

Site Redevelopment Profile

Eagle Rock Lake and the Chevron Questa Mine Superfund Site

One mile east of Questa off Highway 38
Questa, New Mexico 87556

Property Overview

Size

Eagle Rock Lake: 3 acres; Whole Site: 4.5 square miles (2,880 acres)

Current Site Uses

- Recreation; the cleaned-up lake is once again a functioning fishery and its surroundings offer trails, picnic areas, boardwalks and restroom facilities.

Use Restrictions

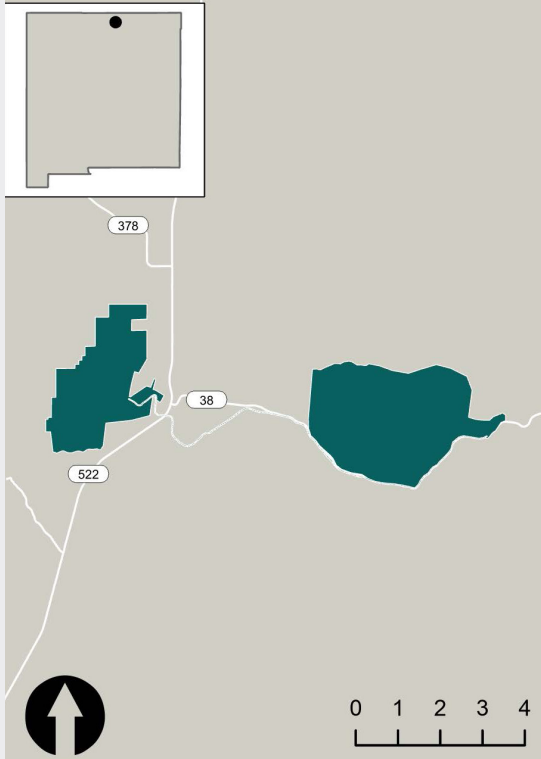
- *Eagle Rock Lake:* None.
- *Whole Site:* Two restrictive covenants cover the tailing facility as well as the mine and mineral processing areas of the site. Both covenants prohibit excavation to more than 10 feet below ground; collection, storage or use of surface water; and use of groundwater for human consumption or installation of wells. The tailing facility's restrictive covenant prohibits residential use prior to termination of mining activities and thereafter allows only light industry and recreational uses. The mine and mineral processing facility's restrictive covenant prohibits recreational use before termination of mining activities and thereafter allows use consistent with the conservation easement.

Surrounding Population

0
1 MILE

17
3 MILES

580
5 MILES



A map of the site in New Mexico.

Site History and Redevelopment Timeline

1920
Mining activities began at the site.

2001-2009
EPA performed investigations at the Eagle Rock Lake portion of the site.

2010
EPA selected the remedy for the Eagle Rock Lake portion of the site.

2011
EPA finalized the site on the National Priorities List.

2012
Chevron completed construction of flumes at Eagle Rock Lake.

2013
Chevron completed head gate construction at Eagle Rock Lake.

2014
Mining activities ended. Chevron mailed informational brochures about Eagle Rock Lake cleanup and closure to residents of the village of Questa. United States Forest Service issued a Closure Order for Eagle Rock Lake.

2015
Chevron completed dewatering, sediment removal and liner activities and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish restocked Eagle Rock Lake. Village of Questa, along with state and federal partners, hosted a grand opening of Eagle Rock Lake for community recreation.

2017
EPA Region 6 presented its Greenovations Award to the site project team.

History and Cleanup

For decades, Eagle Rock Lake was a valued community resource. After contamination from the Chevron Questa Mine impacted the lake, the community prioritized its restoration as part of plans focused on outdoor recreation and tourism. The project was the result of extensive collaboration among Chevron Mining, the village of Questa, community organizations, and federal and state agencies, including EPA.

A molybdenum mine and milling facility operated along the Red River upstream of Eagle Rock Lake from 1920 to 2014. Molybdenum is a metal used in steel manufacturing and chemical applications. Mining operations and waste disposal contaminated soil, sediment, surface water and groundwater as well as sediments in Eagle Rock Lake. In its record of decision, EPA called for excavating lake sediments and installing an automated gate at the Red River inlet to keep storm runoff from the restored lake. Since the lake served as a valuable recreational and fishing asset to the community, Chevron Mining implemented an enhanced design for restoration of the lake.

Cleanup began in 2015. Earth-moving equipment dug out impacted sediment that had settled on the bottom of the lake. Contractors installed a clay liner to help seal the lake bottom. In addition to the cleanup, the company replaced lakeside recreation facilities and put in new walkways and bridges to link the area with the Red River.

"The lake will be a great selling point for Questa, a focal point for where Questa is going in reinventing ourselves for the tourism and outdoor recreation markets."

Mark Gallegos, Mayor of Questa, New Mexico

Redevelopment

The project team and the community came together in October 2015 to officially reopen Eagle Rock Lake and honor all who were involved in its rejuvenation. Today, the lake is stocked with rainbow trout. People fish from piers along its shores and enjoy trails designed to be accessible to people with disabilities. The restoration of this vibrant community resource is an asset to the community.

The cleanup and restoration of Eagle Rock Lake illustrates how effective partnerships and collaboration among diverse site stakeholders can provide significant economic, public health and environmental benefits. In 2017, EPA Region 6 presented the project team with its Greenovations Award. It recognizes the community's leadership in pursuing recreation and public health priorities as well as Chevron Mining's commitment to supporting safe, responsible, innovative and sustainable redevelopment.



View of Eagle Rock Lake following cleanup.



View overlooking part of the Chevron Questa Mine site.



Crews using heavy machinery to dredge sediment from the bottom of Eagle Rock Lake in 2015.

Contacts

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