

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, August 31, 2009

From: Michelle Rogow, OSC

Subject: Soda Gulch restoration complete!

Altoona Mine Site

Shasta -Trinity National Forest, Castella, CA

Latitude: 41.1367000

Longitude: -122.5475000

POLREP No.:	23	Site #:	09PC
Reporting Period:	8/24 - 8/30/09	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

8/24/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 10; START : 1

ERRS continued to work on the USFS 25, laying road base and grading the road. The water truck was back in service and work began on repair of the roads. ERRS traveled to Medford to pick up equipment and supplies for squeeze operation and leachate pipe connector system. The supplies arrived on site and ERRS welded the t-fitting and additional pipe segments together, affixed ball valves to both the standpipe and the gravity line, and prepared the HDPE pipe for squeezing. The leachate discharge pipe was squeezed, water evacuated, pipe cut and welded to the other pipe segments. After cooling, the pipe was unsqueezed and water filled into the pipelines. The standpipe cap was opened to relieve pressure and the system was checked for leaks. After successful check of the system, topsoil was used to begin backfill of the pipe area. Materials were moved out of one connex box, in preparation for demobe. START was on site and conducted sampling of the leachate, and soil samples at the new and old screen plants, camp and the water tower.

8/25/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 10

In the morning, the HDPE leachate pipe had rebounded from the previous day's squeeze and the leachate collection pipe was backfilled. Work then began on the completion of the final segment of the berm on the west side. By the end of the day, the berm was completed and work began on excavation of the anchor trench for the coir matting. Coir rolls (of 400 and 700) were delivered in the morning, along with supplies for installation. ERRS traveled to Redding to return the equipment and supplies for squeeze operation and leachate pipe connector system. ERRS resumed work in Soda Gulch with installation of the step pool

channel. Dust control continued as haul truck brought material to the berm. Hydroseeding bidders were on site for a job walk.

8/26/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 10

In the morning, ERRS relocated the fuel tanks, so that the readyline area could begin to be restored. Work continued on the west face of the repository berm and then ERRS resumed work in Soda Gulch with installation of the step pool channel. Haul trucks, water truck and the dozer worked on USFS 25, with laying of road base and grading. Work continued on restoration of the new screen plant area. RM went to Redding to work get concrete boxes for the repository leachate piping system.

8/27/09 - EPA: 2; USFS: 4; ERRS: 10

OSC Zuroski was on site for a tour and to discuss the repository leachate collection system. USFS environmental engineer and botanists were on site to discuss restoration and replanting of restored areas. They conducted a tour and provided recommendations based on their experience and the success of areas which were restored last year. Work continued in Soda Gulch with installation of the step pool channel. Haul trucks, water truck and the dozer completed work on USFS 25, with laying of road base and grading. All road base was used up. Work began on the installation of the concrete boxes around the repository leachate piping outlets. Each of the boxes was surrounded with rock for protection and erosion control. The straw wattles and biologs were delivered to the site and staged in the readyline area.

8/28/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 9

In the morning, ERRS worked on installation of coir matting on the west side of the repository slope. Once that was completed, the anchor trench was backfilled and work resumed on the installation of the top of berm drainage channel. Work continued in Soda Gulch with installation of the step pool channel. Work was completed on the installation of the concrete boxes and rocking around them. Work continued in the readyline area and the main shaft was filled with soil and compacted. The connex box was moved to the office area for pickup. The dozer began final cleanup work on the 580W, with grading and re-establishment of rolling dips. Work continued on restoration of the new screen plant area. The FCA was off site due to illness. The OSC continued to coordinate with the USFS biologists on restoration needs and supplies for work to begin next week.

8/29/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 10

In the morning, one haul truck broke down and it was called off rent, because it would not be repaired until Monday. Work continued on backfill and grading of the readyline and mine shaft area. Work continued on the installation of the top of berm drainage channel and in Soda Gulch with installation of the step pool channel. By mid-day the berm drainage channel and the Gulch were connected and work was completed on water conveyance structures. The metal was relocated to the old screen plant for pick up, which occurred mid morning. Work began on installation of French drains on the 580W.

8/30/09 – Day off!

Planned Removal Actions

1. Complete restoration of the mine waste area.
2. Install erosion control measures.
3. Empty leachate collection system and install permanent system.
4. Restore operating areas and private lands.
5. Winterize site and roads.

Next Steps

Empty leachate collection system.
Begin amendment of soils and installation of erosion control measures.
Complete installation of erosion control measures on roads.
Complete restoration of private lands.

Key Issues

Leachate management.

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