

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT**

Date: Thursday, July 10, 2008

From: Michelle Rogow

Subject: Mobilization

Altoona Mine Site

Shasta -Trinity National Forest, Castella, CA

Latitude: 41.1367000

Longitude: -122.5475000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	09PC
Reporting Period:	7/7/08 - 7/13/08	D.O. #:	9015
Start Date:	7/8/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	7/7/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	EP-W-07-022
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Altoona Mine is an abandoned mercury mine located approximately 11 miles (as the crow flies) west of the town of Castella in Trinity County, California. The approximate geographic coordinates of the mine are 41 E 8'12.7" north latitude, 122 E 32'51" west longitude. The mine is located on private land within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest is administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS).

The Altoona Mine site is comprised of an abandoned and backfilled vertical mine, with an adjacent ore processing area, former retort areas, and waste rock and tailings piles. There are collapsed remains of wooden structures at the ore processing area, and other collapsed wooden structures are scattered about the periphery of the mine site.

The mine was comprised of six levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the main vertical shaft, and two levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the second vertical shaft. The eight horizontal shafts comprise a total of over 10,000 linear feet.

The mine is located on an escarpment which faces southeast. The ore processing area is located immediately southwest of the surmised location of the main adit, and tailings piles are located southeast (downhill) of the processing area. The base of the tailings piles is approximately 80 feet below the elevation of the processing area.

Water from the mine flows from under the tailings piles, down Soda Creek to the east fork of the Trinity River, which is approximately one mile to the southeast of the mine. As no flowing water was found immediately upgradient of the mine, the water source of Soda Creek is assumed to be an underground source, which likely flows through mine passageways.

Current Activities

7/7/08 - EPA OSC and 16 ERRS mobilize to Dunsmuir, CA.

7/8/08 - EPA: 1, ERRS: 16. Mobilization of equipment to the Altoona Mine begins. A 330 excavator, 3 haul trucks, a grader, 2 water trucks, 2 loaders, a 60 kW generator, and a 20' storage container were mobilized to the site. One of the loaders was used to load the haul trucks with rock at Whalen Quarry. One haul truck and the loader were staged at Whalen Quarry overnight. The grader, water trucks and haul trucks began work on the roads in to the site, which were in very poor condition due to logging activities. EPA and Roseburg Resources continued negotiation of the access agreement. The OSC met with Roseburg Resources personnel regarding the proposed logging of the repository, screen plant and bypass road. Roseburg, the OSC and EQM flagged out the revised repository boundary. The OSC met with Sierra Pacific Industries Representative regarding their activities, which began on 7/7/08 and resulted in additional heavy traffic on USFS 25, which is the main road to the Site. USFS provided 2 Shasta-Trinity National Forest radios for fire and emergency purposes. EQM provided night security which will continue throughout the project.

7/9/08 – EPA: 1, EQM: 16. Equipment mobilization continued. Another haul truck, a D8 dozer, a 345 excavator, 3 office trailers and the porta-potties were brought to the site. The final haul truck was loaded with rock at Whalen Quarry and the haul truck and the loader were brought up to the Site. Work on the roads continued. The office area was cleared, leveled and the trailers began to be set up and generator attached. A road was built between waste rock pile 1 and 2. Concrete and miscellaneous debris were pulled and stockpiled. EPA and Roseburg Resources continued negotiation of the access agreement.

7/10/08 – EPA:1, EQM: 16. EQM continued work on the road to the fuel cell and construction of the secondary containment for the fuel tanks. The grader worked on County 133 from the Site to Doe Creek. In preparation for the construction of the repository, EQM began moving Waste Rock Pile 1 to Waste Rock Pile 2. Approximately 40 loads (1,000 cubic yards) were moved by the end of the day. One of the fuel tanks (split tank) was delivered, along with a 4,000 gallon septic tank, a connex box, a bucket for the 345 excavator, and the dozer was transported up to the site from where it was staged the previous day. START and USCG held a site preparation meeting at the EPA warehouse, reviewing sampling and QA procedures. USCG picked up the EPA satellites, plotter and miscellaneous equipment from the EPA warehouse for delivery to the Site. EQM and Roseburg exchanged indemnity assurances and certificates of insurance. EPA completed negotiations with Roseburg Resources on access and land use. Final signed copies of the access agreement were exchanged and approval for work was granted. The OSC visited with the owners of Pine-Gra-La, a resort located along USFS Road 25, approximately 10 miles from Castella and halfway to the Site. Through out the summer, Pine-Gra-La hosts weddings on the weekends and family reunions during the week. As a result, visitor traffic during the weekends increases substantially, with guests who are unfamiliar with the roads. The Pine-Gra-La owners were appreciative of the coordination, they provided their schedule of events for the weekend and requested follow up with more information when it was available.

