



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Pacific Southwest Region 9

Cyprus Tohono Mine Site

75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105 | November 2013

U.S. EPA Plans Community Interviews and Outreach as Groundwater Remedial Investigation Process Draws to a Close

The Cyprus Tohono Corporation (CTC), working with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), is in the process of completing a multi-year groundwater remedial investigation. This remedial investigation will document the technical findings of the study at Cyprus Tohono Mine Site. In the early 2000s, the Tohono O’odham Nation (Nation) made a request to USEPA for assistance. USEPA became involved with the mine site, designating it a Superfund Alternative Approach site.

Community Involvement

What is a Community Involvement Plan (CIP)?

The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is a document designed to enable meaningful community and stakeholder communication throughout the Superfund cleanup process. It is based on the feedback USEPA receives from interviews with community members.

As part of the Superfund process, USEPA is updating the CIP. USEPA, in coordination with the Tohono O’odham Nation Environmental Protection Office (TONEPO), will be conducting a series of community interviews in November. The purpose of these interviews is to obtain community input to ensure that the North Komelik Community, Sif Oidak District, the Nation and all other stakeholders are kept fully informed of the Superfund process and next steps.

Groundwater Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) and Superfund Process

The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) began in September 2009, when USEPA and Cyprus Tohono Corporation (CTC) signed an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent for the CTC to perform a groundwater investigation and feasibility study on how best to clean up the groundwater contamination at the mine site.

Site Background – 1800s to Present

Development of the site now known as Cyprus Tohono Mine began in the 1880s when low-grade oxide ore was mined from surface outcrops. Mining continued into the 1980s, with several operator changes of the open pit copper oxide mine. In 1987, CTC began operating the mine by leasing it from the Tohono O’odham Nation. CTC expanded the open pit mining activities, heap leaching operations, and extraction/electrowinning (electro-deposition of copper from the ore) for processing the heap solutions. Since 2009, mining has not actively occurred at the site. The mine is currently in “Care and Maintenance” status under Bureau of Land Management jurisdiction. Extensive environmental investigative studies and cleanup work has been on-going since the early 2000’s, when groundwater contamination was discovered. In 2002, the CTC installed new drinking water wells for the village of North Komelik to provide safe and reliable drinking water to the community.

Community Interviews Are Being Scheduled for November 19 – 21, 2013

If you are interested in providing input through an interview about the USEPA’s Community Involvement Plan for the Cyprus Tohono Mine Site, please contact:

Sarah Cafasso, USEPA, at (415) 972-3076 / EPA toll-free hotline at (800) 231-3075 or Laurie Suter, TON Environmental Protection Office, at (520) 383-8681.

SUPERFUND PROCESS

IDENTIFY SOURCES



INVESTIGATE (RI / FS)



PROPOSE CLEANUP PLAN



DESIGN, BUILD & OPERATE (RD / RA)



FOLLOW-UP:

- FIVE-YEAR REVIEW
- SITE WORK COMPLETE



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U.S. EPA Contacts

In January 2014 USEPA will put together a Fact Sheet for community members describing the key findings of the Remedial Investigation Report. Once the Remedial Investigation Report is in final form in early 2014, USEPA is planning to hold a community meeting to outline the next steps of the process. If you have any questions or would like additional information in the interim, please feel free to contact the USEPA or Nation contacts listed below.

Future Community Outreach – January 2014

Tohono O'odham Nation Contact

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Mine Site**