

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, October 27, 2008

From: Michelle Rogow

Subject: Capping of Repository Complete!

Altoona Mine Site

Shasta -Trinity National Forest, Castella, CA

Latitude: 41.1367000

Longitude: -122.5475000

POLREP No.:	16	Site #:	09PC
Reporting Period:	10/20/08-10/26/08	D.O. #:	9015
Start Date:	7/8/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	7/7/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	EP-W-07-022
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Altoona Mine is an abandoned mercury mine located approximately 11 miles (as the crow flies) west of the town of Castella in Trinity County, California. The approximate geographic coordinates of the mine are 41 E 8'12.7" north latitude, 122 E 32'51" west longitude. The mine is located on private land within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest is administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS).

The Altoona Mine site is comprised of an abandoned and backfilled vertical mine, with an adjacent ore processing area, former retort areas, and waste rock and tailings piles. There are collapsed remains of wooden structures at the ore processing area, and other collapsed wooden structures are scattered about the periphery of the mine site.

The mine was comprised of six levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the main vertical shaft, and two levels of horizontal shafts which branch out from the second vertical shaft. The eight horizontal shafts comprise a total of over 10,000 linear feet.

The mine is located on an escarpment which faces southeast. The ore processing area is located immediately southwest of the surmised location of the main adit, and tailings piles are located southeast (downhill) of the processing area. The base of the tailings piles is approximately 80 feet below the elevation of the processing area.

Water from the mine flows from under the tailings piles, down Soda Creek to the east fork of the Trinity River, which is approximately one mile to the southeast of the mine. As no flowing water was found immediately upgradient of the mine, the water source of Soda Creek is assumed to be an underground source, which likely flows through mine passageways.

Current Activities

10/20/08 – USCG: 1, ERRS: 15, START: 3, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 5. ERRS continued hauling contaminated material from upper the Mine Waste Area removing and placing approximately 1670 cubic yards of tailings into the repository. ERRS placed back fill into the ready line and adjacent slopes with approximately 1813 cubic yards of material. ERRS conducted improvements on Forest Service Road 25. Northwest Linings laid geocomposite material on top of liner cap panels that cover approximately 1/3 of the repository and seamed approximately 200 feet of extrusion welds along the north and south borders of repository. URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of liner cap materials and processed weld samples for shipment to lab for analysis and testing. USCG delivered URS samples to FedEx for shipment and conducted site safety. USFS crew arrived on site mid day and assisted NWL by hand digging material away from liner edge for stress relief of liner. START collected 35 samples from Mine Waste Area, set up PDR's, and analyzed 27 samples with XRF.

10/21/08 – EPA:1, USCG: 1, ERRS: 15, START: 3, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 6. ERRS

continued hauling contaminated material from upper the Mine Waste Area removing and placing approximately 208 cubic yards of tailings into the repository. ERRS placed back fill into the ready line and adjacent slopes with 2873 cubic yards of additional material and graded slopes for erosion control measures installation. ERRS also began backfill of the haul road to USFS. Northwest Linings laid geocomposite material on top of liner cap panels that cover and began installation of additional geotextile and liner, moving westward. URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of liner cap materials and processed weld samples for shipment to lab for analysis and testing. USFS crew assisted NWL by hand digging material away from liner edge for stress relief of liner and preparing for additional erosion control measures installation. START collected 7 samples from Mine Waste Area and 7 samples from infrastructure areas, set up PDR's, and analyzed 39 samples with XRF. USFS Weaver arrived on site. One of the USFS personnel demobilized at the end of the day.

10/22/08 – EPA:1, USCG: 1, ERRS: 15, START: 3, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 5. ERRS continued hauling contaminated material from upper the Mine Waste Area removing and placing 59 cubic yards of tailings into the repository. ERRS also began re-excavation on USFS lands, with the removal of 251 cubic yards of waste relocated to the repository. ERRS placed 1818 cubic yards of back fill into the ready line and adjacent slopes and graded slopes for erosion control measures installation. ERRS also began reinstallation of the road to USFS lands and back filled 1133 cubic yards of material back into USFS lands. Northwest Linings laid geocomposite material on top of liner cap panels that cover and began installation of additional geotextile and liner, moving westward. URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of liner cap materials and processed weld samples for shipment to lab for analysis and testing. USFS crew began installation of straw wattles and coir matting on the west side mine waste area slopes. START collected 1 sample from Mine Waste Area, 15 samples from USFS lands and 2 stockpile samples. START analyzed 24 samples with XRF. USFS Weaver was on site. PST delivered liner seam samples to FedEx for shipment.