7/11/08 – EPA:1, EQM: 16. EQM began work on excavation and leveling of the camp pad. The building of the secondary containment for the fuel cell was completed in preparation for lining. Another septic tank was delivered. The grader began work on County Road 133 towards Doe Creek, so that water could be retrieved from a closer location than the Trinity River. Roseburg's contractor, Edgewood Logging began cutting of the screen plant site with the feller buncher. The OSC coordinated with the USFS on the Fire Plan. At the end of the day, Inter-rail Transportation arrived, along with 4 of the camp trailers, which were staged in Castella awaiting transport to the Site in the morning. The OSC coordinated with Roseburg Resources, Sierra Pacific and their contractors regarding the plan to transport the camp trailers up to the Site beginning on Saturday. Both logging companies confirmed that they would not have logging trucks hauling over the weekend. The OSC also coordinated with the owners of Pine-Gra-La, who requested that we curtail truck traffic during the exchange of vows. USCG mobilized to Dunsmuir, stopping in Sacramento to pick up the roll of liner from EQM's Sacramento warehouse. START participated in a training on Response Manager in preparation for its potential use on the site.

7/12/08 - EPA:2, REAC: 1, EQM: 16, USCG:2. Work focused on getting the camp ready for trailer delivery. EQM continued preparing the camp pad and moving material from the cut. The area had to be leveled for the trailer mats to be installed and by the end of the day, 2 sets of mats were installed for the trailers. Inter-rail Transportation met with the OSC and RM in the morning regarding schedule of transportation and plan for trailer delivery. 4 of the trailers were already at Castella and 4 more were scheduled to arrive at approximately 11 am. Because of the wedding, the goal was to get all of the trailers past Pine-Gra-La before 4pm. Due to the size of the trailers and the challenge of the road, moving the trailers past Pine-Gra-La took most of the day, but was successful and by the end of the day, one trailer was delivered up to the camp site. The remaining trailers were stashed in various locations along USFS 25 awaiting transfer up to the camp. USCG arrived on site with the liner, satellites and Polaris ranger. EQM assisted with unloading of the equipment and USCG attempted to get the EPA satellite up and running. The satellite was placed on the EPA trailer, but was unable to connect, no matter what time of day it was. Grading and maintenance on the roads continued. The water truck which had issues with its seals was repaired. In addition, ERT and REAC were on site. They disassembled the solar powered stream and rain gauge which had been installed in October 2007. They collected stream cross section data in Soda Gulch and met with the OSC regarding the derivation of site specific risk calculation for the action level. At the suggestion of Superfund Technical Support, ERT/REAC had performed calculations to determine protective concentrations for mercury (and arsenic) based on sediment threshold and probable effects concentrations. After discussing restoration measures, ERT/REAC planned to revise the calculations and submit to the OSC. ERT/REAC demobed at the end of the day.

7/13/08 - EPA:1, EQM: 16, USCG:2. EQM worked a split shift, with half the crew working in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. The main priority of the day was to complete work on the camp pad, install the trailer mats and work with Inter-rail to get the camp trailers hauled to camp. Inter-rail worked a daisy chain system, with the low boys bringing the trailers as far as they could, stacking 2-3

of them at mile post 15.5 and then the bed truck hauling the camp trailers up the last stretch of road from mile post 15.5 to the camp site. By the end of the day, 8 additional camp trailers were delivered and set up at the camp site. Road work and dust suppression along the roads continued. Travers had its electrician on site and he worked to hook the trailers up together and go through the trailers to ensure that things were working properly and gain access to all of the rooms. The OSC visited Pine-Gra-La to determine if there were any issues with the transport the previous day. One incident was noted, in which one of the employees got trapped by a truck going out. The owners also donated some fruit and finger food left over from the wedding for the crew, which brought smiles since temperatures were in the 90's.

Planned Removal Actions

1. Excavate repository
2. Install liner
3. Fill repository with mine waste
4. Sample to confirm cleanup goals
5. Cap repository
6. Restore site and repository area

Next Steps

Complete set up of camp. Complete relocation of waste rock pile #1 to waste rock pile #2. Log the repository, screen plant and bypass road. De-limb and haul logs from site. Remove stumps and vegetation from repository and screen plant. Sample repository and screen plant.

Key Issues

1. The size of the repository
2. Does the contamination have a boundary?
3. Surrounded and smoked out on occasion

www.epaosc.org/Altoona