

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
McDermitt and Cordero Mercury Mine Sites - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region IX

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial
McDermitt and Cordero Mercury Mine Sites
NVN000909006
McDermitt, NV
Latitude: 41.9135613 Longitude: -117.7081702

To:
From: Tom Dunkelman, OSC
Date: 4/18/2013
Reporting Period: 4/15/2013-4/18/2013

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	NVN000909006	Contract Number:	EP-S9-12-01
D.O. Number:	9027	Action Memo Date:	10/16/2012
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	4/15/2013	Start Date:	4/15/2013
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	Yes
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Time Critical Removal Action

1.1.2 Site Description

The McDermitt and Cordero Mercury Mine sites consist of several non-contiguous locations: the McDermitt Mine, the Cordero Mine, areas within the town of McDermitt where apparent mine waste has been used as fill, and areas of the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Reservation (the Reservation) where apparent mine waste has also been used as fill. The Cordero Mine operated from the 1930s until 1970, and is located on land managed by the BLM and on private land. The adjacent McDermitt Mine was operated from 1973 until the late 1980s. The McDermitt Mine is located on private land. The McDermitt Mine was closed under a permit from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), and a final closure report was submitted in December, 1994.

The EPA Site Assessment program conducted a Site Inspection in 1988 which recommended no further action. Upon request from the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribe, EPA Emergency Response conducted an additional site visit in November 2009. At that time, EPA was notified of the possibility that mine waste had been used as fill at locations within the town of McDermitt and on the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Reservation.

In September and October of 2010, EPA conducted sampling of areas of red-colored fill located in the town of McDermitt and on the Reservation. The town of McDermitt straddles the Nevada/Oregon border and numerous areas were identified which contained mercury and arsenic in soil at concentrations which exceeded the EPA Region 9 residential Soil Remediation Goals (SRGs). Two areas were identified on the Reservation which contained mercury and arsenic in soil at concentrations which exceeded the residential SRGs.

In June 2011, EPA conducted additional sampling of the mine waste present at the mine site and present in the town and on the Reservation. The goal of this sampling effort was to evaluate the bioavailability and mineral speciation of the mercury and arsenic. The USGS provided technical and analytical support to EPA in this effort.

On October 16, 2012, EPA signed an Action Memorandum describing removal activities to be performed. EPA also issued a Unilateral Order to both Sunoco and Barrick Gold requiring these companies to participate in the cleanup process. To date, both companies have declined to participate in work under

these Orders.

1.1.2.1 Location

The town of McDermitt is located roughly 70 miles north of Winnemucca, NV, along Highway 95. The town straddles the Nevada/Oregon state line. The Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Indian Reservation is located 3.5 southeast of the town of McDermitt and the McDermitt and Cordero Mines are located 7.2 miles southwest of the town of McDermitt.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Mercury and arsenic are present in calcine material located on school property and on residential property in excess of site specific cleanup standards of 60 mg/kg arsenic and 80 mg/kg mercury.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Removal assessment results are presented in Removal Assessment reports produced by the START contractor. These reports are available on the epaosc web page. The removal assessment documented the presence of mercury and arsenic at levels in excess of the site specific cleanup levels at approximately 40 residential properties.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

EPA, START (1) and ERRS (9) contractors travelled to the site on April 15. The Environmental Response Team (ERT) also travelled to the site and delivered a trailer and field supplies, which will be used to support the response. From April 16-18, EPA, START and ERRS contractors established a command post, began preparing the borrow pit, began screening rock and conducted other site preparation activities. On April 18, OSC Dunkelman met with BLM biologists to make sure that no nesting migratory birds were present in the area of the borrow pit.

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

EPA has identified two PRPs for this Site - Sunco and Barrick Gold. EPA issued a Unilateral Order to both companies requiring that they perform cleanup activities at the site. Both companies declined to perform work under the Unilateral Order.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<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

Produce crushed rock at borrow source and transport to town;
Prepare school parking lot for capping;
Place cap material at school parking lot and at other select locations;
Remove calcine material from residential properties;
Transport excavated calcine material to borrow source;
Place backfill material at excavated areas;
Transport calcine material to repository;
Demobilize from site.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

Continue to produce crushed rock;
Begin prep of school parking lot.

2.2.2 Issues

EPA is still awaiting formal approval from BLM (in the form of a signed Action Memo) to return calcine material to the Cordero Calcine pile.

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

No information available at this time.

4. Personnel On Site

No information available at this time.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.