

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Final Site

April 2009

BARITE HILL/NEVADA GOLDFIELDS | McCormick, South Carolina McCormick County

Site Location:

Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields (Barite Hill) is located about 2.5 miles southwest of the town of McCormick and about 0.75 mile northwest of the intersection of Highways S-33-44 and S-33-30.

Site History:

Barite Hill was previously owned by Nevada Goldfields, Inc., who operated a gold/silver mine on the property. Mining operations began in 1989 and continued until October 1994. The Barite Hill property covers approximately 795.2 acres. Mining operations encompassed 135.5 acres, and the remaining 659.7 acres served as a buffer zone from surrounding areas. Two mine pits are located at Barite Hill: the 20-acre Main Pit and the 3.93-acre reclaimed Rainsford Pit. During mining operations, Barite Hill also included a process plant; a reusable heap leach facility, consisting of an asphalt-lined leach pad; a permanent leach pad; eight ponds; and two waste disposal areas. In June 1999, Nevada Goldfields, Inc. filed for bankruptcy and subsequently abandoned the property. The property was given to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

The main pit, ponds, sediment, surface water and soil are contaminated with arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, selenium, silver, zinc, and cyanide.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

There are metals in surface water and sediments of Hawe Creek and its tributaries. Because Hawe Creek is a fishery, people may be exposed by eating contaminated fish. In addition, Hawe Creek empties into a drinking water reservoir. There is also a risk that water in the Main Pit will over-top the bank and acid/metals-laden water will enter the reservoir.

Response Activities (to date):

In October 2007, EPA began removal activities that are currently on-going.

Need for NPL Listing:

The State of South Carolina referred the site to EPA because of low pH water in the Main Pit that could present a threat to the Savannah River. Other cleanup alternatives were evaluated, but are not viable at this time because Nevada Goldfields Inc. is bankrupt and the state does not have resources to cleanup the Barite Hill Site. EPA received a letter of support from the state for placing this site on the NPL.

[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.html> or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.