



Anaconda Mine

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • August 2011

Yerington, Nevada

Arimetco Feasibility Study Released for Public Comment

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released the Feasibility Study (FS) for the Arimetco portion (Operable Unit 8) of the Anaconda Mine Site.

The public comment period on the Arimetco FS will end on September 30, 2011. An electronic version of the FS is available at a special web site (please see Page 5 for details) and at the Lyon County Library. Comments may be mailed to US EPA, Attention: David Seter (SFD-8-2), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, or via e-mail to seter.david@epa.gov.

EPA invites the public to a community meeting to learn more about the Arimetco Feasibility Study and the status of other cleanup work at the Anaconda Mine. The meeting will be held on September 15, 2011 at the Yerington High School Multi-purpose Room, 114 Pearl Street, Yerington, NV from 6:30.m. to 8:30p.m.

Community Meeting

September 15, 2011

6:30p.m. to 8:30p.m.

Yerington High School
Multi-purpose Room
114 Pearl Street Yerington, NV

Arimetco Operable Unit (OU 8)

The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to develop and evaluate cleanup alternatives related to contamination resulting from facilities owned and operated by Arimetco. When Arimetco purchased the Anaconda Mine in 1989, they constructed heap leach pads, draindown ponds, and a processing facility on the south side of Burch Drive. These facilities were built for the purpose of recovering copper from tailings material and from new ore.

Approximately 40,000 tons of copper ore per day were hauled to the heap leach pads and dumped into 20-foot lifts. Each lift was leached for 30 to 40 days through the application of a sulfuric acid solution. The solution picked up copper as it percolated through the heap leach pads and was then collected in a series of ponds, then pumped to the processing facility on site.

The Arimetco Feasibility Study presents cleanup alternatives for two aspects of Arimetco operations: the heap leach pads and the draindown fluids. Further study will be necessary related to the processing facility (known as the solvent-extraction electro-winning plant), historical spill locations, and groundwater within the same operable unit. This approach is consistent with the Superfund law (CERCLA), the National Contingency Plan (NCP), and EPA guidance, wherein EPA may develop a feasibility study to address a specific site problem or the entire site.

A total of eight alternatives are presented in the Draft Feasibility Study. They range from the “no action” alternative (which EPA is required to include under CERCLA), to cleanup options for the draindown fluids only, to cleanup options that involve partial and full capping of the heap leach pads.

The public comment period for the Feasibility Study ends on September 30th. Comments may be mailed to US EPA, Attention: David Seter (SFD-8-2), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, or via e-mail to seter.david@epa.gov.

The Anaconda Mine investigation and cleanup has been divided into a number of smaller portions, which EPA calls Operable Units or OUs (see below).

Anaconda Mine Operable Unit Names

OU1	Site-wide Groundwater
OU2	Pit Lake
OU3	Mine Process Areas
OU4	Evaporation Ponds/Sulfide Tailings
OU5	Waste Rock Area
OU6	Oxide Tailings
OU7	Wabuska Drain
OU8	Arimetco Operations

Other EPA Site Activities

Groundwater Monitoring (OU1)

Domestic Well Monitoring Program

EPA continues to oversee the Domestic Well Monitoring Program implemented by the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC). Over 150 private wells located north of the site are sampled on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Private well users are provided with bottled water if the measured uranium concentration in their well equals or exceeds 25 micrograms per liter (the federal primary drinking water standard or Maximum Contaminant Level is 30 micrograms per liter).

We will continue to monitor private wells as we advance our groundwater investigations to determine where mine-related groundwater contamination is located. EPA is working on a fact sheet that provides information on the Domestic Well Monitoring Program and the Bottled Water Program. This fact sheet will be released later this year.

Site Background

The Anaconda Copper Mine Site is a former open-pit, low-grade copper mine that covers more than 3,400 acres in the Mason Valley and is located about one-mile west of the city of Yerington, Nevada. The Anaconda Mining Company operated the mine from 1952 through 1978.

