



Anaconda / Yerington Mine

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

Yerington, Nevada

EPA Draft Community Involvement Plan Available for Public Comment

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites the public to a community meeting to discuss the status of cleanup work for the Anaconda Mine in Yerington, Nevada. The meeting will be held on April 21, 2011 at the Yerington Elementary School, 112 N. California Street, Yerington, 7:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.

During the meeting, EPA will be accepting comments on the draft Community Involvement Plan that organizes the public participation effort for the site. The 60-day public comment period is from **March 28 – May 27**. Please see Page 5 for information on how to provide comments.

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

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 |

Community Meeting

April 21, 2011
7:00p.m. to 9:00p.m

Yerington Elementary School,
112 N. California Street



Cleanup Activities Under EPA's Removal Program

In December 2010, under an Administrative Order with EPA, Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC) completed three cleanup actions:

1. Removal of 6,097 tons of soil contaminated with radiological materials above EPA's industrial worker exposure limit
2. Removal of 27,000 feet of pipe contaminated with asbestos and radioactive materials
3. Capping of 26.5 acres of tailings to limit standing, acidic water to prevent wildlife deaths, and to minimize the migration of dust containing hazardous substances

The work was completed a month ahead of the original schedule. About one third of the work crew consisted of local labor hired through ARC's contractor.

The contaminated soil was transported via 274 truck loads to the U.S. Ecology facility in Grand View, Idaho, which is permitted to accept radiological waste. The majority of the transite pipe, which was only contaminated with asbestos, was safely landfilled on-site. Transite pipe additionally contaminated with radioactive material was also sent to the U.S. Ecology facility for proper disposal.

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 consequentially is responsible 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.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) conducted response actions to address immediate concerns after Arimetco abandoned the Site. EPA assumed regulatory control of the Site in 2004. EPA and ARC have conducted a number of removal actions at the Site. 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.

A dust suppression plan was in place during the removal actions and work was halted at the site on two occasions when the wind speed exceeded 25 miles per hour. However, monitoring showed that levels of PM10 (used to measure particulate matter in the air) did not exceed stop-work levels either at the immediate work areas or at the site perimeter at any time during the cleanup activity.

The ARC cleanup actions are in addition to removal work performed last summer by EPA. The EPA actions included:

1. Removal of asbestos from the Anaconda Mine office and off-site disposal of the asbestos containing material
2. Demolition of the mine office and on-site landfilling of the demolition debris
3. Removal, radiological screening and off-site disposal of more than 300 large truck tires
4. Repair of the heap leach fluids management system
5. Performance of an evaporation pond pilot test
6. Removal of small containers of hazardous waste left on-site

Other EPA Site Activities

Arimetco OUB

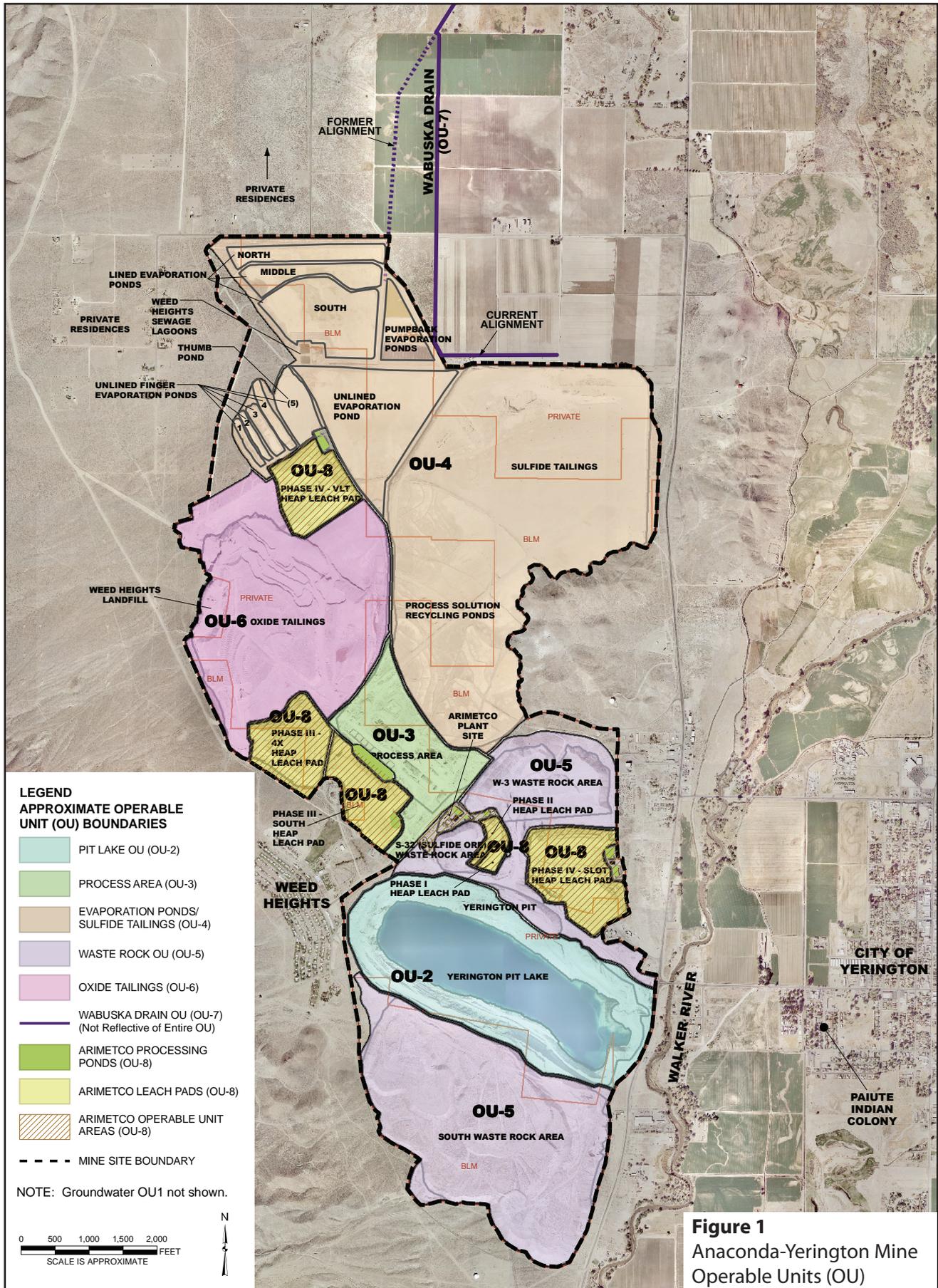
EPA is preparing a response to comments submitted by stakeholders on the Supplemental Remedial Investigation Report for the Arimetco heap leach pads. EPA is also conducting an internal review of the Draft Arimetco Feasibility Study (FS) of options to close the heaps. The FS will be released to the public for comment once the internal review is complete.

