



EPA

SUPERFUND UPDATE

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION IX • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

COALINGA, CALIFORNIA

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Atlas and Coalinga Mines Superfund Sites

This fact sheet provides an update on activities at the Atlas and Coalinga Mines Superfund sites in California. The following topics are included:

- Five-Year Review of the City of Coalinga Site
- Coalinga Asbestos Mine (Johns-Manville) Cleanup
- Atlas Mine Site Remediation
- Clear Creek Management Area
- Arroyo Pasajero Flood Control Management

Five-Year Review of the City of Coalinga Superfund Site

Site Background

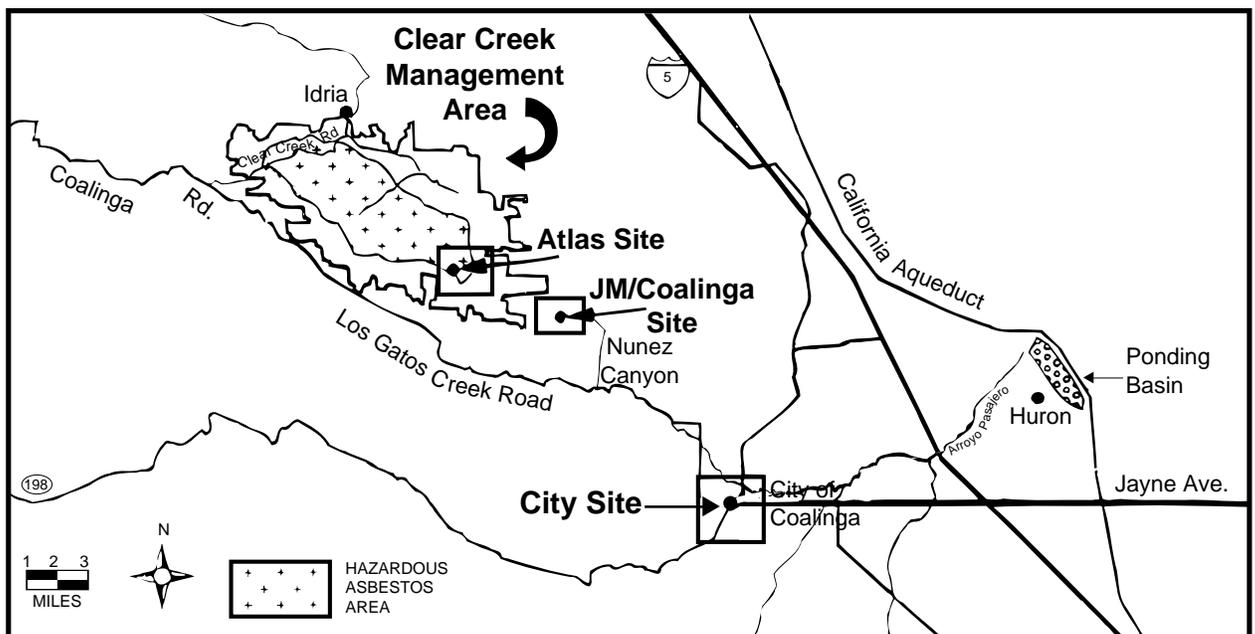
The City of Coalinga site, part of the Atlas and Johns-Manville Superfund sites, was declared clean in May 1993. The cleanup included excavating asbestos and nickel contamination and storing it in a Waste Management Unit (WMU). The WMU, located on Elm Street near Lucille Avenue, is a 20-foot deep pit covered with an impermeable cap and landscaped with natural habitat. The unit is fenced and restricted to public entry. Nearby, on formerly-contaminated land, are homes built after the cleanup, future home sites and a new large retail store.

Current Status

EPA conducted a Five-Year Review of the cleanup remedy for the City of Coalinga site in September 1995. A Five-Year Review ensures the integrity of the remedy and seeks public input on how the remedy is viewed in the community. Interviews were conducted with local officials, concerned citizens and business owners. Those interviewed were generally pleased with the remedy. The final report is available to the public through the site's local repositories (For repository locations, see page 4).

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) under cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), conducted a health consultation for

Atlas and Coalinga Location Map



the Ridgeview Apartments and surrounding areas of the City of Coalinga. The purpose of this health consultation was to review and evaluate available asbestos data for health impacts on the residents. While CDHS could not draw any conclusions from the results, it is probable that the results are a qualitative indication that asbestos levels in the surrounding air of the region is high and may be higher than ATSDR's comparison value.

CDHS, with ATSDR agreement, offered the following recommendations:

- conduct a health statistics review of cancer information to see if there is higher than normal expected deaths due to asbestos-related diseases
- consider a community education program for area residents, which would provide information about the asbestos levels in the community, discuss possible adverse health effects and ways to minimize community and individual exposure
- after evaluation of the first and second recommendations, conduct a study of asbestos levels in surrounding air in 10 cities. The study would focus on air and soil levels and whether the areas of highest contamination correlate with the areas where asbestos-associated disease is found. For further information, contact William Nelson, ATSDR, at (415) 744-2194.

