

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, February 27, 2009

From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Excavation of diversion channel.

Ore Knob Mine Site

Ore Knob, NC

Latitude: 36.4086670

Longitude: -81.3238890

POLREP No.:	9	Site #:	A4ND
Reporting Period:	2/16/2009-2/27/2009	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/20/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/20/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NCN000409895	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Site contains areas affected by mining, including three principal areas that were directly affected by mining along with other areas, primarily downstream, where hazardous substances have come to be located. The three principal areas include the 1950s Mine and Mill Area, the 19th Century Operations Area and a Main Tailings Impoundment. The Action memo recommends response actions to address threats from the main tailings impoundment.

The 1950's Mine and Mill Area comprises 15 acres and is located northwest of the intersection of Ore Knob Road and Little Peak Creek Road, just north of Highway 88. This area contains derelict ore bins, concrete mill foundations, a transformer building, other ruins, a small sawmill currently in operation, two acres with about 10,000 cubic yards of tailings - now mostly covered with stumps, and a two acre former pond where process water was stored. Little Peak Creek starts just upstream of the former pond, flows through the former pond, and discharges into Peak Creek 2.5 miles downstream.

The 19th Century Operations Area and the Main Tailings Impoundment are located across Little Peak Creek Road, at the end of Ore Knob Mine Road. The 19th Century Operations Area includes a series of barren and nearly barren stretches of land (totaling about 5 acres) near the top of Ore Knob that contain waste rock dumps from at least 11 mine shafts as well as locations where ore was roasted to drive off sulfur and smelted to recover copper.

Current Activities

During this reporting period, activities conducted at the Site included: monitoring of ground water quality at the designated monitoring locations, surface water sampling, excavation of subsoil, excavation of loose rock, rock breaking with a hoe ram equipped excavator, excavation of the sediment pond, removal and stockpiling of materials from the location of the proposed diversion channel and obtaining sludge and ash samples from the Louisiana Pacific Roaring River Plant for analysis to determine if the end use products contain hazardous constituents which would eliminate their potential use at the Site.

On February 17, 2009, U.S. EPA conducted a meeting with representatives of Louisiana Pacific, Roaring River Operations plant. Representatives at the meeting included the U.S. EPA, Louisiana Pacific Roaring River Plant Manager, Louisiana Pacific Business Team Environmental Manager and the U.S. EPA Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team. Objectives of the meeting were to discuss the viability of using LP end process products at the Ore Knob Mine site for soil neutralization and revegetation.

During this reporting period 7,155 cubic yards of subsoil, 2,438 cubic yards of sludge, and 270 cubic yards of rock were excavated, transported and stockpiled at the Site.

Planned Removal Actions

Planned removal actions during the next reporting period include: rock breaking with a hoe ram equipped excavator, water quality monitoring at designated locations, initiating a treatability study to select an effective amendment to neutralize subsoil and tailings, and initiate excavation in tailings area north of station 10+00 and begin using a power screener to separate soil and rock into three particle size stockpiles for later use at the site.

response.epa.gov/OreKnob