United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2009
From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Widening of Diversion Channel and More Blasting
Ore Knob Mine Site
Ore Knob, NC
Latitude: 36.4086670
Longitude: -81.3238890

POLREP No.:	16	**Site #:**	A4ND
Reporting Period:	06/02/09 - 07/07/09	**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
Operations resumed at full capacity on 07/06/09. Construction activities were cut by 75% for the past three weeks due to heavy rainfall.

Excavation is continuing in Sections 0-02 through 0-04. A major blockage of the inlet pipe was removed via use of a high pressure jet truck. Drilling and blasting has continued throughout the diversion channel. Ponds 3 and 4 are almost filled and will be neutralized and vegetated in the next few days.

Planned Removal Actions
Hydroseeding will take place next week along the channel banks. Drilling, excavating and blasting is scheduled to continue for the next month. The temporary piping in the outlet drain will be replaced with a permanent one and the first shear key will be brought up to final grade. The refined sand needed to construct the filter is being procured; construction will begin on the second shear key shortly afterward.

Next Steps
Dates for water sampling and particulate monitoring have yet to be set. OSC will contact START and NCDENR in order to find suitable dates.

Key Issues

USCG Strike Team mobilized on Site on 07/06/09.

response.epa.gov/OreKnob