

Red Water Pond Road Sealing Completed

Comprehensive Quivira Mine Sampling Investigation to begin in December

Rio Algom, a company with responsibility for the two Quivira Mines, has completed the first of two phases of work to address contamination from the mines. U.S. EPA (EPA) and Navajo Nation EPA (NNEPA) are supervising the work.

The completed Phase I focused on paving Red Water Pond Road and providing erosion control. Rio Algom completed the following work:

- Performed cultural resource surveys of the mines;
- Repaired fences to keep people and animals off the site;
- Stabilized the mine site waste piles; and
- Applied chip seal paving to Red Water Pond Road (RWPR) from the turnoff at Rt. 566 up to the bridge. Due to concerns about the bridge stability, EPA directed Rio Algom to spray the road to the north up to the Quivira Mine entrance with a different sealant that would not require heavy equipment.

In the coming months, Rio Algom will be performing Phase 2, which consists of soil and sediment sampling, under EPA and Navajo EPA supervision. Rio Algom will conduct an in-depth investigation of the mine site soils and sediments from both mines (Quivira 1 & 1East) and from nearby impacted areas in much the same manner as the investigation EPA directed at the Northeast Church Rock Mine Site.

The investigation will include soils within the original mine permit boundaries, and soils outside of those boundaries, moving progressively further away until the contamination drops below levels of concern.

After the Phase 2 work is completed, EPA will work with Navajo Nation EPA and the Red Water Pond Road Community to plan for long-term clean up of the Quivira Mines and impacted areas. The schedule and additional details concerning the Phase 2 work are inside this fact sheet.

We have shared Rio Algom’s proposed soil sampling work plan with representatives of the Red Water Pond Road Community, and will continue to discuss the project with the community. We are 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.

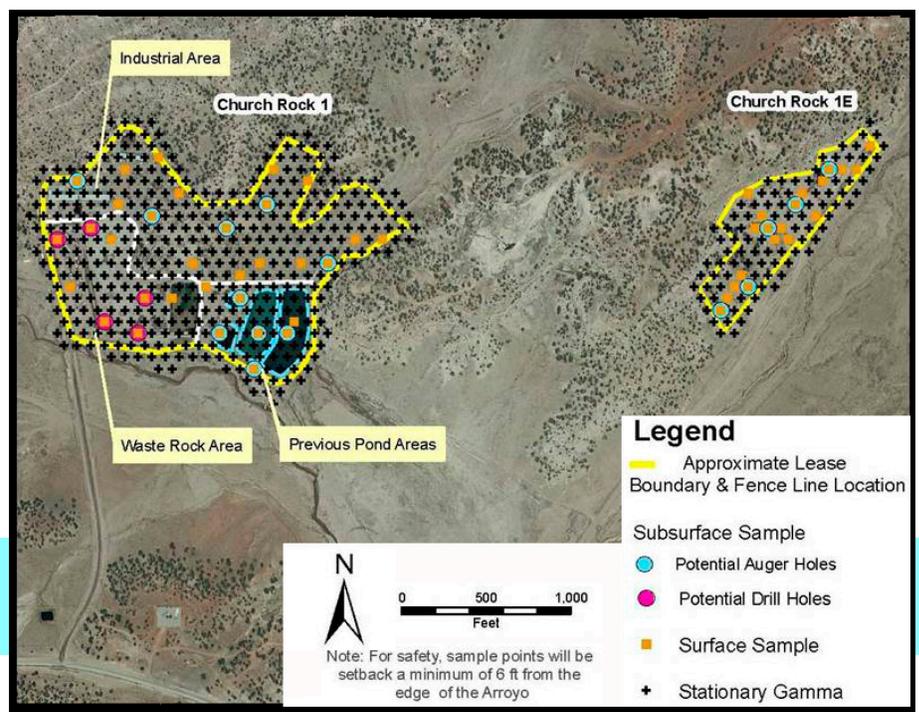


Figure 1: Planned Investigation & Sampling Locations at Quivira Churchrock Mines



Quivira Mine Sites

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Phase 2: Soil and Sediment Sampling



Time frame:

We expect work to begin soon, in early December. This time frame is intended to allow Rio Algom to complete some of the sampling before the winter weather interferes with collecting samples. Additional sampling will be done in the spring, and Rio Algom's report on the investigation will be due in the summer.



Work Hours:

Monday through Friday, 7am - 4pm
(Subject to change depending on weather. EPA will notify the community of any changes)



Reasons:

EPA has found that soils at the two mine sites contain moderately elevated radium (radiation) at the surface and, in some places, at greater depth. Rio Algom is further investigating the mine sites, as well as nearby soils and sediments in the arroyo, under an agreement with EPA. Once we have sample results showing how much contaminated material is present, EPA will consult with NNEPA and the community and decide how to address the problem. The completed Red Water Pond Road covering is a short-term solution until a permanent road remedy is selected. The temporary road covering is designed to last five years and will be maintained by Rio Algom.



What the Community Will See:

- EPA and NNEPA oversight - staff members who provided oversight for the road paving, fence installation and stabilizing the waste pile will continue to participate;
- Rio Algom's contractors and their sampling equipment on the Quivira #1 mine site (on RWPR) and #1 East mine site (on Pipeline Canyon Road).
 - The first stage of sampling will involve the following steps:
 - taking a radiation measurement every 80 feet within the fenced area and nearby;
 - using a drill rig to bore into mine spoils, taking samples from fixed depths until reaching native soil;
 - boring into the Unnamed Arroyo #2; and
 - In Spring 2011, continue drilling for samples.



Jobs:

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



Permanent Remedy:

US EPA will make a final remedy decision after completing investigation of the mine site. In selecting a final remedy, EPA will consider permanence, protectiveness and community input.