



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8**

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Ref: 8SEM-EMR

ACTION MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Action Memorandum for a Removal Action at the Campgrounds 2 and 3 Site pursuant to the On-Scene Coordinator's delegated authority under CERCLA Section 104.

FROM: Craig Myers, OSC
Response Section

Taylor Bowker, OSC
Response Section

THRU: Kerry Guy, Supervisor
Response Section

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TO: Ben Bielenberg, Acting Director
Superfund and Emergency Management Division

I. Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the decision to initiate emergency response actions described herein for the Campgrounds 2 and 3 Site located in Silverton, San Juan County, CO pursuant to the On-Scene Coordinator's delegated authority under CERCLA Section 104. This emergency response involved the surface manipulation and capping of two lead contaminated dispersed campgrounds to deter camping and minimize exposure potential. Conditions existing at the Site present a threat to public health or welfare or the environment and meet the criteria for initiating a removal action under 40 CFR 300.415(b)(2) of the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

II. Site Information

A. Site Description

Site Name: Campgrounds 2 and 3
Site Spill ID (SSID): A8M5
NRC Case Number: NA

CERCLIS Number: CON000802497
Site Location: Co Rd 20A and Co Rd 52, Silverton, CO, 81433
Lat/Long: 37.82515, -107.62413
Potentially Responsible Party (PRP):
NPL Status: NPL
Removal Start Date: 7/18/2023.

B. Site Background

1. Site Evaluation

Campgrounds 2 and 3 are two dispersed campgrounds within the Bonita Peaks Mining District (BPMD) NPL site. The BPMD NPL site consists of 48 mines or mining related sources throughout the San Juan County in Colorado. Much of the soil, groundwater, and surface water have been contaminated with heavy metals throughout this NPL site due to the historic mining operations.

Campgrounds 2 and 3 are both located near historic mining operations just northeast of Silverton. These campgrounds were found to have dangerous levels of lead during sampling events conducted by the EPA in 2016 and 2018. On December 12, 2022, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Research (ATSDR) released a health consultation on exposure to mining-related environmental contamination during camping activities at the BPMD. This consultation concluded that the lead contamination at Campgrounds 2 and 3 pose a health hazard especially for children and pregnant women.

2. Physical location and Site characteristics

Campground 2 is located approximately 3.2 miles northeast of Silverton on the east side of county road 20A depicted on the map in Attachment 1. The Site is located on private property beneath what is believed to be the Mayflower Mill wire rope tramway. County Road 20A leads to many dispersed campgrounds and hikes. The area is commonly used by hikers, UTVs, and campers.

Campground 3 is located approximately 3.1 miles northeast of Silverton on the North side of county road 22 depicted on the map in Attachment 1. The Site is located on private property adjacent to what is believed to be the remnants of the Contention Mill. County Road 22 parallels the Animas River and is commonly used by hikers, UTVs, and campers.

According to EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening and Mapping Tool, the data does not indicate potential areas of EJ concern at or near the Site.

3. Release or threatened release into the environment of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

The presence of lead found in the surface soils at these campgrounds presents a release of hazardous substances to the environment. Lead is a listed hazardous substance in 40 CFR §302.4 and Section 101(14) of CERCLA.

Lead exposure can occur from spending time in areas where the soil is contaminated with lead. Exposure from lead can occur from inhalation of dust generated from recreation and other forms of soil disturbance. The effects of lead are the same whether it enters the body through respiration or ingestion. Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. The nervous system is the main target for lead poisoning in children and adults. Long-term exposure can result in decreased learning, memory, and attention, and weakness in fingers, wrists, or ankles. Lead exposure can cause anemia and damage to the kidneys. It can also cause increases in blood pressure, particularly in middle-aged and older individuals. Exposure to high lead levels can severely damage the brain and kidneys and can cause death.

In pregnant women, exposure to high levels of lead may cause a miscarriage. In men, it can cause damage to reproductive organs. Children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults because their nervous system is still developing. Children can be exposed to lead in their environment and before birth from lead in their mother's body. At lower levels of exposure, lead can decrease mental development, especially learning, intelligence, and behavior. Physical growth may also be suppressed. A child who swallows large amounts of lead may develop anemia, severe stomachache, muscle weakness, and brain damage. Exposure to lead during pregnancy can also result in premature births. Some effects of lead poisoning in a child may continue into adulthood.

III. Threats to Public Health Welfare or the Environment

A. Nature of Actual or Threatened Release of Hazardous Substances, Pollutants or Contaminants.

Recreationists and campers have been seen at these campsites frequently. Evidence of camping has also been seen including ash filled fire rings. Recreation in these areas can cause exposure through inhalation due to dust dispersion when the loose surface soil is disturbed. There is also a higher risk of exposure through both inhalation and ingestion when camping as campers will often be eating, sitting, and sleeping near or directly on the ground.

