

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, September 7, 2009

From: Michelle Rogow, OSC

Subject: erosion control begins

Altoona Mine Site

Shasta -Trinity National Forest, Castella, CA

Latitude: 41.1367000

Longitude: -122.5475000

POLREP No.:	24	Site #:	09PC
Reporting Period:	8/31 - 9/6/09	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

8/31/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 7; CCC: 15

In the morning, the equipment which was being demobilized (dozer and excavator) were walked down to the USFS 25 and deconned. The haul truck which broke down was also picked up by the vendor. Work began on restoration of the water tower area at Doe Creek. In addition, work continued with hauling material to the readyline and mine shaft area. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) crew 25 arrived on site and were briefed by the OSC on history, mine operation and cleanup and restoration measures to be implemented. They began work on the repository, installing coir matting and excavation of a trench for the biolog drainage channel in the mine waste area. Work also began to rollup coir matting on the berm so that seed could be placed below it. The subcontractor who one the bid for the leachate transportation was on site and informed ERRS that they would not bring their vac trucks off of the paved roads. ERRS worked on a back up plan to shuttle leachate water to the vac truck on the paved portion of the USFS 25. ERRS continued efforts to obtain restoration materials recommended by the USFS.

9/1/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 7; CCC: 14; SHN: 2; PSC: 1

Work began with unloading the leachate from the repository using a small vacuum truck. The truck was filled and shuttled water down to the full size vac truck on the USFS 25. Drawdown during pumping was excessive and only one foot of water remained in the standpipe. Water recharged in the system, but not enough to fill a second small truck, so the remaining portion of the truck was filled with leachate water from the tank and drums on site. The vac truck shuttled the second load out to the larger vac truck and came back for another load. The 2nd large vac truck was called off, as the water in the repository was

not recharging sufficiently to fill the truck in time to get a second large load off. All indications are that there is not another full vac truck load of water remaining in the repository. Work on the water tower area was completed. ERRS then began to focus on completing the restoration and grading work in the readyline and mine shaft area. ERRS continued to work with the CCC crews, rolling up the remaining coir on the repository berm, installing coir 700 on steep mine slopes at the transition of the USFS and private lands and chipping wood. The surveyors were on site to begin final data collection for the as built drawings for the repository and post-restoration topography for the site. The fuel tanks and a connex box were demobilized.

9/2/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 7; CCC: 14; SHN: 2; PSC: 1

Vac truck operations continued, but only a small amount of water came out of the repository. At the end of the day, the vac truck held approximately 1700 gallons and work continued on determining the best method for transport and delivery of the material being collected. Recharge rate in the pipe had slowed down considerably throughout the day.

ERRS continued work in the readyline area, but with the arrival of materials throughout the day, work was unable to be completed in that area. Watering of roads resumed. Coir logs arrived in the afternoon. The FCA went off site to obtain additional materials for the leachate collection system. The haul truck was called off rent at the end of the day.

A shipment of seed and biosol arrived in the morning and was off-loaded at the 15.5 mile marker and transported to the site. Work began on spreading of the biosol and seed onto the repository berm and then installation of the coir matting for the repository berm began. By the end of the day, over half of the repository berm was completed.

9/3/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 7; CCC: 13; SHN: 2; PSC: 1

In the morning, the CCC crew vehicle broke down on the way to the site. The loader was utilized to tow it up the hill and ERRS shuttled the crew members and supplies to the site. CCC crew leader worked on getting the broken vehicle picked up and alternative transportation for the crew. The CCC crew continued to work with ERRS throughout the day, almost completing biosol and seed application and installation of coir on the repository berm. The crew also started work on installation of coir, biosol and seeding of the eastern mine waste slope. One crew member was sick and was taken back to camp.

ERRS also completed work on restoration of the mine shaft and ready line area. Work then resumed on restoration of the new screen plant area and repair of site roads. The haul truck was transferred to USFS 25 and deconned there for pickup. ERRS worked on pack up off Portland equipment and loaded the Portland truck for demobe.

The surveyors were on site and completed data collection in the mine waste area and repository and began work on data collection in the creek.

Vac truck operations continued, with approximately 800 gallons removed from the repository throughout the day. The small vac truck offloaded into the 1000 gallon tank to allow for more capacity. ERRS arranged for a large vac truck pickup for the following day. ERRS RM went to town to retrieve the lids for the leachate collection boxes.

9/4/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 6; CCC: 13; SHN: 2; PSC: 1

The CCC crew continued to work with ERRS throughout the day, completing biosol and seed application and installation of coir on the eastern mine waste area slope. The crew also completed work on installation of coir, biosol and seeding of the repository berm and began work on the western mine waste slope and readyline area.

ERRS completed work on restoration of the new screen plant area and continued repair of site roads. The surveyors were on site and completed data collection in the creek.

Vac truck operations continued, with approximately 400 gallons removed from the repository in the morning. The small vac truck transferred the leachate water to a large vac truck which was brought in to transport the material to the disposal facility. The transfer occurred around mile marker 11.5. One load of approximately 3000 gallons was transported off site for disposal. The small vac truck was demobed and one ERRS was demobed with the Portland truck. ERRS RM went to town to make modifications to the lids for the leachate collection boxes and gain additional supplies for that effort.

9/5/09 - EPA: 1; ERRS: 6; CCC: 13

The CCC crew continued to work with ERRS until mid-afternoon, installing straw wattles on the repository berm slope. The crew also worked on installation of the biolog channel on the east side of the

mine waste area. The crew assisted with rolling up of coir matting on the repository, so that the dozer could break up the hard crust which had formed through the winter last year. The CCC crew demobilized mid afternoon, for their trip home to Redding.

ERRS continued repair of site roads. The wood materials were piled away from the treeline for burning at a later date. The dozer began to track walk the repository to break up slopes which had hardened.

ERRS FCA went to town to obtain more supplies for the leachate collection system and erosion control materials installation.

9/6/09 – Day off!

Planned Removal Actions

- 1. Amend and seed disturbed areas
- 2. Install erosion control measures.
- 3. Empty leachate collection system and complete permanent system.
- 4. Winterize site and roads.
- 5. Hydroseed repository.

Next Steps

Empty leachate collection system.
Amendment of soils and installation of erosion control measures.
Prepare for 1 month demobe.

Key Issues

Leachate management.
Restoration and revegetation.

Disposition of Wastes

Leachate water disposed at US Ecology, Beatty, NV

Waste Stream	Quantity	Manifest #	Disposal Facility
Leachate water	4500	Non-Haz 1	US Ecology, Beatty, NV
Leachate water	3000	Non-Haz 1	US Ecology, Beatty, NV

response.epa.gov/Altoona