

CLEVELAND MILL NEW MEXICO

EPA ID# NMD981155930
Site ID: 0600952



EPA Region 6
Congressional District 02
Grant County

Contact: Mark Purcell
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Note: This Site has been deleted from the NPL and this Fact Sheet will be updated annually.

Background

The Cleveland Mill Superfund site (Site) is located 5.5 miles north of Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico. The Site, which contained an operating mine and mill in the early part of the century, is located at the headwaters of a small tributary of Little Walnut Creek. The Site occupies 4 acres in mountainous terrain and 10 acres which extend down the drainage area and into the streambed of Little Walnut Creek. Disposal of mill tailing and mine waste rock occurred in several areas of the Site during mining activities and during processing related to the Cleveland Mine. A shallow on-site aquifer at the toe of the tailing was also contaminated.



Citizen complaints to the NMED are what initially led to NMED's 1985 identification of the Site as an area of potential concern. Residents along Little Walnut Creek and the Site drainage area that served as a tributary of the creek complained about the acidic runoff of the tailings into the creek, causing the water color to change to a dark red. The Site was added to the final NPL on March 31, 1989.

The contaminants of concern are arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, lead, and zinc.

The Site is located in a developing residential area that is adjacent to the Gila National Forest and private lands. Downstream residences are concentrated along Little Walnut Creek, almost all of which rely on private wells for potable water and agricultural uses. The nearest residence is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the Site. The population within a 3-mile radius of the Site is estimated to be 1,200. The present and anticipated future land uses for the Site and the surrounding land are residential, recreational, and agricultural with limited grazing of cattle.

A Record of Decision (ROD) for the Site was signed on September 22, 1993. The ROD included excavation of the waste material, transportation of the waste material to a

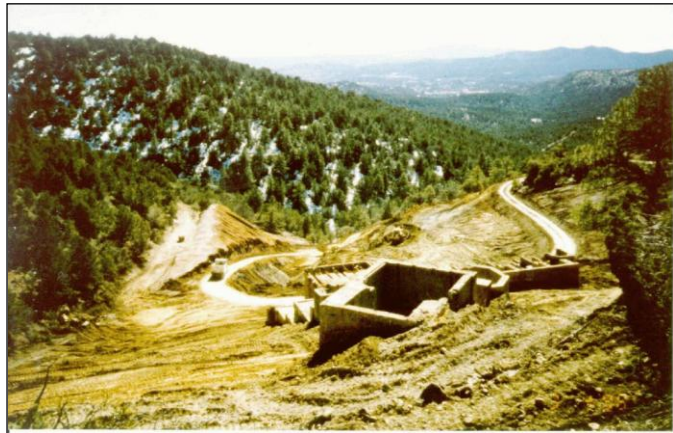
reprocessor for treatment, and disposal of the residuals. The ROD also included ground water monitoring to ensure that the contamination did not worsen or spread. In a 1995 Consent Decree (CD), the participating companies agreed to implement the remedy specified in the 1993 ROD. Despite agreement the participating companies were unable to implement the remedy. To address the immediate risks, on July 11, 1997, the EPA, with the concurrence of the NMED, issued an Action Memorandum that authorized a time-critical removal action. The Removal Action Work Plan, submitted by the participating companies, was approved by EPA on November 6, 1997. The Removal Action Work Plan detailed the design criteria and the steps that would be undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of the 1993 ROD.

The field activities required by the AOC were completed on November 19, 1998, the date on which the last area of the Site was seeded. The EPA issued an Amended ROD for the Site on September 20, 1999, stating that no further response action was necessary; however, the ground water and surface water monitoring, and implementation of the existing institutional controls were required to continue. In a 2003 letter, EPA advised the participating companies that surface water monitoring was no longer necessary.

The Site was deleted from the NPL on 7/23/2001.

Present Status and Issues

- The Site is currently remediated. Operation and Maintenance activities, including Site inspection and ground water monitoring are being undertaken by the responsible parties.
- The Site was deleted from the National Priorities List in July 2001.
- A Five-Year Review of the Site was completed in August 2007. The Five-Year Review concluded that the remedy for the Site continues to be protective of human health and the environment.
- The next Five-Year Review will be completed in 2012.
- The annual site inspection and ground water sampling event was performed in October 2010.



Benefits

- After the removal action, the Site was addressed in a single long-term remedial phase that focused on contamination at the entire Site and monitoring of the ground water.
- Remediation of the tailings addressed a source of contamination to Little Walnut Creek and a potential threat to the residential wells that were already established.
- The Site and adjacent five mile stretch of Little Walnut Creek is in a rapidly developing residential area.

National Priorities List (NPL) Site History

- Site HRS Score: 40.37
- Proposed Date: 6/24/88
- Final Date: 3/31/89
- Proposed deletion from the NPL: 5/22/2001
- Deleted From the NPL: 7/23/2001
- Location: 5 miles northeast of Silver City
- Photos: [Site Photos](#)
- Population: Approximately 1,200 area residents, mainly along Little Walnut Creek, draw drinking water from private wells within 3 miles of the site.
- Setting: The site is an abandoned lead, zinc, and copper mine and mill covering about 4 acres near mine and about 10 acres of the bed of Little Walnut Creek. Tailings from the mill were deposited in piles in the mill area and then washed into Little Walnut Creek.
- Hydrology: Run-off from the facility had acidified Little Walnut Creek and has contaminated it with metals. Residential wells installed along the creek, though not contaminated with toxic substances, had shown indicator parameters, which indicate that they have been affected by the mine tailings.
- Principal pollutants: arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, lead, and zinc.
- Volume: 164,960 cubic yards in about 9 piles and in the streambed.

Human Health and Ecological Considerations

- Direct contact and ingestion threat; shallow, on-site aquifer is contaminated with metals.
- Acidic run-off from facility into Little Walnut Creek potentially transports metals into residential wells.

Record of Decision

Signed: September 22, 1993

Remedy Selected: Off site reprocessing, recycling and disposal

Contacts

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State Contact (NMED):

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Prime Contractor:

PRP lead (Mining Remedial Recovery Company), EPA and NMED oversight

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