



Argonaut Mine

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • November 2014

Jackson, California

EPA Cleanup Activities and November Public Meeting

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is moving forward with cleanup activities at the Argonaut Mine site and has scheduled a public meeting for November 18th, 2014. The Argonaut Mine site, a 65-acre former gold mine tailings disposal area, contains highly contaminated soils and tailings from its years of operation. Over the past year, EPA has been sampling soils as part of an environmental assessment of areas in and near the Argonaut Mine. In December, EPA will remove highly contaminated soils and tailings in a small area of land on Pioneer Street. Over the next several months, residents can expect to see ongoing investigations to assess the need for a long-term cleanup plan. EPA will continue to inform residents about what activities are happening in their neighborhood.

Removal of Highly Contaminated Soils and Tailings in December

In December 2014, EPA will begin removing soil and mine tailings containing high levels of arsenic, lead and mercury from the Argonaut Mine site. This work, called a “removal action,” will focus on materials in a small area at the corner of Argonaut Lane and Pioneer Street (See map, page 3). This small area was historically used to dispose of mine tailings from the Argonaut Mill and is the focus of the first phase of planned EPA removal work.

EPA’s goal during this initial removal action is to eliminate immediate threats to human health and the environment by excavating the contaminated soil and mine tailings. The contaminated material will be moved to a designated five-acre area of land to the east of Argonaut Lane and west of Buena Vista Drive, where it will be covered with clean soil and secured. The removal area will also be covered with clean soil and seeded with fast-growing vegetation to prevent soil runoff. In 2015, EPA will construct a mine waste repository in this five-acre area (See map, page 3) where all of the removed soil will be securely stored and capped with a permanent vegetative cover designed to prevent migration or erosion of the contaminants.

Save the Date

Public Meeting

**November 18th
6:30 PM**

**Jackson City
Council Chambers**

33 Broadway
Jackson, CA 95642



Traffic Interruptions and Construction Schedule

EPA is working with your local government and school district to minimize inconvenience to residents during this removal action, however, some disruption in traffic will be necessary to ensure the safety of the community. For about two weeks in early December, a section of Argonaut Lane will most likely be closed to the public while contaminated soils are being removed and transported to the repository. EPA will hire a local traffic safety company to develop a traffic control plan, which will be shared during the public meeting on November 18th, 2014. Community members are encouraged to attend the public meeting to provide input and learn more about this proposed traffic control plan. EPA's goal is to cause as little disruption to people's daily schedules as possible and to keep community members fully informed of all traffic or road closure plans.

For more information regarding EPA's removal work or to join the mailing list, contact:

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Eastwood Multiple Arch Dam Investigations

In the course of environmental investigations at the Argonaut mine site, EPA's attention was directed to the Eastwood Multiple Arch Dam (the Dam, see map). EPA is working with local agencies to address dam safety issues, including the City of Jackson and Amador County. In November 2013, EPA arranged to have the safety of the Dam evaluated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Following a series of inspections, USACE prepared a report and submitted it to EPA in June 2014. This report determined that the Dam is structurally unstable and USACE recommended further hazard impact studies be conducted to understand the nature and scope of the safety risk. These studies are currently underway, and local agencies will continue to update the public as information becomes available.

It is recommended no one trespass on the property surrounding the Dam, where the City of Jackson has installed fencing and warning signs to designate an unsafe area.

EPA shared this USACE report with local, state and federal agencies. These agencies convened a workgroup to determine appropriate actions needed to protect the public. The City is currently working with the County to include the dam as an identified hazard in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. EPA and local officials will be available to answer questions related to the Dam at the upcoming public meeting on November 18th.

The report can be viewed here along with other EPA Argonaut Mine Site documents:

http://www.epaossc.org/site/doc_list.aspx?site_id=8780

For more information regarding the Eastwood Multiple Arch Dam, contact:

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Save the Date – Public Meeting

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