

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, March 30, 2009

From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Excavation of diversion channel.

Ore Knob Mine Site

Ore Knob, NC

Latitude: 36.4086670

Longitude: -81.3238890

POLREP No.:	11	Site #:	A4ND
Reporting Period:	3/14/09-3/27/09	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 topsoil and subsoil from the eastern hillside, placement of excavated material and filling of ponds #1 and #3, excavation of loose rock, drilling of boreholes and explosives placement for blasting of rock, removal and stockpiling of materials from the location of the proposed diversion channel, screening and stockpiling materials with a power screen unit, and continued monitoring and completion of the treatability study testing soil amendments for use at the Site.

On 3/24/2009 the first blasting event was conducted near station 10+00 in the area of the proposed diversion channel.

On 3/25/09 the treatability study was completed. Data from the study will be compiled and reviewed and START will prepare a summary of treatability study results.

Planned Removal Actions

Excavation of topsoil and subsoil from the eastern hillside in the area of the diversion channel. Drilling and placing explosives for blasting of rock in the area of the proposed diversion channel. Removal of rock

from the area of the proposed diversion channel after blasting events. Placement of excavated soil and pumping of ponds #1, #3 and #4 to remove water and raise the grade of the areas.

response.epa.gov/OreKnob