

Site Update Pride of the West Mill



Operational Period

May 28 – June 21, 2021

Current Situation

On May 11, 2021, the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) conducted an inspection at the Pride of the West Mill related to the DRMS's statutory obligation to complete reclamation at the previously permitted mill facility. This inspection identified numerous drums, bags, and containers in various states of integrity.

On May 20, 2021, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) notified EPA of their concern for unsecured chemicals at the Site and requested assistance.

An EPA response team conducted an evaluation of the Site between May 21-28, 2021. The team identified hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants in numerous abandoned drums and containers. Many of these drums and containers are compromised and leaking.

EPA will be initiating an emergency response action on June 22, 2021 to remove drums and containers in the Leach Plant, Mill Building and Laboratory.

Site Description

The Pride of the West mill facility is located several miles to the northeast and upstream of Silverton, Colorado along the Animas River. The mill facility is not in operation and consists of several structures situated within a steep river valley along Animas Forks Rd/Rt. 2.

Site Objectives

- Safety of the public and response personnel is top priority.
- Maintain site security to eliminate trespassing and public exposure.
- Minimize or, if possible, eliminate threats to human health and/or the environment posed by chemicals in the drums and containers.
- Remove, secure and properly dispose of abandoned containers containing hazardous substances as well as pollutants or contaminants.
- Provide timely and accurate communication of response information to the public, on-site media, and affected stakeholders.

Safety Message

EPA will adhere to all CDC and local recommendations pertaining to COVID-19 during the site work.

All relevant safety precautions will be followed when conducting the removal and disposal of all drums and containers. Many containers are corroding and leaking.

Operational Period Objectives

The Operational Objectives from May 29 - June 21, 2021 were to:

1. Identify waste streams to support disposal of abandoned containers and drums.
2. Monitor integrity and security of abandoned containers and drums.
3. Finalize Action Memo for CERCLA Removal Action.

Current Activities

EPA used its inventories and hazard classifications of chemicals in the containers and drums to develop plans to combine compatible waste and identify disposal facilities.

EPA developed strategies and tactics to gather, overpack, bulk and dispose of chemicals in the Leach Plant, Mill Building and Laboratory. The Office/Shop is across the road from these structures and appears to be recently occupied. The drums and containers in this building were well labelled and mostly consistent with what could be expected in an office and light mechanical garage. EPA removed 3 containers of strong acid from this building and placed them with the acids found in the Laboratory. EPA has no further plans to address the Office/Shop.

Planned Activities

1. Remobilize response resources on June 21, 2021.
2. Establish work zones on June 22, 2021 to support removal and disposal of all drums and containers currently located in the Leach Plant, Mill Building and Laboratory.

EPA will distribute the next Site Update on June 23, 2021.