

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Skyline Abandoned Uranium Mine (AUM) - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region IX

Subject: POLREP #10
Transport of Waste Continues via Skyline System
Skyline Abandoned Uranium Mine (AUM)
09SY
Monument Valley, UT
Latitude: 37.0205530 Longitude: -110.2308250

To:
From: Jason Musante, OSC
Date: 8/29/2011
Reporting Period: 08/15/11 – 08/27/11

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	09SY	Contract Number:	EP-W-07-022
D.O. Number:	022-9075	Action Memo Date:	9/27/2010
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	3/28/2011	Start Date:	11/1/2010
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

Please see any previous POLREP for additional Site Background information.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.1.1 Current Situation

Transport of stockpiled mine waste to the repository via the skyline cable yarder continues as the main work activity at the Site. The windy, dusty conditions at the Site have impacted the skyline operation. The sandy soils present at the Site get into the system cables creating an abrasive effect and shortening the working lifetime of the cables. On August 16, the main "skyline" cable failed and the hopper bucket was damaged as it fell approximately 35 feet to the ground. All Site operations were on hold for four days while the skyline cable was replaced and repairs were made to the hopper bucket. To prevent this from occurring again the skyline cable will be inspected and adjusted weekly to reduce wear at critical points.

August 15 – 20, 2011

OSC Calanog and Musante onsite this week.

This week ERRS:

- Continued water conveyance system operations.
- Continued site-wide road improvements and maintenance.
- Continued dust control program using water for dust suppression.
- Continued transport of stockpiled mine waste materials to top of Mesa via the skyline cable yarder.

START performed air sampling around work zones as part of the effluent dust sampling program.

August 21 – 27, 2011

OSCs Musante onsite this week.

This week ERRS:

- Continued water conveyance system operations.
- Continued site-wide road improvements and maintenance.
- Continued dust control program using water for dust suppression.
- Continued transport of stockpiled mine waste materials to top of Mesa via the skyline cable yarder.

START performed air sampling around work zones as part of the effluent dust sampling program.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Mobilization for removal activities and site setup began the week of March 28, 2011. Construction of the repository began the week of April 4, 2011, and was completed at the end of May. Excavation of mine waste from valley floor areas on the north side and the upper slope below the mine opening of Oljato Mesa was completed by July 24.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

EPA to date has been unable to identify any existing PRPs. EPA will continue to analyze the voluminous responses to the information requests it sent to numerous parties associated with mining in general on the Navajo Reservation. Because of the urgency of this removal, EPA is proceeding with a fund-lead action. EPA will continue to review the information referenced above to determine whether viable and liable parties may be identified, and will pursue recovery of the removal costs if appropriate.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

There are no progress metrics to report at this time. Off-site disposal is not planned for this removal. Uranium tailing wastes at the Site will be transferred to the on-site repository. Total volumes of waste moved into the repository may be reported in future POLREPs.

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

- 1) Archeological clearance of all areas impacted by removal activities;
- 2) Construction/improvement of limited access road on southern side of Oljato Mesa;
- 3) Secure a water supply for dust suppression activities, including the potential development of a groundwater well near the Site;
- 4) Development and implementation of an effluent dust monitoring program to prevent offsite release of contaminated particulate;
- 5) Construction of a subsurface repository on top of Oljato Mesa near the Skyline AUM;
- 6) Relocation of contaminated soils from the existing NN AML Skyline AUM repository to allow access to mine tailings on the edge of Oljato Mesa;
- 7) Excavation and internment of contaminated soils from the TLDA, TSDA, and unnamed arroyo in the onsite repository;
- 8) Development and implementation of a confirmation survey and sampling plan.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

- Uranium mine waste from the slope below the mine and the foot of the mesa will continue to be moved into the repository. A skyline yarder, like the old Skyline, will be used to transport the mine waste up to the top of the mesa. Water will be used to control dust and make sure the mine waste doesn't spread from the site. Air sampling will be conducted around the work areas to check for any radioactive dust.
- Once all the tailings have been placed in the repository, another plastic liner will be installed over the top. Then a soil cap will be placed over the top liner to protect it from sun and wind.
- Areas impacted by removal activities will be seeded with native plant species to help restore the land.

2.2.2 Issues

-Maintenance and repair of the skyline yarder system, additional volumes of waste excavated from the TLDA, and additional volumes of waste excavated from the lower portion of the upper slope below the mine opening have extended the project schedule and increased removal costs.

2.3 Logistics Section

N/A

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

2.6 Liaison Officer

2.7 Information Officer

2.7.1 Public Information Officer

Margot Perez-Sullivan from the EPA Office of Public Affairs was onsite 8/16, 8/24, and 8/25 to coordinate media visits and interviews.

2.7.2 Community Involvement Coordinator

OSC Musante attended the Ojato Chapter monthly meeting on August 21st to give an update on site progress. Photos of the work activities were presented to show removal activities and progress to the community.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

N/A

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

Navajo Nation EPA Superfund (NN EPA)

Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Program (AML)

Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources

4. Personnel On Site

1 EPA OSC

1 START – E&E

15 ERRS – EQM, H2O, ES, Skyline subcontractor

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

website: www.epaosc.org/SkylineAUM

6.2 Reporting Schedule

The next POLREP will be submitted on 9/12/11.

7. Situational Reference Materials

-maps: Skyline Fig 1 Site Location, Skyline Fig 2 Site Features