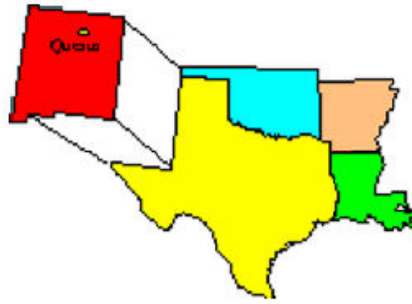


MOLYCORP, INC. (TAOS COUNTY) NEW MEXICO



EPA REGION 6 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 03

Contact:
Mark Purcell 214.665.6707

EPA ID# NMD002899094
Site ID: 0600806

Updated: September 2009

Current Status

A Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) is currently being conducted under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) at the MolyCorp site (Site) near Questa, NM. MolyCorp (currently Chevron Mining Inc. – Questa Mine or CMI) is performing the RI/FS in accordance with an EPA Administrative Order on Consent, dated September 2001. The field investigation phase was completed in 2008. The final RI Report was submitted to EPA in July 2009 and is under review. The final FS Report was submitted in August 2009 and is also under review. Once these documents are approved, they will be made available at the Site repository, located at the village of Questa offices. EPA finalized the baseline human health and ecological risk assessments in May 2009. These documents are currently available at the Site repository for review. A meeting with the EPA National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) is scheduled for September 2009 to present EPA's proposed remedy. The NRRB is a technical and policy review group that reviews proposed high-cost cleanup decisions to help evaluate whether they are consistent with current law, regulations, and Agency policy and guidance. After the NRRB meeting, a Proposed Plan outlining EPA's preferred remedy will be released to the public for review and comment later this year. Over the last few years, previous community outreach efforts include community meetings held in Questa in August 2007 and May 2008 to present the results of risk assessment and cleanup options, as well as a community bulletin presenting a status update in July 2009.

Benefits

The completion of the RI/FS and risk assessments will allow EPA to select a remedy to mitigate threats to public health and the environment from the release or potential release of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants at or from the Site.

National Priorities Listing (NPL) History

Site Hazard Ranking System Score: 50
Proposed Date: 5/11/00
Final Date:

Site Description

Location: The mine site is located 4 miles east of Questa, Taos County, New Mexico. The tailings ponds are located 1 mile west of Questa.

Population: An estimated 1,100 people live within a mile of the tailings ponds. The permanent population within one mile of the mine site is limited to the owners of a small resort and the owners of a few small cabins.

Setting: The Site consists of an active molybdenum mine and milling facility on three square miles

of land owned by Molycorp in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It also includes a tailings disposal site (tailings ponds) on approximately one square mile of land owned by Molycorp and a nine-mile long tailings pipeline running along State Highway 38 from the milling facility to the tailings ponds. The mine and tailings ponds are bounded to the south by the Red River, a tributary of the Rio Grande. The Red River is home to a State fish hatchery located 2 miles downstream of the tailings ponds and is designated as a Wild and Scenic River in the vicinity of its confluence with the Rio Grande. Over the years numerous breaks in the pipeline resulted in the spilling of tailings into and along the flood plain of the Red River, threatening the fishery and nearby endangered species habitats. Additional threats to ground water and surface water include seepage from the tailings ponds and acidic metal-laden water generated from the weathering of the waste rock piles (referred to as acid rock drainage or ARD) at the mine site. COPCs include aluminum, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, fluoride, iron, lead, manganese, molybdenum, sulfate and zinc.

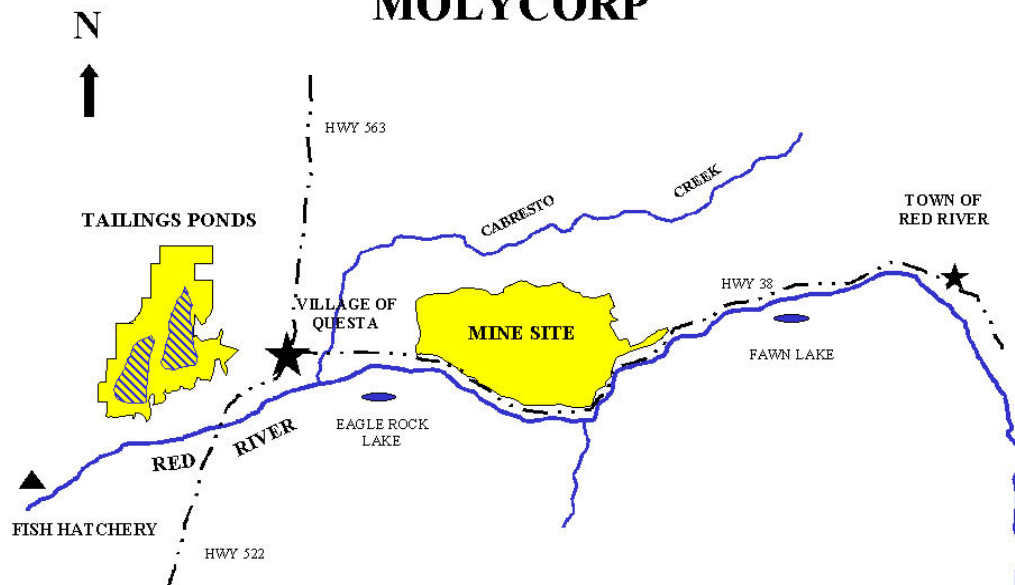
Hydrogeology: Mine Site — Contaminated ground water within side drainage basins flow into the Red River alluvial aquifer. Some of the ground water within the alluvial aquifer flows into the Red River as seeps and springs at zones of upwelling. Acidic, metal laden seepage at the toe of the Capulin and Goat Hill North rock piles is captured and directed to the underground mine workings. The dewatering of the underground mine workings has created a zone of capture for the deep bedrock ground water. Molycorp uses water collected from the underground workings and the alluvial aquifer (via pumping wells) for production water in its milling operations.

Tailings Ponds — Ground water is present beneath the tailings ponds in an upper alluvial aquifer and a basal volcanic aquifer. Saturation of the tailings has created a partial mounding of ground water beneath the ponds. Seepage from the tailings ponds has moved both downward into the underlying aquifers and laterally to ground surface as seeps. Seepage-impacted water is extracted by collection systems and discharged to the Red River via a permitted outfall (002 Outfall).

Principal Pollutants: Heavy metals, including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, fluoride, lead, manganese, molybdenum, and zinc.

Site Map

MOLYCORP



Contacts

EPA Remedial Project Manager:	Mark Purcell	214.665.6707
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator:	June Hoey	214.665.8522
EPA Attorney:	John Emerson	214.665.3137
EPA Region Public Liaison	Donn R. Walters	214.665.6483
EPA State Coordinator:	Kathy Gibson	214.665.7196
New Mexico Environment Department:	Joe Fox	505.827.2340

EPA Region 6 Superfund Toll Free Number: 800.533.3508

Prime Contractor: CDM Federal Programs Corporation