

**Appendix B:
Site Reconnaissance Interview
and
Observation Report/
Photo Documentation**

Weston conducted a site walk through of the Halaco facility with FOOSC Robert Wise, FOOSC Pete Guria, and Matt Mitguard of the EPA in April 2006. Field work in the execution of Integrated Assessment Investigation took place in June 2006. Halaco Engineering is a now-defunct recycler of aluminum and magnesium. The facility closed its doors and filed for bankruptcy in 2004. The facility lies at the southern-most end of Perkins Road on the east side. It is bound by a city park and empty fields on the opposite side of Perkins road to the west, wetlands and a lagoon to the south, empty fields to the east, wetlands and a paper recycling plant to the north, and a waste water treatment plant to the northwest.

The site consists of an eleven-acre parcel housing the main recycling operations, including offices, machine shop, smelter, scale room, warehouses, and a building that was last used in an attempt to convert the ammonia-rich waste into fertilizer. The Smelter Area is bound by a cinder-block fence around three sides of the property and the Oxnard Industrial Drain (OID) on the east side. The banks of the OID provide unrestricted access to the site. Building construction ranges from brick to concrete and corrugated steel construction. The Smelter building appears to have been constructed using slag in lieu of gravel in the concrete mix; the result is that the clasts are rusting out of the concrete.

Several lean-to structures and Connex boxes lie in the receiving area; inspection of these reveal trash, drums of what appear to be oil-based chemicals, and SuperSacs filled with fine-grained, gray slag material. Most of the building also have large accumulations of slag waste either in SuperSacs or in a large pile in the Smelter building. Large areas of the paved surface in and around the old workings are coated with slag as well. Sumps associated with the machinery around the Smelter area contain highly turbid water, presumably due to the fine-grained, metal-rich wastes. Most of the structures around the site are covered with very complex graffiti, indicating that taggers are spending a significant amount of time on the property.

Waste material from the Smelter Area was transferred via sluice-pipe and/or front loader to the 28-acre Waste Disposal Area to the east of the Smelter Area. The Waste Disposal Area consists of the 14-acre Waste Management Unit (WMU) to the south and a roughly flat, 14-acre area to the north. Both areas are dominated by waste slag, as evidenced by the lack of vegetation in this area.

The Waste Disposal area is surrounded by an earthen berm. Inspection of the berm reveals the presence of slag in portions of the berm, as well as bathtub-sized, metallic ingots. The berm is breached at both points where it intersects the WMU, presumably to allow vehicular traffic. The surface flow in these areas would allow materials to flow off the site in either direction.

There is a bridge over the OID connecting the Smelter Area and the Waste Disposal Area. Inspection of the banks indicates the presence of slag in the wall of the OID. Concave cutbacks into the banks of the OID indicate mass wasting at periods of high flow.

The WMU is approximately 20 to 25 feet above ground surface. There are three containment pond areas constructed in the top of the WMU. There appears to have been some cover and erosion control installed along the berm walls, as there is sporadic areas of vegetation, especially on the south and east sides of the WMU. These areas are broken up by what appears to be areas of slumping, where the internal depositional layering is evident. There is a silt fence and straw boom constructed around the south and east toes of the berm; in spite of this, large chunks of waste may be found in the adjacent wetlands. Weston noted burrows into the soil cover where ground squirrels and other burrowing animals have exposed waste materials at several places around the WMU.

The surface of the WMU and WDA are covered with dirt bike tracks, footprints (human, bird, lizard, dog, etc.), and trash, beer cans, toys, and other recreational items are common. These observations, as well as the regular presence of trespassers (joggers, taggers, and kids wandering around) during field work indicate that the site is commonly used for recreational purposes. On the night of June 23, 2006, thieves stole four air samplers and three generators from around the WMU. Due to the size of the generators, a large truck was likely used to conduct the theft.

During Halaco field work, B. Castellana encountered Jay Nicholas of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) and exchanged business cards. Mr. Nicholas stated that his organization might have photos and other information that might aid EPA in their investigation. Mr. Nicholas stated that he had seen several instances of large dust clouds emanating from the waste pile when the winds kick up near the site.

Photodocumentation - Halaco Engineering Integrated Assessment



Photo 1: The Halaco Smelter Facility. Note the prolific graffiti at almost every accessible surface. Photo by B. Castellana.



Photo 2: The Waste Disposal Area and Waste Management Unit taken from the berm along the northern part of the site. The Oxnard Industrial Drain is to the right in the photo. Photo by B. Castellana



Photo 3: Collecting soil samples from the Smelter Area, along the OID. Some of the highest Gamma readings were observed in this area. Photo by B. Castellana.



Photo 4: Beach sediment sample SDB26. Photo by A. Rice.

Photodocumentation - Halaco Engineering Integrated Assessment



Photo 5: Collecting sample SSN51 from the Waste Disposal Area. The soil here is dominated by two to five feet of waste material used to fill in the surface. Photo by B. Castellana on 06-21-06.



