

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Final Site

September 2012

BAUTSCH-GRAY MINE | Galena, Illinois
Jo Daviess County** Site Location:**

The Bautsch-Gray Mine site consists of the remnants of an abandoned lead-zinc mine and milling operation located approximately four miles south of Galena in Rice Township, Jo Daviess County, Illinois. The site contains a 40-acre mine tailings pile, a 4.8-acre surface impoundment and 4.9 acres of contaminated soil. The site is in a rural area and is located approximately 1.5 miles east of the Mississippi River.

 Site History:

The Bautsch and Gray Mines were two separate underground mines. The Mineral Point Zinc Company began operating at the Gray Mine in 1927 and continued until the 1940s. In 1946, Tri-State Zinc began operating at the Bautsch Mine. From 1969 until 1979, Eagle Picher operated from both mines. Currently, the property encompassed by the Bautsch-Gray Mine site is owned by three separate entities. No mining activities have occurred on the property since 1979.

 Site Contamination/Contaminants:

A mill formerly located on the Bautsch-Gray Mine site processed rock from the Bautsch and Gray Mines. After rock was mined, it was transported to the mill which was located near the present day location of the tailings pile. The mill was used to crush and grind rock and separate usable lead and zinc ore. The leftover rock, referred to as mine tailings, began to accumulate on the site in the late 1940s. A large berm, composed of mine tailings, parallels Blackjack Road. Sampling of the areas contaminated by mine tailings found elevated levels of lead, zinc, arsenic and cadmium.

 Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

The erosion of the tailings pile has resulted in the migration of contaminated mine tailings toward Blackjack Road. A surface impoundment, two residential properties, roadside ditches, a wetland and Smallpox Creek have been impacted by the migration of mine tailings. Smallpox Creek flows for approximately 2.7 miles before reaching the Mississippi River. Smallpox Creek is a perennial water body that is used for trapping, fishing and canoeing. The Mississippi River is a fishery and contains two protected aquatic species near the confluence with Smallpox Creek. The most shallow bedrock aquifer, which provides drinking water to most of the area residents, has been contaminated. One nearby residential drinking water well was found to exceed the Safe Drinking Water Act maximum contaminant level (MCL) for lead.

 Response Activities (to date):

The EPA has entered into an administrative order on consent with several potentially responsible parties (PRPs) to conduct a Superfund time-critical removal action to install and maintain a water treatment system on the residence with elevated lead levels in their well. Removal actions were also taken to re-grade the tailings pile and address residential soils.

 Need for NPL Listing:

The state of Illinois referred the site to the EPA. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated, but are not viable at this time. The EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state on March 22, 2011.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp> or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.