

Cove Area Abandoned Uranium Mines Investigation Activities

Cove Wash Watershed Assessment

From 2015 to 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), along with Navajo Nation EPA and Diné Environmental Institute of Diné College, sampled sediment and water in the Cove Wash watershed and conducted various surveys and studies. Sampling determined that the watershed has elevated uranium concentrations in surface and ground water around and below the historically mined areas. Sampling goals included:

1. Identifying sources of contamination and potential areas of concern.
2. Determining the baseline contaminant levels in the Cove Wash.

The types of sampling completed are shown in the table below. During the time sampling occurred, USEPA also installed warning signs at unregulated water wells. Upcoming activities include livestock assessments and air sampling.



Water well warning signs installed at unregulated water wells.

Completed

Cove Wash spring snowmelt sampling

Cove Wash low-flow sampling

Mexican spotted owl survey

Cove Wash wetland survey

Crop and irrigation study

About the Cove Wash Watershed

The Cove Wash watershed is approximately 47 square miles and includes 42 abandoned uranium mines within the Lukachukai Mountains. Year-round water is found in peaks and canyons above 7,000 feet elevation, where springs and seeps are above ground. Developed springs and wells are also part of the watershed.



Sampling in the Cove Wash watershed.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Activities for the Cove-Area Tronox Mines

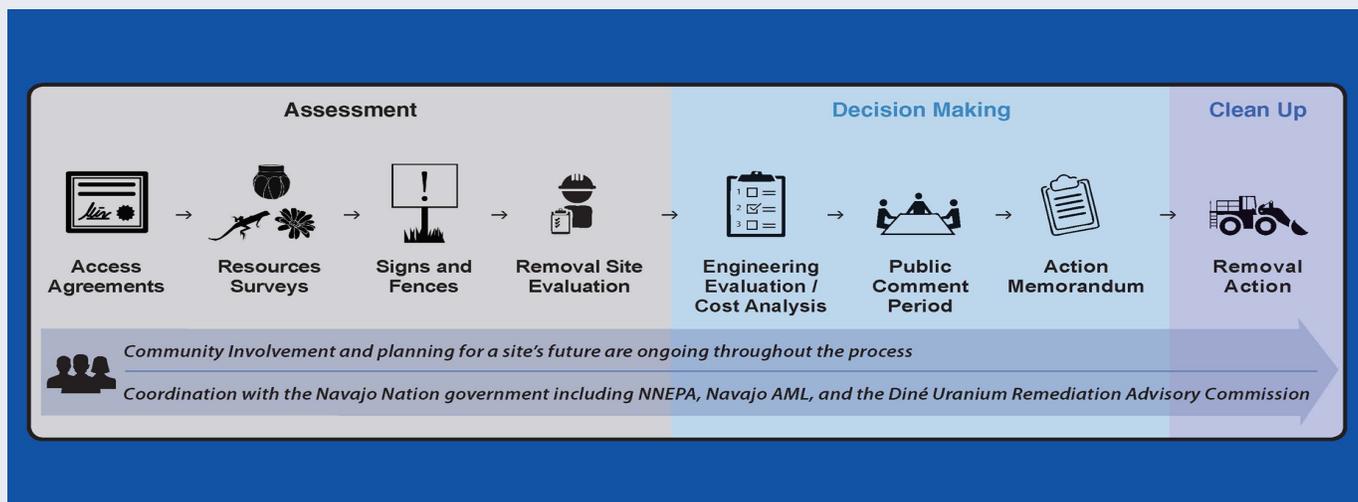
In late June 2016, USEPA entered into an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop a planning document for addressing the Cove Chapter abandoned uranium mines. This planning document is called a conceptual site model (CSM). The CSM will help USEPA figure out which areas need further study and which areas will move straight to cleanup. USACE presented an introduction to the CSM to the Cove community in November 2016 and received their feedback.

As part of the agreement, USACE will also do an assessment that identifies mining areas where more data will need to be collected. To complete the assessment, USACE created picture models that show how exposure to uranium can occur and to whom.

Next Steps for the CSM

Results of the CSM will be presented to the Cove community in Spring 2018.

Superfund Process on the Navajo Nation



For More Information

If you have questions about the Cove Wash Watershed Assessment and Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, please contact:

Gaelle Glickfield
Remedial Project Manager
USEPA Region 9
(415) 972 – 3045
glickfield.gaelle@epa.gov

Secody Hubbard
Community Involvement Coordinator
USEPA Region 9
(415) 972 – 3241
hubbard.secody@epa.gov

For more information visit:
www.epa.gov/navajo-nation-uranium-cleanup/cove-arizona-mines-cleanup