Photo 5: Smelter waste stored in SuperSacs in the warehouse, smelter, and multiple Connex boxes throughout the Smelter Area. Five composite samples were collected from these areas. Photo by A. Rice on 06-26-06

Photodocumentation - Halaco Engineering Integrated Assessment



Photo 7: Soil sample location along the eastern boundary of the Smelter Area. High gamma readings were observed in this area. Photo by A. Rice.



Photo 8: Supersacs stored in the smelter building. Note the graffiti. Photo by B. Castellana on 06-28-06.

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Photo 9: One method of gamma radiation screening involved the Office of Indoor Air and Radiation's tractor-mounted gamma detector - a 12x12" sodium iodide detector. Photo by B. Castellana taken on 06-21-06.



Photo 10: Gamma screening at sampling locations in the Waste Disposal Area. Background readings range from 7,000 to 14,000 counts per minute. Photo by B. Castellana taken on 06-21-06.

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Photo 11: The EPA GeoProbe collecting waste samples in the WMU. The Geoprobe had to be driven on 1.25" plywood boards to keep it from sinking into the waste pile. Photo by B. Castellana taken on 06-27-06.



Photo 12: Complex graffiti at the site. Photo by B. Castellana taken on 06-27-06.

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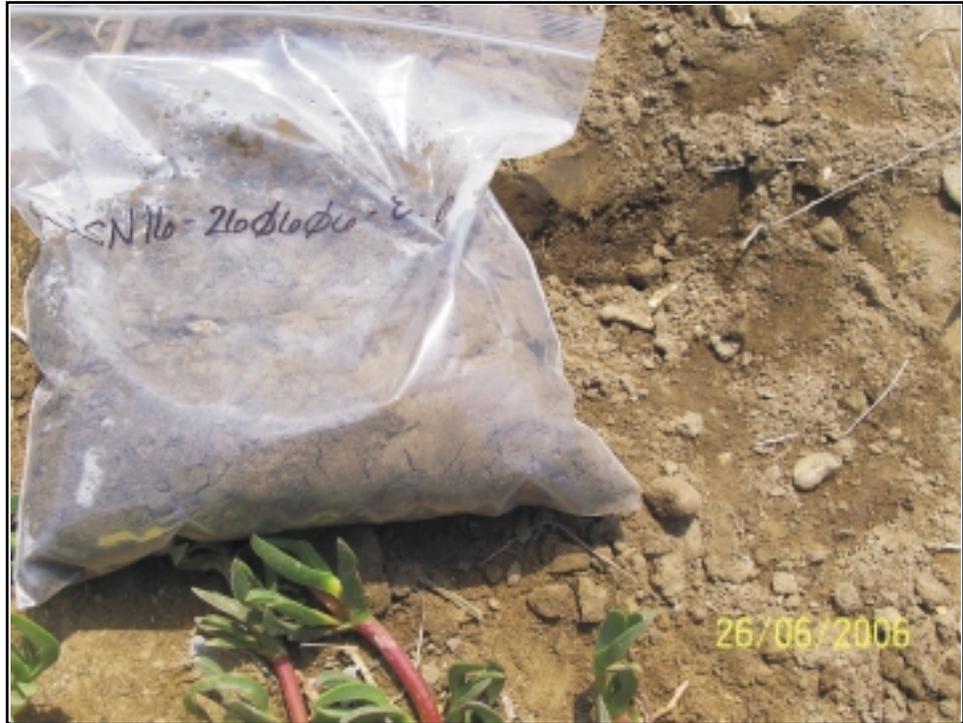


Photo 13: Soil sample collected from the Smelter Area . Photo by A. Rice.



Photo 14: Setting the nets to collect the fish samples. Photo by B. Castellana

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Photo 15: The surface water body at the toe of the Waste Management Unit. Photo by A. Rice.



Photo 16: Large chunk of waste spalled off of the WMU into the wetlands to the south. Photo by A. Rice.

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Photo 17: Wetlands sample collected from area south of the WMU. Photo by A. Rice.



Photo 18: Waste material extracted from under the soil cover by burrowing animals. Photo by A. Rice.

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Photo 19: View across the OID bridge on the Smelter side, looking east toward the WMU. The people on the WMU are trespassers. There is grey-colored waste material present in the wall of the OID, just above the water line. Photo by B. Castellana taken on 06-28-06.



Photo 20: Air sampling station AIR1 in the southwest corner of the site. Photo by B. Castellana

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Photo 21: View of the WMU from the Smelter Area. Note the waste material in the wall of the banks of the OID. Photo by B. Castellana.



Photo 22: Photo of the OID outfall lagoon. The boat on the left is the fish collection crew. AIR1 station is in the lower left corner. Photo by B. Castellana