

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT**

Date: Monday, August 17, 2009

From: Michelle Rogow, OSC

Subject: Work on repository berm continues

Altoona Mine Site

Shasta -Trinity National Forest, Castella, CA

Latitude: 41.1367000

Longitude: -122.5475000

POLREP No.:	21	Site #:	09PC
Reporting Period:	8/10-8/16/09	D.O. #:	9015
Start Date:	7/7/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	7/6/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	EP-W-07-022
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Altoona Mine is an abandoned mercury mine located approximately 11 miles (as the crow flies) west of the town of Castella in Trinity County, California. The approximate geographic coordinates of the mine are 41 E 8'12.7" north latitude, 122 E 32'51" west longitude. The mine is located on private land within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest is administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The Altoona Mine site is comprised of an abandoned and backfilled vertical mine, with an adjacent ore processing area, former retort areas, and waste rock and tailings piles. There are collapsed remains of wooden structures at the ore processing area, and other collapsed wooden structures are scattered about the periphery of the mine site. The mine was comprised of six levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the main vertical shaft, and two levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the second vertical shaft. The eight horizontal shafts comprise a total of over 10,000 linear feet. The mine is located on an escarpment which faces southeast. The ore processing area is located immediately southwest of the surmised location of the main adit, and tailings piles are located southeast (downhill) of the processing area. The base of the tailings piles is approximately 80 feet below the elevation of the processing area. Water from the mine flows from under the tailings piles, down Soda Creek to the east fork of the Trinity River, which is approximately one mile to the southeast of the mine. As no flowing water was found immediately upgradient of the mine, the water source of Soda Creek is assumed to be an underground source, which likely flows through mine passageways.

Current Activities

8/10/09 - EPA: 2; ERRS: 12ERRS completed installation of the main southeastern repository drainage successfully connecting the drainage into Soda Gulch. ERRS then began working on the central toe of berm repository channels. Coir mat was staged in the lower eastern side of the mine waste area for installation at a later date. Work resumed on the top of the repository berm, to complete grading for drainage from the berm. Work began on installation of the top of repository berm channel, with excavation, installation of filter fabric and placement of rock into the channel. The screen plant continued operations and continued to screen material from the camp area. Dust control operations resumed, with heat rising. Road work was conducted on the USFS 25, toward mile marker 14. ERT Johnson returned to Site and resumed work with ERRS on channel installation. 8/11/09 - EPA: 2; ERRS: 12ERRS continued working on the central toe of berm repository channels. Work continued on the top of the repository berm channel, with excavation, installation of filter fabric and placement of rock into the channel. ERRS worked on the bypass road culvert, removing it from its installed location and re-installing it deeper into the road. The areas at the inlet and outlet the culvert were rip rapped. The screen plant continued operations and continued to screen material from the camp area. Dust control operations continued. The OSC coordinated with CCC on availability and scope of work for their assistance with installation of erosion control measures. ERT Johnson continued to oversee installation of water conveyance structures. 8/12/09 - EPA: 2; ERRS: 12ERRS completed work on the central toe of berm repository channels. Backfill was brought into the east mine waste area to complete grading of the area around the new channels. Work was also conducted on the repository berm, moving westward. Also, work resumed on the repository east side channels and grading of the east side of the repository was

completed. The screen plant continued operations and continued to screen material from the camp area. Dust control operations continued. The OSC coordinated with START and the Shiloh Warehouse on sampling of repository leachate. OSC provided information to URS engineers on repository performance and construction of the berm to seismic safety standards. The OSC coordinated with Roseburg Resources on restoration issues. OSC and ERT conducted a site walk and review of all of the remaining water conveyance structures to be installed. 8/13/09 - EPA: 2; ERRS: 11 Work focused on the slope of the repository berm, moving from the central portion westward. Unscreened material for the berm was transported from the old screen plant. The north east top of repository channel was connected to the east channel and work on the east side of the repository was almost completed. Dust control operations continued. ERT Johnson met with ERRS to review the remaining water conveyance structures and installation designs. One ERRS demobilized due to a death in the family. 8/14/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 11 Work was completed on the east repository face and the east side repository channel was completed. Work continued on the slope of the repository berm, moving from the central portion westward, with material for the berm being transported from the old screen plant. With the next segment of berm being fattened, the haul mine waste area haul road was relocated into the Soda Gulch footprint. This allowed for the berm to be built up and material to be able to be transported to the base of the new berm toe. ERRS continued excavation of the unscreened material from the old screen plant, and completing removal of stockpiled material by the end of the day. ERRS prepared for the installation of the southwestern repository drainage channel. Hauling resumed from the camp area to the new screen plant for the processing of rock for stream channels. Dust control operations continued. A representative from Roseburg Resources was on site and toured the site and roads with the OSC. Roseburg provided consultation on the restoration of areas utilized by EPA during the response efforts and coordinated on closure issues and return of the land to Roseburg operation. ERT Johnson demobilized. 8/15/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 11 ERRS completed reclamation of the old screen plant area as prescribed by the Roseburg representative. Erosion control materials were relocated from the back of the ready line area. Work began backfilling the ready line area with top soil, removing the ready line road. The screen plant was washed readied for pickup, along with the 345 excavator. ERRS began work on the southwestern repository berm channel (aka the last segment of repository berm channel). Large rock was also keyed in to the bottom of the repository slope to increase stability. Dust control operations continued. 8/16/09 – Day off!

Planned Removal Actions

1. Complete restoration of the creek.
2. Install drainage channels on repository berm and around the west side repository berm toe.
3. Complete repository berm.
4. Complete restoration of the mine waste area.
5. Install erosion control measures.
6. Empty leachate collection system and install permanent system.
7. Restore operating areas and private lands.
8. Winterize site and roads.

Next Steps

Complete creek restoration. Continue construction of the repository berm and top of berm channel. Installation of drainages at the toe of the repository berm. Empty leachate collection system, sample leachate and prepare for disposal. Complete permanent leachate collection system. Meet with CCC and USFS regarding restoration.

Key Issues

Action memo ceiling increase for additional funding is still awaiting for approval by AA for OSWER.

response.epa.gov/Altoona