



# SULPHUR BANK MERCURY MINE SUPERFUND SITE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### ELEM INDIAN COLONY MINE WASTE REMOVAL ACTION June – October, 2006

#### *Clearlake Oaks, California*

The Elem Indian Colony Mine Waste Removal Action Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet is designed to address concerns and questions that the community may have regarding the project. The FAQ contains information on the removal action project, traffic and roads control, and health-related concerns. The removal action will take place from June to October 2006. If you have any questions, please contact any of the persons on the contacts listed or call Pui Man Wong at the **toll-free hotline (800) 231-3075** or **email [wong.puiman@epa.gov](mailto:wong.puiman@epa.gov)**.

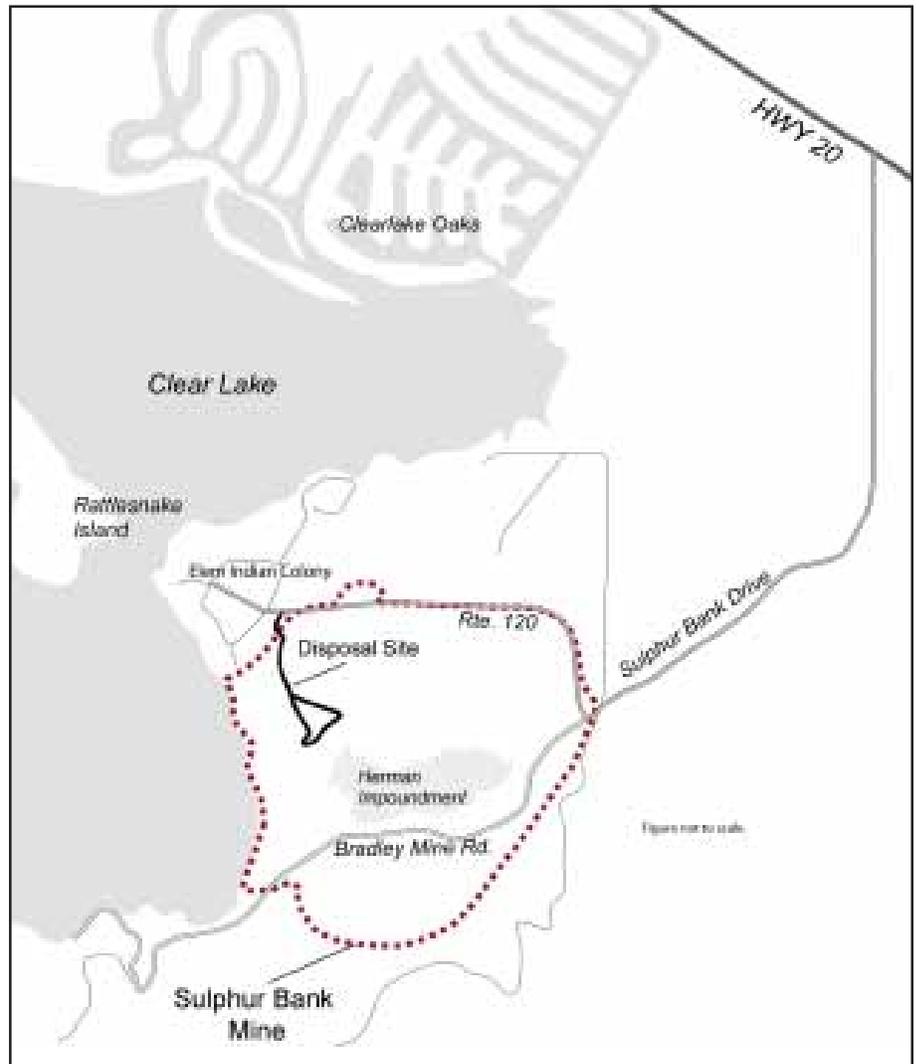
#### REMOVAL ACTION PROJECT

#### **What is the Elem Indian Colony Mine Waste Removal Action?**

EPA will excavate approximately 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the Elem Indian Colony residential area, and move it safely to a secure area on the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine property.

#### **Phase I June - October 2006**

- EPA will need to demolish and rebuild three homes at the Elem Indian Colony to remove mine waste from beneath the homes.



*Location of Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Removal Action*

- EPA will also demolish the paved road system and gravel roads to remove mine wastes from beneath the roadway, and EPA will reconstruct the roadway systems with clean soils.
- EPA will also replace the water supply system for the residential area that will be impacted.

