

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region I
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 2008

From: Gary Lipson

Subject: FINAL POLREP

VAG Mine Site

Eden/Lowell, VT

POLREP No.:	4	Site #:	
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/15/2007	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/15/2007	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The site is located in a rural area off of Mines Road in the towns of Eden and Lowell, VT, within Orleans and Lamoille Counties. Between the early 1900's and 1993 when production operations ceased, asbestos ore was mined out of three locations on Belvidere Mountain in areas identified as Eden Quarry, C-Area, and Lowell Quarry. The entire property is greater than 2,500 acres and it is believed that the tailings piles, open pits and quarries, and waste rock make up greater than half of that amount. The approximate latitude and longitude at the main entrance to the mine site is N44°45.9', W72°31.2'.

The tailings pile associated with the Eden Quarry is being heavily eroded by the beginnings of Hutchins Brook which is carrying substantial quantities of mine tailings into the Lamoille watershed. A wetland, approximately 25-acres in size, located approximately one mile down-gradient of this waste pile has been heavily affected by the tailings. The wetland area appears to be reaching its storage capacity and is threatening to adversely affect adjacent water bodies.

The Lowell Quarry, now filled in with water, created the larger of the waste piles, which has been estimated between 30 and 60 million tons covering 80 acres. This pile has also been eroding and has impacted the southern end of Corez Pond, Burgess Brook and associated wetlands within the Mississquoi watershed.

There is a gate at the main entrance to the mine area, but access is generally unimpeded via any number of points throughout the woods. There is frequent recreational activity occurring in the vicinity, which includes hunting, fishing, rock-collecting, all-terrain vehicle riding, and hiking.

Current Activities

Please refer to POLREP's 1, 2 & 3 for additional information.

On June 9, 2008, EPA, it's Emergency Rapid Response Services (ERRS) contractor (Shaw), and it's Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor (Weston Solutions) re-mobilized to the site.

New crew members attended a state mandated site specific asbestos awareness class on June 10, 2008 and site activities began on June 11, 2008. Due to a number of unusually severe storms and heavy precipitation throughout the summer, many of the site features constructed in 2007 were reworked after inspections indicated that repairs were needed. This work included mucking out a large sedimentation basin constructed down-gradient of the larger of the two tailings piles (waste from the Lowell Quarry and C-Cut) and increasing the basin's storage capacity. Other actions performed to keep tailings runoff from the Burgess Branch or Mississquoi watershed included the construction of a large berm adjacent to the western base of the Lowell tailings pile; increasing the height and length of the berms protecting Corez Pond located to the east of the Lowell Pile; and redirecting runoff into the sedimentation basin previously constructed at the northern base of the Lowell Pile.

Additional site activities concentrated on keeping Eden Pile runoff and sedimentation from entering

Hutchins Brook. This brook has been the conduit of a huge amount of tailings that have inundated off-site, down-gradient wetlands within the Lamoille watershed. Trenches and culverts were constructed to allow mountain run-off water to bypass the pile and were designed to return the flow to lower sections of Hutchins Brook to maintain the hydrologic flow to the wetlands. Due to the age and significance of this Site, specifically the area immediately above the Eden Pile, EPA worked with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) and a historical preservationist to comply with the Historic Preservation Act (HPA). Since the work that took place above the pile where the original mine buildings once stood, activities in this location were well documented and in accordance with HPA requirements.

Final demobilization occurred on August 28, 2008.

Next Steps

EPA has been working closely with the VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) throughout this removal action and has been communicating with the President of the Vermont Asbestos Group (VAG), the owners/operators of the mine between 1975 and 1993. The president, who is an active businessman in a nearby community, has verbally pledged to maintain the features constructed by EPA. This maintenance, which will be ongoing for the foreseeable future, is a necessary component of the removal action as the sedimentation basins and storage areas behind the berms will eventually fill up and need to be dredged. The DEC will work with VAG to ensure that this work is done in a timely and safe manner.

EPA's pre-remedial program is assessing this Site for potential listing on the National Priority List. This may lead to the eventual listing of this site as a Superfund Site.

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