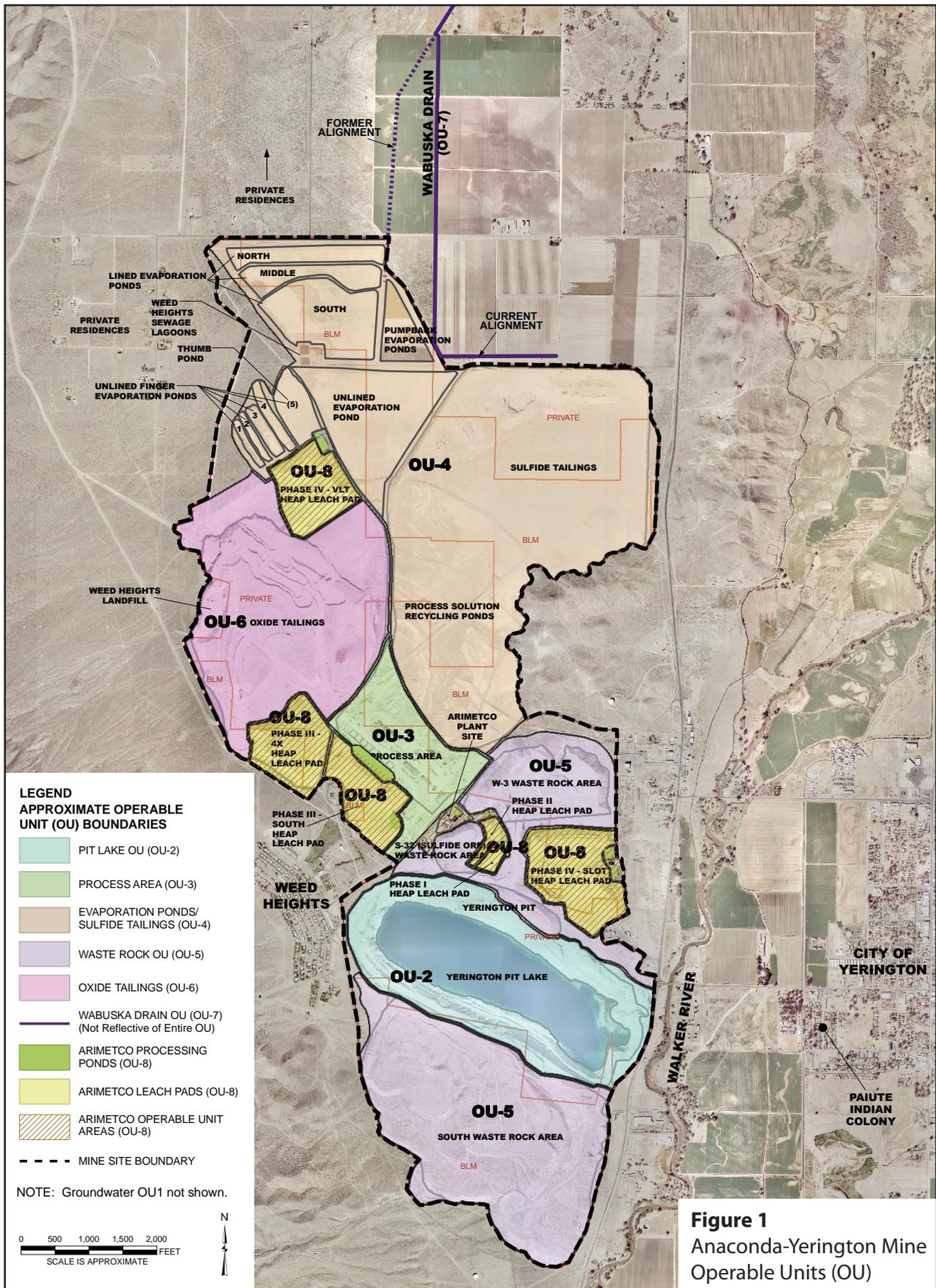
Anaconda processed oxide and sulfide ores extracted from the open pit, which resulted in liquid and solid wastes, such as tailings piles, evaporation ponds, leach vats, and waste rock piles. The Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC) bought the Anaconda Mining Company, including the Site, in 1977, and consequently is accountable for contamination from former Anaconda mining activities at the Site.

ARC sold the Site to Mr. Don Tibbals in 1982. Mr. Tibbals conducted some operations and leased portions of the Site to companies that extracted copper from the tailings and waste rock piles and conducted metal salvage and transformer recycling. Mr. Tibbals sold the property to Arizona Metals Company (Arimetco) in 1989.

Arimetco constructed an electrowinning plant and five heap leach pads to extract residual copper from tailings material and from new ore. The heap leach pads cover about 250 acres and produce acidic heap leach solutions that are collected in ponds. Arimetco filed for bankruptcy in 1997 and ceased operations at the Site in 2000.