### **Phase II Summer of 2007 (Planned)**

EPA also plans to excavate an additional 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated soils that are present beneath the main access road to the Elem Indian Colony, Route 120. This contaminated soil will be moved to a secure area on the mine property.

### **What is in the contaminated soil?**

The mine wastes contain high levels of mercury, arsenic and antimony that could pose threats to human health. The mercury, arsenic and antimony present in the soils can be absorbed by the human body through inhalation or ingestion and cause health effects.

### **When will construction activities start and end?**

EPA expects the construction periods to be:

- Phase I Elem Indian Colony Residential Area from June 12 to October 2006.

- Phase II Route 120 in the summer of 2007 (planned).

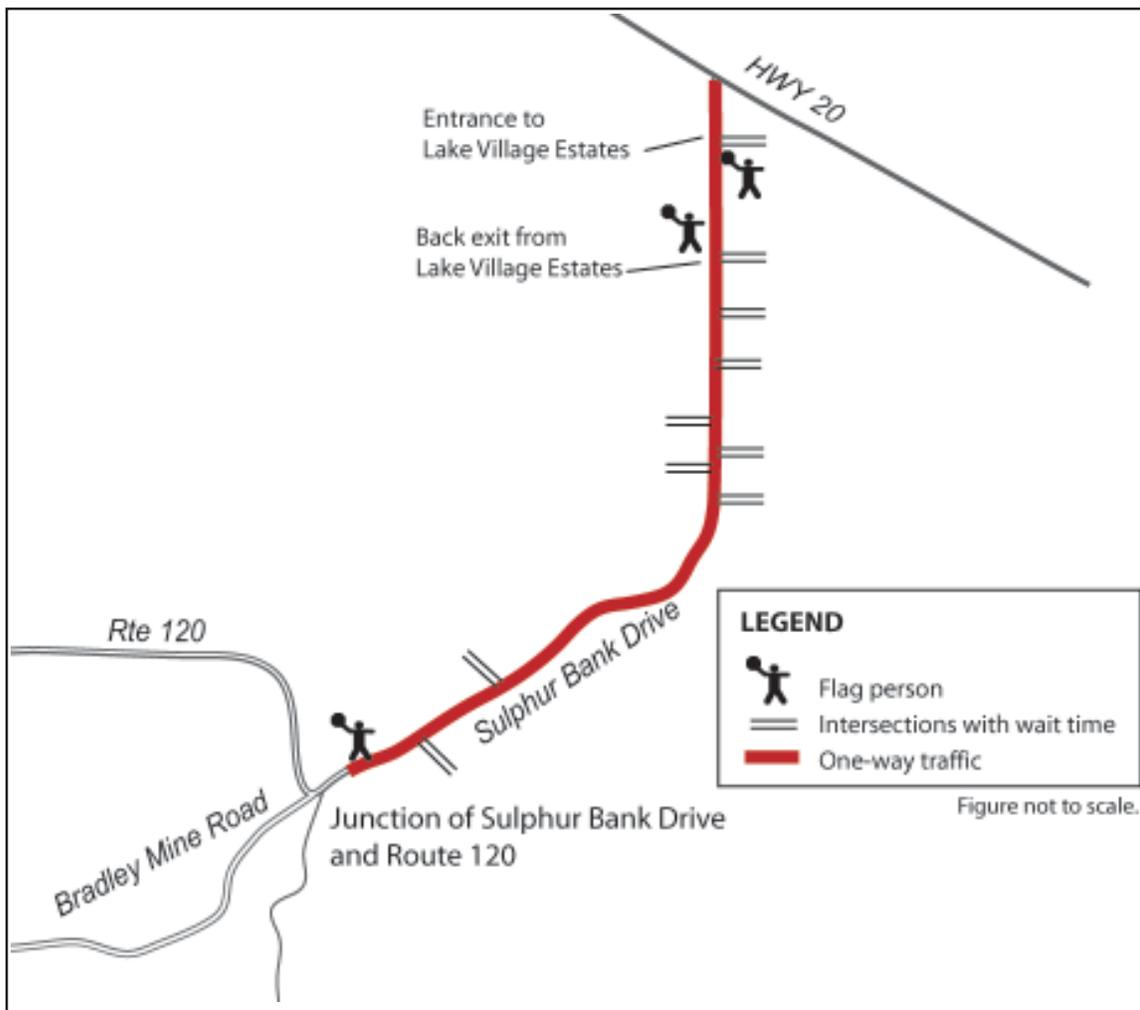
### **Why is this project being done? Why are we having this cleanup?**

In the early 1970's the Bureau of Indian Affairs used contaminated mine waste from the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine as construction materials to maintain gravel roadways, to construct the paved road system and to construct level pads for housing.

