

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

**Date:** Sunday, January 28, 2007

**From:** Leo Francendese

**Subject:** Initial POLREP Removal Assessment in Progress

Barite Hill Nevada Goldfields

McCormick, SC

Latitude: 33.8711000

Longitude: -82.2972000

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	1	<b>Site #:</b>	A4NZ
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	1/17/07 thru 1/28/07	<b>D.O. #:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>		<b>Response Type:</b>	
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Assessment
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>			

#### Site Description

The Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields site is located approximately 3 miles south of McCormick, South Carolina between US 378 and US 221 on the northern side of Road 30 in McCormick County, South Carolina. The mine site is relatively remote; there are no buildings, homes, or commercial buildings within 0.5 miles of the boundary. The site actively mined gold from 1991 to 1995. From 1995 until Nevada Goldfields filed for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy in 1999, the reclamation of the site was being addressed by Nevada Goldfields. On July 7, 1999 Nevada Goldfields handed the facility's keys to SCDHEC and abandoned the site.

The site is located along a topographic high ridge area forming the headwaters of an unnamed tributary to Hawes Creek. The topography of the area consists of rolling hills with ridgelines at an elevation of about 500 feet. Within the site, the ridgeline comprising the site has a high point of about 510 feet and an average elevation of approximately 480 feet.

The permitted mine site totals 795.2 acres. Of this total, 659.7 acres are designated as buffer area (areas not disturbed beyond the pre-mine natural state); therefore the maximum disturbance area is 135.5 acres.

The facility used a cyanide solution in a heap leach process to extract gold from ore. There are 7 processing ponds onsite containing an unknown amount of free-liquids. Three large, multi-acre, waste rock piles contaminated with cyanide are left onsite. Each waste rock pile has the potential for producing acid. Storm water run on and runoff are not controlled at the site. The Main Pit from the mining operations remains. The pit contains approximately 100 million gallons of water with a pH of 2 ~ 2.2 and a high dissolved metal content. Seeps from the main pit containing acidic water with high dissolved metal content are being released to the northern unnamed tributaries of Hawes Creek which borders the pit.

As per a referral by the State of South Carolina, the EPA Region 4 Removal Program is currently conducting a Removal Assessment according to the National Contingency Plan.

#### Current Activities

A January 17th site walkthrough revealed the need for additional investigation and data gathering in order to make the Removal Assessment determination. Several representatives from the State were present and part of the debriefing. EPA Region 4 Site Assessment also attended the walkthrough as well as several national experts to advise the OSC on the situation.

A team comprised of scientific specialists from ORD and ERT are currently writing the coordinated workplan for the execution of the field sampling event. This event is being closely coordinated with the State.

**Planned Removal Actions**

Tentative plans for the field sampling event are scheduled for March 07.

**Next Steps**

In the event that a removal action is required, the OSC has already received a potentially responsible party investigative report. The EPA attorney is currently coordinating with the State on the status of these parties.

[response.epa.gov/baritehillnevadagoldfieldsremoval](https://response.epa.gov/baritehillnevadagoldfieldsremoval)