Singatse Peak Services recently completed its purchase of the former Arimetco property for the purpose of conducting mineral exploration on site. EPA plans to work with Singatse to ensure that these efforts do not conflict with cleanup activities at the site.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) conducted response actions to address immediate concerns after Arimetco abandoned the Site. EPA assumed the regulatory lead for the Site in 2004. EPA and ARC have conducted several removal actions to address immediate concerns. EPA, with the support of NDEP, continues to move forward with investigations to determine the extent of contamination and identify cleanup options for the Site.



Groundwater Investigation (OU 1)

A draft workplan to complete the Remedial Investigation for Groundwater will be prepared in Fall 2011. The draft plan will be available for public review and comment.

Mine Process Area (OU3)

EPA and ARC had an on-site meeting in May to discuss the geophysical investigations in the former mine process area. The second phase of investigations will be implemented later this year. The information collected will help us identify potential ongoing sources of contamination.

Anaconda Mine and Mason Valley Agriculture

EPA has no evidence that contamination from the Anaconda Mine has affected any agricultural products in the Yerington Area. Crops grown and livestock raised in the vicinity of the mine should not be considered contaminated by virtue of their proximity to the site. Crops grown and livestock raised in the Yerington Area should be considered safe for consumption.

To be affected by contamination from the Anaconda Mine site, an agricultural product would have to come into contact with elevated levels of site contaminants. By their nature, pathways that may transport contaminants tend to be very localized and directional. Just being near the mine site is not a reason to assume or otherwise conclude an impact to the safety or quality of an agricultural product.

In fact, in 2007, EPA conducted tests of onions grown adjacent to the Anaconda site and irrigated from a supply well located just north of the site boundary. The onions were selected from random areas of the field and were not washed or trimmed prior to analysis. The onions were analyzed for uranium, a primary site contaminant. The results showed that the uranium levels in the onions were low, and below levels typically found naturally in onions from other areas of the United States. Accordingly, EPA concluded that the test results showed that the Anaconda mine did not elevate uranium levels in local onions.



EPA and its contractors are working to finalize a draft work plan for the OU-3 source investigation. This work plan will be available for public comment later this year.

Evaporation Pond and Sulfide Tailings (OU4)

EPA completed its review of the Cover Materials Characterization Data Summary Report and will work with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC) to identify the next steps for the removal action to cover the lined and unlined evaporation ponds (LEP and UEP) with interim covers. A technical meeting to discuss the removal action will be held later this year. EPA approved the application of a dust suppressant to the LEP and UEP. This is a temporary measure to mitigate fugitive dust emitted from these areas until the removal action is finalized.

EPA has initiated internal scoping meetings for the OU4 remedial investigation and intends to hold a larger scoping meeting with ARC and stakeholders later this year. OU4 contains the LEP, UEP, finger evaporation ponds, pumpback well system evaporation ponds, sewage lagoons, and sulfide tailings area.

Wabuska Drain (OU7)

EPA has initiated internal scoping meetings for the OU7 remedial investigation and intends to hold a larger scoping meeting with ARC and stakeholders later this year. OU7 contains the Wabuska Drain, which is an agricultural return flow ditch that

is 14 miles long, originates near the northern boundary of the mine, and terminates in the Walker River. Records indicate that mining process fluids from Anaconda operations entered the Wabuska Drain.

Community Involvement Program

The purpose of EPA's Community Involvement program is to help the public become involved in the cleanup decision-making process.

EPA has a number of ways for the public to learn about the site. We've placed site documents in our Information Repository at the Lyon Library and on EPA's web site (see information at right). EPA also has a number of staff that you can call with questions using their direct line or EPA's toll-free line (800-231-3075). Their direct lines are listed on the back of this fact sheet.

Information Repository

For site documents, please visit the Information Repository at:

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

Hours: Mon, Wed., Fri – 9:00am to 6:00pm
Tues, Thurs – 9:00am to 7:00pm
Saturday – 9:00am to 4:00pm

Please visit the Anaconda / Yerington Mine website at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/anaconda>

The OU 8 Feasibility Study for the fluid management system and Arimetco heap leach pads is available at:

<https://partners.ttemi.com/sites/epanevada/default.aspx>

User name: clients\public

Password: public

Then click on Public Documents on the left and then click on OU-8. The date of the Feasibility Study is July 21, 2011.



Mailing List Coupon

If you are not already on EPA's mailing list for the Anaconda Mine Site, please send an e-mail or return the coupon below to David Cooper (contact info on back).

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (optional) _____

E-mail (optional) _____

Affiliation (optional) _____

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— Public Meeting on September 15, 2011 —

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