Coalinga Asbestos Mine (Johns-Manville Mill) Superfund Site

Site Background

The Coalinga Asbestos Mine (Johns-Manville Mill) Superfund site was once part of an asbestos mining facility where a short-fiber asbestos product was milled. It operated from 1957 to 1977. In early 1980, the Metropolitan Water District (WMD) of Southern California detected asbestos in water samples from the California Aqueduct. The site, recognized as a source of the contamination, was placed on the National Priorities List in 1983. A Record of Decision was signed in September 1990, and through a Consent Degree, the responsible parties agreed to construct the remedy.

Current Status

The Coalinga Asbestos Mine site remediation has been completed, and the final inspection was conducted in June 1994. The completed remedy consists of: stream diversion, mill demolition, access restriction, road paving and revegetation. The pilot revegetation project was successful, and revegetation of the entire disturbed area was accomplished. The remedy was designed to increase stability of the tailings piles and decrease erosion. Although nearby roads were washed out and access to the site was denied for six weeks, the 100-year flooding event in March 1995 did remarkably little damage to the site. This proved the effectiveness of the design of the remedy. Long-term operation and maintenance is required to ensure the integrity of the remedy, and a site caretaker, the nearby Birdwell Ranch, has been

appointed. A closeout celebration sponsored by Levine-Fricke was held in June 1995. A final closeout report, Notice of Intent to delete from the National Priorities List and assumption of long-term oversight by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) are planned for 1997.

Atlas Mine Superfund Site Remediation

Site Background

The Atlas Mine Superfund site was once part of an asbestos mining and milling facility which operated from 1967 to 1979. In 1980, the Metropolitan Water District (WMD) of Southern California detected asbestos in water samples from the California Aqueduct. The site, recognized as a source of the contamination, was placed on the National Priorities List in 1984. A Record of Decision was signed on February 1991, and through a Consent Degree the responsible parties agreed to construct the remedy.

Current Status

The Atlas Asbestos Mine Superfund site remediation is in progress. The completed remedy consists of run-on/run-off controls, mill demolition, access restriction, road paving and revegetation. Several sediment trapping ponds and two diversion channels are completed, and the mill has been demolished. The pilot revegetation project was completed and revegetation islands over the entire site are being constructed. The remedy will increase stability of the tailings piles and decrease erosion. Long-term operation and maintenance will be required to ensure the integrity of the remedy.

Clear Creek Management Area

The Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) is approximately 30,000 acres of federally-owned land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is situated in the New Idria Formation, one of the largest naturally-occurring asbestos deposits in the world. The CCMA, in addition to natural or environmental asbestos, includes the Atlas site, touches the Coalinga site and surrounds the KCAC mine, the only active asbestos mine in California. Most of CCMA has been designated an asbestos hazard area and warning signs are posted at entry points. EPA and BLM contacted Rand McNally and Thomas Brothers, and they agreed to put asbestos warnings on maps. Rand McNally has incorporated an asbestos hazard warning in their 1997 road atlas. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation and racing have been

allowed in the CCMA for many years. BLM issued a final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Resource Management Plan for CCMA in 1996. EPA and other agencies protested this plan as not providing enough protection to the public. BLM is trying to resolve this protest before implementing the plan. EPA is concerned that the casual public visitor receive adequate warning on the risks of cancer due to asbestos inhalation at CCMA and from fibers that remain on vehicles. For further information, contact Robert Beehler, Area Manager with the Bureau of Land Management, at (408) 637-8183.

Arroyo Pasajero Flood Control Management

During heavy rains, asbestos-bearing sediments are washed down from the creeks draining the Atlas and Coalinga mines. Waters are eventually carried through the Arroyo

Pasajero drainage basin and deposited in the ponding basin adjacent to the California Aqueduct. In March 1995, a rainfall record was set for 100-year events. The Interstate 5 highway bridge was lost to flood waters, an oil pipeline burst and the California aqueduct was breached near the City of Huron. The Department of Water Resources (DWR), in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers, is completing a Feasibility Study that will lead to a long-term solution for flood control and asbestos waste in the Arroyo Pasajero. DWR is currently sponsoring a series of public meetings in Coalinga as part of a Multi-Agency Forum. For further information regarding the public meetings, please contact Jose Faria, Aqueduct and Flood Management, Department of Water Resources, at (209) 445-5372. ■



Environmental Asbestos Workshop Information

EPA sponsored a workshop where technical issues surrounding environmental asbestos were discussed with the public, and information was provided about site cleanup efforts. In addition, the workshop included presenters and panelists consisting of concerned citizens, federal, state and local government, and representatives from industry, education and research institutions. If you would like a videotape of the session, it is available upon request (See next page).

Information Repositories

Coalinga District Library
305 N. 4th Street
Coalinga, CA 93210
(209) 935-1676

Huron City Hall
36311 Lassen Avenue
Huron, CA 93234
(209) 945-2241

Avenal Public Library
501 East Kings
Avenal, CA 93204
(209) 386-5741

Kings County Library
401 North Douty
Hanford, CA 93230
(209) 582-0261

For More Information

If you would like to add a name to our mailing list, request a copy of the videotape of the workshop, or would like more information on the Atlas Mine, Johns-Manville Coalinga Asbestos or the City of Coalinga Superfund sites, please contact:

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(415) 744-2177

Richard Proconier (SFD-7-2)
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(415) 744-2219

 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
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