use

6. Community Health & Quality-of-Life Indicators

(Optional, depending on comfort level and privacy concerns)

☐ Recent community health concerns (respiratory issues, water-related illnesses)
☐ Changes in household water supply quantity/pressure
☐ Property damage history (cracks, foundation shifts, etc.)
☐ Reports of nuisance impacts (dust on laundry, noise waking residents, etc.)

7. Infrastructure & Traffic Baseline

☐ Current road conditions (potholes, shoulder erosion, rutting)
☐ Traffic levels at different times of day
☐ School bus routes and timing
☐ Existing signage for weight limits or speed limits
☐ Photos of road surfaces and intersections

8. Public Records & Official Information

☐ Copies of any existing permits
☐ Maps from mining agency or geological surveys
☐ Blasting records (if current mining is already occurring)
☐ Previous violations or enforcement actions in the area
☐ Contact information for regulatory agencies

9. Community Interviews & Oral Histories

☐ Statements from long-term residents about:
 ☐ Water changes over time
 ☐ Historical land conditions
 ☐ Past mining impacts
☐ Notes from community listening sessions
☐ Documentation of local concerns or priorities

10. Creating a Documentation Archive

☐ Establish a shared folder or physical binder system
☐ Label all photos with:
 ☐ date
 ☐ time
 ☐ location
 ☐ photographer
 ☐ description of what's shown
☐ Create standardized logs for:
 ☐ water observations
 ☐ air and dust events
 ☐ traffic patterns
 ☐ noise or blasting
☐ Keep backup copies in at least two locations

11. Ongoing Monitoring Plan

☐ Who will document what, and how often
☐ Fixed reference points for photography
☐ Seasonal updates for water, wildlife, and land conditions