

Upcoming Road Work on Red Water Pond Road – Fall 2010

Rio Algom Mining LLC (Rio Algom), with oversight by the US EPA (EPA), will begin the following work in and around the Red Water Pond Road area. Rio Algom, US EPA and Navajo Nation EPA (NN EPA) have agreed on the following activities:

Phase 1 (late September through October)

- Repair fences;
- Stabilize the mine site waste piles in order to prevent the contaminated material from eroding and spreading to the surroundings; and
- Apply chip seal paving to approximately 2,200 feet of road, including a segment of Red Water Pond Road (RWPR) and the Quivira Mine Entrance Road for the short-term. Chip seal is a pavement method that combines a layer(s) of asphalt with a layer(s) of fine aggregate. This method is typically used on rural roads with low traffic, such as RWPR. The chip seal will be a temporary pavement, expected to last for approximately five years.

Phase 2 (November through Spring 2011)

- Conduct an in-depth investigation of the mine site soils and sediments.

After this work is completed, EPA will work with Navajo Nation EPA, Rio Algom and the Red Water Pond Community to plan for long-term clean up of the Quivira Mines and impacted areas.

We have been working with Navajo Nation EPA to prepare for the work at the Quivira mine site. We have also shared Rio Algom's proposed workplan with Teddy Nez, a representative of the Red Water Pond Road Community, and will continue to consult with the community about the plans.

We are also available to answer any questions you may have.

U.S. EPA: For questions related to this work, please contact Andrew Bain, Remedial Project Manager at (415) 972-3167 or bain.andrew@epa.gov or Ken Black, Project Director for Rio Algom at (520)-531-6927.

Work Dates:

EPA and Rio Algom have agreed to start Phase 1 work in late September and to complete this work by November 1. This time frame will allow Rio Algom to complete the work before the winter season begins. The preparation and chip sealing are expected to take approximately one week.

Work Hours:

Monday through Friday 7am – 6pm.

Purpose of Work:

The soils in RWPR have moderately elevated radium (radiation) in the top and shoulders. It appears to be related to former ore hauling by the Quivira Mine.

This road covering would be a short-term solution before a permanent road remedy is selected. EPA needs the data from a comprehensive study of the mine site to make a final decision about the road.

The road surfacing will benefit the residents by:

- Improving the existing road and making it easier to drive on;
- Reducing residents' exposure to radioactive contamination;
- Preventing migration of radioactive contamination into yards and side roads where radioactive contamination has already been removed; and
- Providing protection to nearby residents and drivers while EPA investigates the rest of the mine site.

Methods:

While the road can be either paved or covered with chip seal, which would both effectively cover the road until a more permanent remedy is implemented. US EPA prefers chip sealing over asphalt paving for the following reasons:

- It requires the application of less material than asphalt paving
- Chip sealing can be done faster than paving, which reduces potential impact to residents

Some concerns with the sturdiness of the chip seal were expressed. However, the analysis that EPA and/or Rio Algom have completed indicates that the chip seal surface is sturdy enough for Red Water Pond Road, which does not experience high speed traffic. Chip seal is very effective when carefully prepared and applied. US EPA will provide oversight to ensure successful chip sealing of the road.

Duration of short-term remedy

The proposed road covering is designed to last five years, sufficient time for a permanent road cleanup to be selected and completed.

Permanent remedy

US EPA will make a final remedy decision following investigation of the rest of the mine site and public input. In selecting a final remedy, EPA will consider risk based feasible options that will protect public health and safety.

What the community will see

- EPA and NNEPA oversight – staff members who provided oversight for the UNC Interim Removal Action last Fall/Winter will continue to participate;
- Rio Algom's contractors and their equipment on RWPR and at the Quivira #1 mine site.

Trucks

Semi truck trailers will haul gravel and chip seal material. One lane of traffic will be closed at a time with traffic control (flag people) during operating hours.

Dust

Based on extensive air sampling during work on the NECR site and the nature of this effort, EPA does not anticipate significant dust generation. To be sure, EPA will require dust abatement (water trucks) and perimeter air monitoring for particulates and radioactive materials.

Noise

Trucks and paving equipment will cause typical construction noise during working hours.

Employment

EPA has asked Rio Algom to consider local hiring. EPA will facilitate communications about Rio Algom hiring notices with RWPRCA and the Navajo Nation.

Reasons for limited time frame for review and comment:

Negotiations with Rio Algom took longer than anticipated this year, and EPA expects work to occur on the road and waste pile side slopes before the winter season. Therefore, we felt obligated to require Rio Algom to follow a tight construction schedule for this first phase. EPA will continue to consult with the community during this work, including the planning for Phase 2, investigation of the mines).