

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region III
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, October 8, 2008

From: Deborah Lindsey

Subject: Ongoing Removal Activities

WRG4 Vermiculite Site
1210 Factory Street, Ellwood City, PA
Latitude: 40.8595660
Longitude: -80.3000080

POLREP No.:	9	Site #:	E358
Reporting Period:	08/16/2008 - 09/18/2008	D.O. #:	0703-03-009
Start Date:	7/16/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	4/17/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	PAN000305592	Contract #	EP-S3-07-03
RCRIS ID #:			

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

ERRS mobilized back to the Site on August 20, 2008. At that time, the OSC learned of a small fire that had occurred on Sunday, August 17, 2008 at the base of the access road. The fire had been started by someone gathering a bunch of wood chips and setting them on fire under the plastic covering the hillside. Wayne Township Fire Dept responded and was able to put the fire out before spreading. The OSC met with the Fire Chief to review operations and how the Fire Department would respond if there are any future calls. A Fire Response Plan was drafted and provided to both Wayne Township and Ellwood City Fire Chiefs.

ERRS worked on the hillside between the Moose Lodge and access road - clearing and grubbing and grading the slope. Due to the location of low power lines and cleanout pipes - work in this area was completed by hand and with a mini-excavator. ERRS also completed the access road and equipment decon areas with placement of gravel. Once clearing and grubbing and rough grading the slope beside the access road was complete, ERRS began receiving fill dirt to start building up hillsides to a rough 2:1 slope needed for a cover system. 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.

On the evening of September 14, 2008, high winds from Tropical Storm Ike blew through the area. Winds were documented at 80 mph in the nearby town of Beaver Falls. Sections of plastic covering the hillsides and fill dirt were blown away. ERRS was on-site until 11:00 pm securing temporary fencing and plastic sheeting where possible.

ERRS continued to grade hillside with backfill and re-covered the entire hillside after the storms prior to demobbing on September 18, 2008.

START continued to conduct perimeter air monitoring and air sampling. A contract for analytical lab services was signed on August 15, 2008. On August 22, 2008, the first shipment of 21 samples were sent to QuanTEM Laboratories for PCM (NIOSH 7400) and TEM (NIOSH 7402) analysis. PCM analytical data results, which provides total fiber counts, ranged from 2 to 5 fibers/100 fields. TEM analytical data results, which provides the number of asbestos fibers, indicated no asbestos fibers were identified in any of the 21 samples.

On or about September 2, 2008, it was determined that the air sampling method would need to be modified to high volume samplers using open face cassettes. The additional air sampling equipment was coordinated and procedures modified. Air monitoring continued during the reporting period.

The Change of Scope Amendment to the Action Memo was approved on September 2, 2008.

The OSC continued to work on the access agreement for the active rail line. While working on the access, the OSC learned that the active rail line is actually owned by CSX Transportation and leased by Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad. Further, the OSC learned that the CSX property consists of a 35 ft corridor with the property line extending 15 feet from the centerline of the track on the side adjacent to hillside identified for cleanup. This information left a gap on property ownership. The property line for the former vermiculite facility has been confirmed to be at the top of the hillside and the CSX property line is at the bottom of the hillside. Additional research was able to determine that the hillside property is still owned by the defunct Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. A letter was sent to the former officer requesting the current access agreement for the hillside behind the Moose Lodge be extended to include an additional 650 feet for property adjacent to the active line.

ERRS demobe from the site between September 18, 2008 and September 29, 2008 for a scheduled break.

Planned Removal Actions

Begin installation of gabion baskets at the toe of the hillside to stabilize hillside in support of cover system. Continue clearing and grubbing hillside in sections once access is obtained. Continue with dust suppression activities while work is being conducting and continue to conduct air monitoring/air sampling activities.

Next Steps

Continue to work on obtaining access from the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. Once that access is obtained, finalize Access Agreement with Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad and CSX Transportation

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
ERRS - Cleanup Contractor	\$1,020,083.00	\$361,862.00	\$658,221.00	64.53%
RST/START	\$105,270.00	\$58,585.00	\$46,685.00	44.35%
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$1,125,353.00	\$420,447.00	\$704,906.00	62.64%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

response.epa.gov/WRG4Vermiculite

POLREP #9 Last Updated 9/30/2009