Groundwater Monitoring

The investigation of the nature and extent of groundwater contamination is continuing. Atlantic Richfield Company recently completed the installation of 94 additional groundwater monitoring wells in the area north of the mine site. Sampling of these wells and previously-installed monitoring wells will provide an improved picture of what is happening with groundwater beneath and downgradient of the site.

Domestic Well Monitoring Program

EPA continues to oversee the Domestic Well Monitoring Program implemented by the Atlantic Richfield Company. 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). EPA will continue to monitor private wells as we advance our groundwater investigations to determine the extent of mine-related groundwater contamination.



Status of Proposed Superfund (NPL) Listing

Although EPA is completing the Feasibility Study to select a remedy for the Arimetco heap leach pads, the Agency is prohibited from spending money to implement the remedy unless the site is added to the Superfund National Priorities List. Over the past 10 years, EPA has worked with the State of Nevada to explore options to fund the cleanup of the Arimetco operation without Superfund listing. Unfortunately, no timely or reliable alternatives have materialized. EPA is continuing to move forward with the listing process to assure that the site is cleaned up and returned to productive use.

Next Steps

Groundwater Investigation (OU 1)

A final workplan to complete the Remedial Investigation for Groundwater will be prepared during Summer 2011. The workplan will include groundwater components of all the Operable Units (OU) with the exception of OU3 (Mine Process Areas), which is integrated with the Mine Process Areas source investigation, and OU8 (Arimetco portion), which is being investigated separately by EPA.

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.

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 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.



Mine Process Area (OU3)

EPA will work with ARC to advance investigations in the former mine process area. Geophysical investigations to identify underground utilities and assess their condition will be completed this year. The information will help identify potential ongoing sources of contamination. A draft Remedial Investigation (RI) work plan will be released by EPA for public comment in the Spring. We intend to have the work plan finalized for ARC to implement in the Fall.

Evaporation Pond and Sulfide Tailings (OU4)

EPA will work with ARC to conduct a removal action and initiate the remedial investigation for OU4. The Cover Materials Characterization Data Summary Report will be available for public comment in March. EPA will use this information to choose an appropriate cover material for the lined and unlined evaporation ponds located at the northern portion of the site. A removal action to cover these two large ponds will be implemented later this year. A draft RI work plan will be released for public comment later this year. Dates for technical meetings to discuss the evaporation ponds removal action and the OU4 RI will be announced soon.

Wabuska Drain (OU7)

EPA will work with ARC to initiate the RI for the Wabuska Drain. This agricultural return-flow ditch is about 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. A draft RI work plan will be released for public comment later this year. A date for a technical meeting to discuss the RI will be announced soon.

Community Involvement Program

The purpose of EPA’s Community Involvement program is to help the public become involved in the cleanup decision-making process. Our work is organized by a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). The CIP lists the community’s issues and concerns about the site, then identifies the tools and techniques that EPA will use to provide information about the site and access to the cleanup process.

EPA’s draft CIP is available for review and feedback during a 60-day public comment period from **March 28 – May 27**. Please send your input to David Cooper, Community Involvement Coordinator (contact information on back page). EPA’s next community meeting, April 21, 2011, falls within the draft CIP’s public comment period. It is also possible to provide verbal or written comments at that time.

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 on 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 page.

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>



Mailing List Coupon

If you are not already on EPA’s mailing list for the Anaconda / Yerington 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 April 21st —

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