The sampling events conducted in 2016 and 2018 indicated the presence of harmful levels of lead. The surface soils at these two campgrounds are loose and not well vegetated allowing the lead to be easily dispersed into the air if the soil is disturbed.

Due to the urgency demanded by the site conditions there is no other federal or state response mechanisms that could adequately address this emergency removal.

B. Check applicable factors (from 40 CFR 300.415) which were considered in determining the appropriateness of a removal action: The EPA has considered all the factors described in 40 CFR 300.415(b)(2) of the NCP and determined that the following factors apply at the Site.

- ☒ Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants [300.415(b)(2)(i)].
- ☐ Actual or potential contamination of drinking water supplies or sensitive ecosystems [300.415(b)(2)(ii)].
- ☐ Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers, that pose a threat of release [300.415(b)(2)(iii)].
- ☒ High levels of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in soils largely at or near the surface that may migrate [300.415(b)(2)(iv)].
- ☐ Weather conditions that may cause hazardous substances or pollutants to migrate or to be released [300.415(b)(2)(v)].
- ☐ Threat of fire or explosion [300.415(b)(2)(vi)].
- ☒ The availability of other appropriate federal or state response mechanisms to respond to the release [300.415(b)(2)(vii)].
- ☐ Other situations or factors that may pose threats to the public health or welfare of the United States or the environment [300.415(b)(2)(viii)].

IV. Selected Removal Action and Estimated Costs

A. Situation and Removal Activities to Date

1. Current Situation.

Currently both campgrounds have been covered with approximately 300 cubic yards of cover material acting as a containment barrier over the contaminated soil. The surface of both campgrounds was also graded and manipulated so that the surface is uneven, hummocky, rocky, and uninviting to further deter camping and recreation at these sites. Rocks have also been placed in strategic areas to further deter camping by means of a tent or vehicle.

2. Removal activities to date:

a) Federal Government/Private Party

The EPA personnel mobilized to the Campgrounds 2 and 3 site on 7/17/2023. Approximately 300 cubic yards of cover material was placed over the contaminated soil at both at approximately 12in thick throughout both campgrounds. The cover material was graded and excavated so that the surface

at both campgrounds is uneven, hummocky, rocky, and uninviting. This acts as a barrier and deterrent to campers minimizing exposure potential. The removal concluded on 7/22/2023 when EPA personnel demobilized from the site.

b) State/local

None.

3. Enforcement

Where the responsible parties are known, an effort initially shall be made, to the extent practicable, to determine whether they can and will perform the necessary removal action promptly and properly.

B. Planned Removal Actions

1. Planned action description:

Both campgrounds will be hydroseeded with local vegetative mix to further minimize exposure potential and increase soil stability.

2. Contribution to remedial performance

The proposed actions will, to the extent practicable, contribute to the efficient performance of any long-term remedial action at the site.

3. ARARs

No ARARs have been identified for this response. Removal actions conducted under CERCLA are required to attain ARARs to the extent practicable. In determining whether compliance with ARARs is practicable, the OSC may consider appropriate factors, including the urgency of the situation and the scope of the removal action to be conducted.

4. Project Schedule

This action was started on July 18, 2023. Initial field work to cover the areas as described above took approximately 4 days. The hydroseeding of Campgrounds 2 and 3 needs to be conducted in early fall and is planned to take place by December 31, 2023.

C. Estimated Costs*

Contractor costs (ERRS/START staff, travel, equipment)	\$141,500
Other Extramural Costs (Strike Team, other Fed Agencies)	\$0.00
Contingency costs (20% of subtotal)	\$28,300
Total Removal Project Ceiling	\$169,800

*EPA direct and indirect costs, although cost recoverable, do not count toward the Removal Ceiling for this removal action. Liable parties may be held financially responsible for costs incurred by the EPA as set forth in Section 107 of CERCLA. "

V. Expected Change in the Situation Should Action Be Delayed or Not Taken

A delay in action or no action at this Site would increase the actual or potential threats to the public health and/or the environment.

VI. Outstanding Policy Issues

None.

VII. Approvals

This decision document represents the selected removal action for this Site, developed in accordance with CERCLA as amended, and is not inconsistent with the National Contingency Plan. This decision is based on the administrative record for the Site.

Conditions at the site met the NCP section 300.415(b) criteria for a removal action and through this document, I am approving the proposed removal actions. The total project ceiling is \$169,800, this amount will be funded through Remedial special account funds.

Craig Myers,
Federal On-Scene Coordinator

Date

Attachments

Att. 1: Map of Campgrounds 2 and 3 Locations

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