

Superfund Construction Project – Funding Pending



Ely Copper Mine Superfund Site Vershire, Vermont

Site Description

The [Ely Copper Mine](#) Superfund site is an abandoned copper mine located in Vershire, Orange County, Vermont. It encompasses approximately 350 acres where historic mining activities took place. The site includes about 30 acres of waste material containing an estimated 172,000 tons of waste rock, tailings, ore roast beds, slag heaps and smelter wastes as well as more than 3,000 linear feet of underground mine workings with associated shafts and adits. No buildings remain at the site. Remnant foundations, pads, and stone walls, including a 1,400-foot long smoke flue, demark the location of former site structures, including a former flotation mill and the smelter plant.

EPA added the site to the National Priorities List in 2001. Since that time, EPA has completed three investigations and selected remedies for three areas of the site. The selected remedies' construction designs for those areas are also complete.

The exposed mine waste contains elevated levels of cobalt, copper and iron. Acid mine drainage with elevated levels of copper and other metals along with eroded mine waste have affected the surface water and sediment of two on-site ponds, Ely Brook and Schoolhouse Brook. Groundwater beneath the waste piles and within the underground workings contains elevated levels of cobalt, manganese and iron.

Site Status and Cleanup Actions to Date

- In 2019, the design for the excavation and on-site consolidation of the mine waste and contaminated sediment was completed.
- In 2019, the design for the closure of the Deep Adit and Main Adit was completed.
- In 2019, the design for the delineation of the technical impracticability zone was completed.
- The study of the sitewide groundwater, former smelter site and downstream sediments in Schoolhouse Brook is ongoing.
- Institutional controls are in place for the Ely Copper Mine property to prevent unrestricted future residential use of the site or use of contaminated groundwater and to protect the cleanup actions.

Project Pending Funding, as of the end of Fiscal Year 2020

This work consists of implementation of the three selected remedies' cleanup actions, including excavation and on-site consolidation of mine waste and contaminated sediment, and closure of the Deep and Main adits.

Funding Through Fiscal Year 2020

EPA has provided approximately \$13 million for cleanup activities at the site.