
Community Update**June 2020**

Public Participation is essential to the success of EPA's community involvement program. If you have any questions about the site, please contact:

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For more information on the site, visit:

www.epa.gov/superfund/arsenic-mine

Recent and Upcoming Activities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently selected an early action to help impacted residents relocate to protect them from exposure to arsenic-contaminated soil at the Arsenic Mine Superfund site by offering to acquire certain properties and permanently relocating those residents. EPA's decision to strongly recommend that residents take advantage of its relocation assistance is the result of EPA's own investigation at the site and a Public Health Advisory issued by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) recommending that EPA relocate people, especially children, to protect them from exposure to arsenic in shallow soil at the site.

Permanent relocation for those who accept EPA's offer will include federal financial and logistical support for residents to help them move away from the site permanently and residents will be assisted in the relocation process, including identifying and moving into replacement residences. Following permanent relocation, the vacated structures will be demolished. Until the residents from each affected residence are permanently

relocated, or until a final remedy is completed, periodic inspections and maintenance of the existing protective measures at each occupied residence will be performed, as necessary, to ensure the effectiveness of these measures in eliminating exposure pathways in the areas where these measures were installed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will perform the relocation, demolition, and maintenance work under an interagency agreement with EPA.

In addition to this early action, EPA will investigate the full nature and extent of contamination at the site and evaluate measures to address this contamination. Because it will be several years before the investigation is completed and a remedy selected, it was important that EPA take this early action to dissociate residents from the contamination.

Interim Activities

In April 2019, EPA put interim measures in place to protect the health of the residents and reduce threats from direct contact with surface soil. These measures include providing residents with indoor and outdoor door mats and boot brushes, excavating soil in dog pens and backfilling with woodchips, creating woodchip or stone walkways, covering residential high-use areas with woodchips, and paving or adding stone to exposed earthen driveways. In an effort to reduce indoor dust, each household received high efficiency particulate air vacuums containing filters capable of capturing extremely small particles.

Site Description

The Arsenic Mine site is located in Kent, New York and includes a historic mine, previously known as Pine Pond Mine, Silver Mine, and Brown's Serpentine Mine. There are two former entry shafts, the northern mine shaft, which is located on private property, and the southern mine shaft, which is located in the adjacent Nimham

Mountain Multi-Use Area, a state recreational area that is not part of the site. The site includes undeveloped and residential properties around and downslope from the northern mine shaft, near the intersection of Gipsy Trail Road and Mt. Nimham Court.

Site Background

In 1987, residents living in a house adjacent to the northern mine entrance were hospitalized from exposure to arsenic found in their drinking water well that had been installed through tailings from the mining operations. EPA installed a cistern at that residence for drinking water deliveries as an alternative drinking water supply.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH), in conjunction with EPA and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), conducted limited soil sampling on the properties near the northern mine entrance, revealing significant concentrations of arsenic in surface soil. PCDOH placed a warning sign near the northern mine entrance indicating the presence of elevated arsenic levels in soil.

While repairing the cistern in 2016, EPA determined that sediments with high concentrations of arsenic were entering it. In August 2017 and June 2018, EPA collected soil and potable water samples from undeveloped and residential properties around and downslope from the northern mine shaft, and in May 2019, EPA initiated quarterly drinking-water assessments.

NYSDOH released a Health Consultation on April 30, 2019, in which it evaluated shallow residential soil at the site. NYSDOH concluded that children's short-term exposure to surface soil with the highest concentrations of arsenic poses an immediate and significant threat to human health, constituting an urgent public health hazard. It also concluded that long-term exposure of children and adults to arsenic in surface soil poses a significant threat to human health, constituting a public health hazard. EPA supported these conclusions in a Determination of Significant Threat memorandum, finding that all residential properties at the site contain exposure point concentrations at or above the threshold for unacceptable risk. Additional action beyond the interim measures was recommended to protect the long-term health of affected residents. EPA asked the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to assess the site and on April 30, 2019 ATSDR issued a Public Health Advisory, recommending immediate short- and long-term measures to remove people, especially children, from exposure to arsenic in shallow soil at the site. EPA performed the above-referenced interim measures to protect public health and reduce direct contact threats relative to surface soil from April to November 2019.

After the site was added to the National Priorities List on November 8, 2019, EPA conducted a focused feasibility study (FFS) to identify and evaluate alternatives to dissociate residents from exposure to arsenic-contaminated soil. Following the completion of an FFS report in late March 2020, EPA prepared a Proposed Plan identifying its preferred remedy and the basis for this preference. The public was afforded the opportunity to comment on EPA's Proposed Plan from April 8, 2020 to May 8, 2020. After considering the public comments that were received in writing and at an April 22, 2020 virtual public meeting, EPA selected a remedy on June 29, 2020.