### **TRAFFIC & ROADS**

#### **What public roads will be affected by the removal action?**

The public roads that will be impacted by construction activities include: Sulphur Bank Drive, Bradley Mine Road and short distances on Highway 20 east of Clearlake Oaks.



*Traffic Control on Sulphur Bank Drive During Removal Action*

## **Will the material removed from the site be transferred on public roadways?**

Haul trucks will not transport any contaminated material on public roadways.

All excavated contaminated material will be transported directly from the Elem Indian Colony to the adjacent Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine site for disposal in a secure area at the mine site.

Clean construction materials will be transported from commercial aggregate sources located approximately 1 mile southeast of Sulphur Bank Drive off Highway 20. Trucks hauling these clean materials will travel on Highway 20, Sulphur Bank Drive and the Bradley Mine Road before entering the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine site and the Elem Indian Colony residential area.

## **What size are the haul trucks and how often (dates and hours of the day) will they be on the roads?**

The haul trucks will likely have a capacity of 20 cubic yards or 24 tons and will consist of either bottom dumps or truck and trailer transfers.

Haulage of clean construction materials on public roadways will take place anytime from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Traffic control will be in place for short haulage (hours or days) of heavy equipment, with longer haulage (weeks) for clean fill construction materials.

## **What traffic controls will be in place to lessen the road impact and ensure traffic safety?**

In order to minimize hazards and damage to the roadway, implementation of one-way (reversible) traffic control on Sulphur Bank Drive is planned during the haulage of clean fill and other clean construction materials. Traffic will be restricted to one-way traffic from Highway 20 to the Bradley Mine Road.

Traffic on Sulphur Bank Drive will be controlled by flag persons located south of the main entrance to Lake Village Estates near Highway 20, and at the intersection of Bradley Mine Rd. A pilot car will guide traffic traveling between

Highway 20 and Bradley Mine Road, a distance of about 1.7 miles. The maximum wait time for a vehicle traveling between Bradley Mine Road and Highway 20 will equal about 8 minutes, assuming that the vehicle “just missed” the pilot car. Haul trucks will be kept to the center of the roadway to reduce impacts to the road.

## **Who will maintain the road during the project and ensure that repairs are made?**

An evaluation of the initial condition of the roadway will be conducted prior to EPA’s project. Following completion of the project, EPA will conduct repairs of the roadway if necessary.

## **NOISE AND DUST**

### **Will the trucks have covered loads and will the roads be kept sprinkled to minimize dust?**

This is clean material from a commercial aggregate source and a cover is not needed. EPA will comply with all requirements for transporting construction materials on public roadways. Truck traffic will be controlled and moving slowly, so we do not anticipate any problems with dust being kicked up, or coming off the trucks. We will make every effort to contain dust on gravel roads at the mine site and do not anticipate the need to water the paved roadway.

### **How much noise should I expect?**

During the height of the fill haul from offsite, trucks will be in operation about 8 hours per day, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

This traffic control approach should minimize traffic speed and noise adjacent to Lake Village Estates, Orchard Shores and on Sulphur Bank Drive.

## **SECURITY**

The Elem Indian Colony will be a Superfund Site managed by the US EPA during the removal action. Under federal jurisdiction, the site will be fenced off with no trespassing signs with 24 hours/day and 7 days a week security to protect human health and safety.

## HEALTH

### **How is the dust from the removal action being controlled?**

EPA will require the contractor to control dust by wetting down the contaminated soils during excavation, hauling and placement in the disposal area. Based upon our past experience, EPA expects that these dust control practices will be very effective in preventing dust in the work areas. We expect that dust containing hazardous contaminants will be controlled in the work area and that dust will not be released from the site to adjacent areas.

EPA requires the contractor to set up and operate a monitoring network to gather air data. The data will be used to make sure that dust is not leaving the work area. EPA will put in place additional controls depending on the results of the data.

### **Do I have to worry about breathing dust containing hazardous contaminants?**

No. EPA will not haul any contaminated soils on public roadways.

Soils containing hazardous contaminants will be excavated using safety and health controls at the Elem Indian Colony. The soils will be transported directly to the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine property for disposal.