10/23/08 – EPA:1, USCG: 1, ERRS: 14, START: 3, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 4. ERRS completed hauling contaminated material from USFS lands, removing and placing 161 cubic yards of tailings into the repository. Hot spots in the Mine Waste Area were also removed, relocating 42 cubic yards of waste into the repository. ERRS then removed the ramp into the repository and re-excavated where hot spots were identified. In the early afternoon, final grading of the repository was completed and the repository was ready for final segment of liner installation. ERRS placed back fill into the ready line and adjacent slopes and graded slopes for erosion control measures installation and continued installation of the clean road to USFS lands. Northwest Linings laid geotextile and liner, moving westward to the end of the repository. URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of liner cap materials and processed weld samples for shipment to lab for analysis and testing. USFS crew assisted with hand excavation around the repository berm and continued installation of straw wattles and coir matting on the west side mine waste area slopes. START collected 10 samples from Mine Waste Area, 8 samples from USFS lands, and 2 samples from the roads. START analyzed 45 samples with XRF and prepared QC samples from shipment to the Region 9 laboratory. Aramark cook was upset by something that occurred the previous evening and refused to make breakfast and lunch for the entire crew. Cook requested for himself and the prep-cook to be replaced. One ERRS demobilized for personal reasons. Excavator operator fell ill and went back to camp to recuperate.

10/24/08 – EPA:1, USCG: 1, ERRS: 15, START: 3, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 4, SHN: 1. ERRS continued hauling backfill to the Mine Waste Area slopes and placing 2109 cubic yards of material for restoration. ERRS also resumed restoration activities on USFS lands, placing 1756 cubic yards of backfill and rock for restoration. ERRS graded slopes for erosion control measures installation. Northwest extrusion welded the last segment of top liner to the bottom and then laid geocomposite material on top of liner cap. URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of liner cap materials and processed weld samples for shipment to lab for analysis and testing. USFS crew continued installation of straw wattles and coir matting on the west side mine waste area slopes. Surveyor was on site to survey liner panels and toe of berm slope. START prepared final maps, met with the OSC and packed up laboratory for demobilization. One of the USFS AML crew demobilized mid-day, brought a load of metal for recycling and delivered liner seam samples to FedEx for shipment. USCG PST went to Castella to assist Aramark in the pickup of groceries.

10/25/08 – EPA:1, USCG: 1, ERRS: 14, URS: 1, Aramark: 3, NWL: 6, USFS : 3. ERRS continued hauling backfill to the Mine Waste Area placing 430 cubic yards of material for restoration. ERRS continued to grade slopes for erosion control measures installation. ERRS continued backfill placement along the stream on the USFS lands and began restoration within the stream itself. Approximately 147 cubic yards of backfill was placed on USFS lands. Northwest Linings completed installation of geocomposite material on top of the liner cap. ERRS began coving the cap from the URS conducted QA/QC during deployment of geocomposite and oversight of placement of topsoil onto the liner cap. USFS crew continued installation of straw wattles and coir matting on the west side mine waste area

slopes. USFS AML crew demobilized mid-day. START demobilized at the beginning of the day, bringing equipment back to the warehouse.

10/26/08 –Aramark: 3. Day off and birthday celebrations.

Planned Removal Actions

1. Cover repository cap
2. Restore site and repository area
3. Install erosion control measures
4. Restore operating areas
5. Demobilize camp and equipment
6. Demobilize from Site!

Next Steps

Cover the repository cap with 3' of topsoil. Continue restoration of stream channel on USFS lands, moving toward private lands.

Key Issues

1. Weather cooperation, winter is coming
2. Time and money
3. How much will be completed before site is no longer accessible

response.epa.gov/Altoona