

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, November 17, 2008

From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Sludge Removal Continues

Ore Knob Mine Site

Ore Knob, NC

Latitude: 36.4086670

Longitude: -81.3238890

POLREP No.:	4	Site #:	A4ND
Reporting Period:	11/10/08 - 11/16/08	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's environmental contractor continues to remove sludge from the sediment pond and deposit atop the tailings dam. Approximately 1,000 cubic yards of sediment was excavated this week. Site activities were suspended on 11/12/08 due to precipitation. Work will resume Monday, November 17. In order to prevent sludge from entering the tailings dam inlet pipe, a barrier of sawdust and topsoil was constructed around the sludge pile.

Planned Removal Actions

The crew will begin solidifying sludge upon remobilization to the site. The defunct cement pipe in the sediment pond will be replaced. A surveyor will be present to create a topo map of the Site as well as identify property boundaries.

Next Steps

Construction plans for the diversion channel and dam face re-sloping will be completed within the next few weeks.

Key Issues

A public meeting was held on Thursday, November 13th in Laurel Springs, NC. Local residents inquired about the status of their drinking water. Results of the sampling event conducted by the Remedial program

were handed out. The residents were advised to contact the EPA Remedial Project Manager (RPM) for more information about the sample results as it was outside the scope of ERRB's current removal activities.

Representatives from a number of Divisions within North Carolina State government made a visit to the Site on Tuesday, November 12th. among the issues discussed were the safety of the sediment pond dam, off-site sediment control, and off-site water quality. EPA is currently working with the State in order to determine the most suitable method to minimize sediment run-off.

response.epa.gov/OreKnob