



ANACONDA / YERINGTON MINE

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • FEBRUARY 2006

Yerington, Nevada

EPA To Conduct Removal Action to Address Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and Fugitive Dust

This month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will begin what is called a "Removal Action" at the Anaconda/Yerington Mine to rid the site of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and control dust. A Removal Action involves activities taken quickly to control hazardous conditions that could potentially cause "imminent and substantial" harm to human health and the environment. This Removal at the mine is part of the larger evaluation and cleanup that remains ongoing at the site. The lead project manager for the Removal will be an EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) who is based in Nevada.

Why We're Doing This Removal

EPA recognized that certain conditions at the mine site should and could be addressed quickly, thereby minimizing the potential for contaminants from the mine harming people and the environment. In October 2005, EPA personnel conducted a removal assessment to determine what issues should be dealt with in the short term. EPA determined that two activities should happen as soon as possible: ridding the site of PCBs (PCBs are very dangerous to human health); and controlling dust contaminated with mine waste from blowing off site. EPA asked the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARC) to undertake these actions, but they declined. Therefore, EPA will conduct the removal and seek reimbursement from ARC.

What Will Be Done

There are approximately 170 transformers, switches and containers at the site which potentially contain unacceptable levels of PCBs, many located in two storage buildings, others scattered across the property. Some are leaking and all are vulnerable to weather and vandalism. EPA will remove and prop-

erly dispose of all PCBs and related equipment that are not needed to operate site facilities.

Tailings piles and other areas contain heavy metals and radionuclides that can blow off site. Using the vat leach tailings material from the site, EPA will cap the part of the sulfides tailings area that was not already capped along with an area adjacent to it (approximately 100 acres total). Additional dust control will be put in place at the Acid Brine Evaporation Pond Area by applying a soil sealant to those areas with the potential to generate dust. EPA will also apply soil sealant to any other areas on the site that are determined to be contributing to fugitive dust emissions. Soil sealant is not a permanent remedy. However, it will reduce the dust for one to two years until a long-term solution is established for those areas.

Timing of Removal

The PCB removal action will begin later this month (February 2006) and take about three weeks to complete. The dust mitigation activities will most likely begin in early April and will take about two months to complete.

OTHER SITE ACTIVITIES

Site Security

EPA has actively been working toward addressing a major community concern regarding the ability of trespassers to access the mine site. This past December, site team members and ARC reviewed the existing fencing along the entire site perimeter (14.2 miles). Following this assessment, EPA asked ARC to use the following factors to determine what needs to be done:

- Site fencing should provide the same level of security as a six-foot-high fence (combination of wire mesh and barbed wire).
- Consider proximity of hazardous materials to local residents and receptors.
- Consider barriers to access such as steep embankments or tailings piles.
- Take into account the condition of existing fencing which must meet site security goals.

Although EPA believes we are close to reaching an agreement with ARC as to how to accomplish the above goals, no final decision was made by the time this fact sheet went to press. We do, however, expect to have this issue settled satisfactorily within a very short period of time.

Air Monitoring

ARC has submitted the first three quarters of 2005 air monitoring data for review and it is currently being evaluated. Preliminary results do not show exceedances of national air quality standards for fugitive dust. However, we will continue to collect and evaluate air data. A full year's worth of sampling is needed to adequately assess this. We expect to have the full evaluation available later this summer.

Additional Technical Evaluations

EPA is continuing technical evaluations at the site in the following areas:

- Soil and groundwater contamination at the Process Areas—This evaluation will be supplemented by a work plan to determine background levels in soil; the preparation of this work plan is currently underway.

- Radiological data—Assessing all the information we have and determining what else needs to be done to better understand the nature, extent and potential risk.
- Site-wide hydrogeologic framework assessment—Involves drilling and sampling at 15 locations on and off site, both north and south of the mine, installing monitoring wells and monitoring the groundwater. The results of this study will help us determine whether contamination from under the mine is migrating off site and whether the uranium seen in wells north of the mine is related or naturally occurring. The first report from this study is expected by mid-year.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Community meeting to discuss public health consultation for Anaconda/Yerington Mine

Wednesday,
February 22, 2006
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Yerington Paiute Tribe Gymnasium

171 Campbell Lane
Yerington

For more information, contact:

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Information Repository

Site reports and other information can be found at the following Location:

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

Hours:
Mon, Wed, Fri—9 am to 6 pm
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You may also provide the above information via e-mail to: rosen.vicki@epa.gov

For Further Information

If you have questions or concerns about the Anaconda/Yerington Mine, please feel free to contact any of the following people:

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You may also leave a message for Jim or Vicki at EPA's toll-free line: **(800) 231-3075** and you will receive a call back as soon as possible.

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