EPA will bring in clean soil, aggregate, asphalt, concrete and other construction materials from local suppliers to the work areas at the Elem Indian Colony.

### **Why is mercury a problem?**

Mercury is of particular concern because it can be absorbed by the human body and then may interfere with the development of the central nervous system. Mercury is a special concern to women of childbearing age and to children ages 1 to 17. Mercury is a lesser concern to men above the age of 17 and women beyond child bearing age.

Humans can be exposed to mercury through the ingestion of fish with high levels of mercury in fish tissue. Humans can also be exposed to mercury through direct contact with contaminated soils containing mercury. The primary direct contact exposure pathways are through

inhalation of contaminated dust or through incidental ingestion of contaminated soil.

### **Can I be poisoned by touching it?**

No. The health effects caused by the levels of mercury found in the contaminated soils at the Elem Indian Colony require exposure over a long period of time. The primary exposure pathways are through incidental ingestion or through inhalation.

### **Can we swim in the Lake?**

Yes. The levels of mercury found in the water in Clear Lake are low and within the mercury standard for safe drinking water. It is perfectly OK to swim in Clear Lake.

### **Is it okay to eat the fish?**

It is OK to eat a certain amount of fish. Fish are a nutritious part of your diet when eaten in moderate amounts. The presence of high levels of mercury in fish is a problem in many lakes throughout California, and in fish from the Pacific Ocean. Mercury affects the developing central nervous system.

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has issued a health advisory for consumption of fish and shellfish from Clear Lake and other areas in the region. The general guidelines for fish consumption from fish caught in Clear Lake and other areas in the region are:

- Women of childbearing age and children age 17 and younger may eat one fish meal per month.
- Women who are pregnant and children under 6 years old should not be consuming any fish.
- Women beyond childbearing age and men may eat one fish meal per week.
- This guideline allows for consumption of greater amounts of certain fish that are known to contain lower levels of mercury.

For further info, see the OEHHA website at <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html> or call them at (510) 622-3200.



# WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?



The EPA is working in close coordination with Lake County Agencies. If you have additional questions, please contact one of the following people.

## U.S Environmental Protection Agency (Primary Contact for the Project) SBMM Superfund Site Hotline: 1-800-231-3075

### **Richard Sugarek**

Remedial Project Manager  
75 Hawthorne St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415-972-3151 or **Hotline: 1-800-231-3075**  
sugarek.richard@epa.gov

### **Pui Man Wong**

Community Involvement Coordinator  
75 Hawthorne Street, MC-SFD-3  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Tel: 415-972-3242 or **Hotline: 1-800-231-3075**  
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## Lake County, CA

### **Jeff Smith**

Lake County Supervisor  
Board of Supervisors - District 2  
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### **Gary Lewis**

Lake County Supervisor  
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### **Ray Ruminski**

**Environmental Health  
(Primary Contact for Lake County)**  
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### **Bob Reynolds** (Air Quality and Dust Issues)

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### **Bob Lossius** (Road Issues)

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### **Chris Rivera**

Office Emergency Services  
Lake County Sheriff's Department  
1220 Martin Street  
Lakeport, CA 95453  
(707) 263-2331 (central dispatch)  
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### **Lou Dukes**

Cleaklake Oaks Fire Department  
707-998-3294

# ELEM INDIAN COLONY MINE WASTE REMOVAL ACTION

## Who to Contact, continued

### Elem Indian Colony

**Raymond Brown Sr.**, Elem Tribal Chairman  
Elem Tribal Office  
POB 989  
Clearlake Oaks, 95423  
707-998-9424

**Michael Umbrello**, Environmental Director  
Elem Environmental Department  
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Clearlake Oaks, 95423  
707-998-9424

### CH2MHILL (Project Contractor)

**John Spitzley**, Project Manager  
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Cell: (530) 945-1605  
email: [jspitzle@ch2m.com](mailto:jspitzle@ch2m.com)

### Clear Lake Environmental Action Network (CLEAN)

**US EPA Technical Assistance Grantee**  
**Chuck Lamb**, Chair  
P.O. Box 926  
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(707) 998-0135, Website: [www.cleanlake.org](http://www.cleanlake.org).  
email: [rtnc@sonic.net](mailto:rtnc@sonic.net)

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San Francisco, CA 94105  
Attn: PuiMan Wong (Sulphur Bank 6/06)

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