



ANACONDA / YERINGTON MINE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \$ Region 9 \$ San Francisco, CA \$ October 2007

Yerington, Nevada

SITE UPDATE

There has been much activity at the Anaconda Mine site since our last fact sheet in September 2006. This newsletter will describe what has been going on and what we can expect in the near future. An evening community meeting will be scheduled for later this year...stay tuned.

Current Field Work and Sampling

Both Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been in the field taking samples. ARC's work has been in three areas: Second Step groundwater well installation, background soils sampling and ongoing groundwater and air monitoring. EPA has concentrated on two areas: sampling the Arimetco heap leach pads and ponds and assessing the Anaconda process areas for radiological constituents.

Groundwater

ARC's First Step groundwater investigation, conducted in late 2006, resulted in boreholes up to 240 feet deep and installation of monitoring wells at 15 locations around the mine site. The Second Step groundwater investigation was approved by EPA this past May. It calls for the installation of more than 50 wells at both existing and new locations (see photo of drill rig). The purpose of these monitoring wells is to help further evaluate the extent to which the groundwater



Typical drill rig

from the site may have impacted off-site areas. Field work began in May and will continue through the end of the year, with data available mid-2008.

Upcoming groundwater activities include a site-wide groundwater investigation and monitoring plan (including evaluation of pump-back system monitoring wells). ARC has submitted a work plan for this which includes additional well installation both on and off site.

Background Soils Sampling

Following approval of the work plan one year ago, ARC identified 74 off-site sample locations (south and west of the mine perimeter), each of which had samples taken at two depths—on the surface and three feet below ground surface (see photo of backhoe). Prior to sampling at these locations, archaeological screening was conducted to ensure that historically significant sites were not disturbed. Some locations were moved to protect sensitive areas. Field work has been completed, and data will be available at the end of this year. Results of the off-site sampling will be compared to what has been found in soils in the process area.



Backhoe digging trench

Radiological Assessment—Process Areas

Past sampling of the Anaconda process areas found elevated levels of radiation. Though ARC proposed to remove contaminated soils from a limited area, EPA believed a larger radiological assessment and removal was necessary. In light of this, EPA conducted a radiological scan of the area from July 26 – August 8, 2007. The scan utilized several different methods including an ERG gamma scanner, a hand-held gamma scanner, a gamma spectrometer and soil sampling of hot spots (see photo of scanner). The initial screening revealed several scattered areas of surface radiological contamination at levels as high as those seen in earlier screening. However, the actual concentrations need to be determined by lab analyses. Results should be available later this year. EPA is currently taking deeper soil samples to determine if a removal action is warranted.



Hand-held gamma scanner

Arimetco Heap Leach Ponds and Pads

A great deal of work occurred on some Arimetco heap leach ponds this past year because of the poor shape they were in and the possibility that they would leak and spread contamination (see aerial photo next page). This included replacing one pond, constructing a new one and building a French drain for the large Megapond in 2006. During the high wind events this past May and June, the liner for the Bathtub Pond tore causing an ongoing release of heap leach fluids. EPA will close this pond this fall by constructing a trench similar to what we built for the Megapond, remove sediments and the liner, and regrade the pond. Additional sampling of other ponds was completed in August which will then lead to figuring out a strategy for closing them.

In a separate effort, EPA's contractors are collecting soil samples from borings and surface surveys of the tops of the heap leach pads. Samples of the acidic fluids draining from

the pads is also being collected to allow EPA to better understand the contamination in the pads and how to best close them. This is all part of the Remedial Investigation of the Arimetco facilities and will help determine options for containing and/or cleaning up contaminated areas on this section of the mine site.

Site-Wide Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

The mine site has been divided into eight Operable Units (OUs) based on location, type of contamination and other attributes. The RI/FS for each OU will outline how each area is investigated and what is determined from that investigation, followed by options for controlling and/or cleaning up each area. ARC is responsible for implementing the RI/FS for seven OUs, and EPA has the lead on OU8 (Arimetco facilities). ARC and EPA have been working together on a schedule for each work plan based on urgency and length of time to implement. The work plans for each OU must be carefully planned and integrated in order to be effective overall. Presently, the status for the work plans is as follows:

- \$ Health & Safety Plan, Data Management Plan, Air Quality Monitoring Work Plan, and Background Soils Work Plan — completed and currently being implemented
- \$ Site-wide Groundwater (OU1) RI Work Plan — currently under review
- \$ Site-wide Groundwater Monitoring Plan — currently under review
- \$ RI Work Plan for Process Areas (OU3) — currently under review
- \$ Revised Site-wide Quality Assurance Plan — currently under review
- \$ Revised Conceptual Site Model — currently under review
- \$ Pit Lake RI (OU2) Work Plan — due December 2007

Possible Purchase of Mine Areas and Facilities

Two companies have expressed interest in purchasing various portions and/or equipment from the Anaconda Mine site. Quaterra Resources has been given an option to purchase the site including mineral and water rights, private land, Arimetco holdings (except the Solution Extraction (SX)/Electrowinning (EW) plant equipment and documents). The company will have six months from the date of purchase,

along with a possible four-month extension, to work out environmental requirements through an agreement with EPA. The process is still in the technical evaluation phase, and no decision has been made at this point. If a purchase offer is made, EPA would be involved in the process to ensure all environmental issues are handled properly.

Western Utah Copper Company (WUCC) has purchased the Arimetco SX/EW plant and plans to move parts of it to their operations in Utah. They had a year after the purchase was finalized to move the equipment. However, EPA was recently told of financing issues, and WUCC has asked to extend the original purchase timeframe to work things out. It is looking like the extension may be granted and the removal may take place later this year.

Trespassing on Mine Site

There have been several instances of people trespassing on the site and stealing mine property. As work increases on the site, this type of behavior becomes more serious as well as dangerous due to physical conditions on site. Although no one has yet been apprehended by law officials, ARC is prepared to press charges against any individual caught in this type of action.

Information Repository

Site reports and other information on the Anaconda/Yerington Mine site can be found at:

Lyon Country Library

20 Nevin Way
Yerington, NV 89447
(775) 577-5042



Hours:

Mon, Wed, Fri - 9 am to 6 pm
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Arimetco heap leach pads and ponds

Anaconda / Yerington Mine Site Update

For More Information

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Anaconda/Yerington Mine, please contact any of the people listed below:

Jim Sickles

Remedial Project Manager
(SFD-8-2)
(415) 972-3265
sickles.james@epa.gov

Nadia Hollan Burke

Remedial Project Manager
(SFD-8-2)
(415) 972-3187
hollan.nadia@epa.gov



Vicki Rosen

Community Involvement Coordinator
(SFD-3)
(415) 972-3244
rosen.vicki@epa.gov

EPA toll-free number:

(800) 231-3075 (Please leave a message and your call will be returned.)

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United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105
Attn: Vicki Rosen (Ana/Yer 10/07)

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