

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, October 23, 2008

From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Initial Polrep

Ore Knob Mine Site

Ore Knob, NC

Latitude: 36.4086670

Longitude: -81.3238890

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	A4ND
Reporting Period:	10/20/08 - 10/24/08	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/20/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/20/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NCN000409895	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Site contains areas affected by mining, including three principal areas that were directly affected by mining along with other areas, primarily downstream, where hazardous substances have come to be located. The three principal areas include the 1950s Mine and Mill Area, the 19th Century Operations Area and a Main Tailings Impoundment. This Action memo recommends response actions to address threats from the main tailings impoundment.

The 1950's Mine and Mill Area comprises 15 acres and is located northwest of the intersection of Ore Knob Road and Little Peak Creek Road, just north of Highway 88. This area contains derelict ore bins, concrete mill foundations, a transformer building, other ruins, a small sawmill currently in operation, two acres with about 10,000 cubic yards of tailings - now mostly covered with stumps, and a two acre former pond where process water was stored. Little Peak Creek starts just upstream of the former pond, flows through the former pond, and discharges into Peak Creek 2.5 miles downstream.

The 19th Century Operations Area and the Main Tailings Impoundment are located across Little Peak Creek Road, at the end of Ore Knob Mine Road. The 19th Century Operations Area includes a series of barren and nearly barren stretches of land (totaling about 5 acres) near the top of Ore Knob that contain waste rock dumps from at least 11 mine shafts as well as locations where ore was roasted to drive off sulfur and smelted to recover copper.

Current Activities

EPA, NCDENR and ERRS met at the Site to discuss the Site remedy. ERRS widened and graded the access road, making it accessible for heavy equipment. ERRS also began gaining access to the sediment pond. Drilling contractors have taken SPT and CPT samples of the tailings dam in order to determine its stability. Site security has been obtained and aerial photography has been taken.

Planned Removal Actions

NCDENR and EPA plan to take surface water samples within the next few weeks. The diversion channel will be staked based on conceptualized drawings provided by the US Bureau of Reclamation. Construction of the diversion channel will begin after the results of the stability analysis are received. Meanwhile, the lower sediment pond will be emptied.

Next Steps

EPA is planning a community meeting to inform residents of the removal activities at the Site.

Key Issues

no key issues at this time

