

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

**Date:** Friday, September 12, 2008

**From:** Deborah Lindsey

**Subject:** Ongoing Removal Activities

WRG4 Vermiculite Site

1210 Factory Street, Ellwood City, PA

Latitude: 40.8595660

Longitude: -80.3000080

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	8	<b>Site #:</b>	E358
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	07/16/2008 - 08/16/2008	<b>D.O. #:</b>	0703-03-009
<b>Start Date:</b>	7/16/2008	<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	4/17/2008	<b>Response Type:</b>	Time-Critical
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>	PAN000305592	<b>Contract #</b>	EP-S3-07-03
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>			

#### **Site Description**

The WRG4 Vermiculite Site is located at 1210 Factory Avenue in Ellwood City, Lawrence County, PA. The Site is a former vermiculite expansion facility that was operated by W.R. Grace/Zonolite Co. from 1954–1969. EPA's removal evaluations were conducted at the Site in response to an Agency-wide initiative to investigate current and former vermiculite facilities that received vermiculite ore from the W.R. Grace vermiculite mine in Libby, Montana.

The Site is situated on approximately two acres and is comprised of 2 parcels of land. The first parcel includes the former vermiculite expansion facility. The building was last used by a trucking company for short term storage. Currently the building is vacant. The adjacent parcel of land, originally included under the deed for the Site, is now owned by the Loyal Order of the Moose #93. During a period of time when the vermiculite facility was operational, the Moose Lodge property was a playground and ball field often referred to as the "West End Playground".

Reports from local residents and past workers indicated that waste from the vermiculite operations (waste rock, vermiculite ore and unused product) were placed on the adjacent playground and disposed of on the hillside behind the facility. Sampling results confirmed the presence of fibrous amphibole asbestos including amphibole structures indicative of the Libby, Montana ore in berm areas on the northwestern edge of the property and on the hillside behind the Site.

This removal action addresses the need to mitigate the potential threats posed by asbestos contaminated soils located on-site from the processing of vermiculite ore and the disposal of associated waste products at this Site by W.R. Grace/Zonolite Co.

#### **Current Activities**

On July 16, 2008, ERRS mobilized to the Site and began site set-up operations by clearing and grubbing support areas, setting up office trailers and hooking up utilities. Work zones were established and an access road on the west side of the Moose Lodge was cleared. ERRS encountered difficulty on locating any useable nearby water source so water was delivered on-site by a local service until a long term solution could be arranged.

On July 17, 2008, EPA received an Access Agreement from the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad for review and signature. EPA drafted a new Consent Agreement for Entry which was forwarded to Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad on August 1, 2008.

ERRS began clearing and grubbing the hillside behind the Moose Lodge. Trees trunks were cut off approx. 2 feet above the soil and tree tops and limbs removed. Tree trunks were placed outside the work zone. Root balls have been pulled from the hillside, stockpiled and covered with plastic while disposal options are being investigated. Tree tops and limbs were chipped and stockpiled and used as fill on the

hillside. Wetting operations are being conducted during work to control dust. All areas that have been cleared are covered with visqueen plastic at the end of the work day.

A majority of the operations at and around the Moose Lodge must be conducted from the bottom of hillside given concerns on the parking lot's ability to withstand heavy equipment and that the Moose Lodge is an operating establishment with hours of operations starting at 1300 hrs. Limited activities are being conducted from the parking lot of the Moose Lodge at the top of the hill.

Perimeter air monitoring is being conducted using Data Rams to provide real time particulate monitoring. Ambient air sampling is being conducted to measure the concentration of particle dust and asbestos fibers in the air at the site perimeter. Analytical lab services are being procured through the CST in Ft. Meade.

On or about July 28, 2008, ERRS began excavating the surface of the hillside and found that the contamination was much greater than the 2 feet estimated. Three (3) test pits/trenches were excavated and showed that the contamination was greater than 3 feet deep into the hillside. Also, excavation worked showed that the contaminated soils on the hillside visually contained a great deal of vermiculite product. One area that appeared to be mostly vermiculite product created a slip approximately 10 ft wide and 6 ft high when working near it causing excavation activities to stop. Fill dirt was delivered and used to shore up the unstable hillside. ERRS then moved to the top of the hillside and began excavating the top two feet of soils around the perimeter of the parking lot. A mini-excavator was used to reduce the potential for damage to the parking lot. The excavated area was filled with gravel and soil and compacted.

An amendment to the Action Memorandum was prepared requesting a Change of Scope to allow contaminated soils to remain in place and cover with an appropriate cover system. The Change of Scope also documented the need for additional stabilization at the bottom of the hill due to the steepness and instability of the hillside.

On August 2, the OSC went door-to-door in the adjacent residential neighborhood to hand out the factsheet and talk with residents about the cleanup.

ERRS demobed from the site between August 14, 2008 and August 19, 2008 for a scheduled break.

### **Planned Removal Actions**

Continue to clear and grub areas in limited sections, excavate asbestos contaminated soils where possible and begin to stabilize exposed areas with clean fill. Continue with dust suppression activities while work is being conducted and continue to conduct air monitoring/air sampling activities.

### **Next Steps**

The OSC awaiting approval of the Change of Scope Amendment to the Action Memo in order to proceed with a cover system over the asbestos contaminated soil and hillside stabilization.

The OSC will continue to work on finalizing the Access Agreement with the Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad.

### **Key Issues**

Approval of Action Memo Change of Scope and Securing Access with Railroad

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