



# Remedial Action Activities Progress Report

Tar Creek Superfund Site, Operable Units 2 and 4  
Ottawa County, Oklahoma

September 2014

## This Progress Report will tell you about...

- The progress of remedial actions at Operable Unit 2 (OU2) and Operable Unit 4 (OU4);
- Remedial action work conducted by the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma;
- Superfund Job Training Initiative program successes;
- EPA's efforts to protect public safety by addressing abandoned mine shafts and subsidence features; and
- Promoting sustainability by recycling site materials.

## Remedial action protects human health

In July 2010, EPA began the final phase of work to clean up lead contaminated residential driveways, yards, public alleyways and parks on properties in Miami, Afton, Commerce, Fairland, Narcissa, North Miami, Peoria, Quapaw, and Wyandotte (OU2). Since September 1, 2010, when the final phase began, 576 properties have been cleaned up. Since the cleanup of residential properties began, approximately 2,887 residential yards and public properties in Ottawa County have been cleaned up. As a result of the public's participation in this effort, a healthier environment exists for families to enjoy now and in the years to come.

The implementation of the remedial action for Operable Unit 4 (OU4) began in January 2010. The removal of mine and mill waste in distal areas, where access was granted, started in January 2010. To date, more than 2.15 million tons of mine and mill wastes and contaminated soil have been removed from properties in distal areas. More than 570 acres of land have been cleaned up and made available for future reuse. Though EPA does not own any chat and will not purchase any chat, EPA helped facilitate chat sales which was a component of the remedy. In 2013, 17 percent of the source materials removed were purchased by local processors (with transport provided by EPA), and the processors compensated the property owners directly.

The cleanup efforts at OUs 2 and 4 protect human health, especially the health of young children, and the environment.

## Quapaw Tribe performs the Remedial Action at the Catholic 40

On October 1, 2012, a Cooperative Agreement was signed between EPA and the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma to perform remedial action work at the "Catholic 40". The Catholic 40 is a 40-acre tract of land owned by the

Quapaw Tribe that has cultural and historical significance.

Historical structures include remnants of a Catholic Church and school constructed in 1893. The remedial action involved the excavation, hauling, and disposal of approximately 107,000 tons of source material or chat.

The Quapaw Tribe Environmental Office began hauling chat at the site in mid-December 2013. Extra precautions were taken during these activities in the areas near the historical structures to prevent damage. The remedial action included restoration (for example, contouring, seeding) of the Site and bank stabilization of Beaver Creek to ensure the integrity of the remedy. Beaver Creek also has cultural and historical significance to the Quapaw Tribe.

## Superfund Job Training Initiative, local labor utilization benefits regional economy

Job creation is just one component of this project's impact on the local economy. EPA continues to work with project contractors to implement the Superfund Job Training Initiative (Super JTI) in Northeast Oklahoma. Super JTI provides job-readiness training and employment opportunities for underserved citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites. The Tar Creek program generated 250 interested candidates of which 26 were selected for training. A number of graduates were hired by project contractors and others are awaiting the award of new contracts with hopes of being hired.

A success story we have related to this program involves a graduate that has worked on OU4 site projects since 2010. As a result of his outstanding performance, he was hired as a full time employee by EPA's contractor CH2M HILL in July 2010. When current site remediation activities wrap up, he will have opportunities for other work, including OU2.

The OU4 and OU2 remedial actions have also provided economic benefits to the local community beyond the sales and marketing of chat. For example, from July 2013 through April 2014, local staff utilization on the Distal 7 North portion of the OU4 remedial action was over 80% of the construction labor, and over 45% of the construction subcontract awards have been made to small disadvantaged businesses, including veteran-owned and woman-owned businesses. For OU2, 40% of construction subcontract awards have gone to small disadvantaged businesses, including woman-owned businesses. These



workers have been helping the local economy by spending funds with local vendors.

### **EPA is solving two problems at once and helping eliminate hazards from abandoned mine shafts and subsidence features**

Addressing abandoned mine shafts and subsidence features is not a specific goal related to reducing the risks of exposure associated with mining-related contamination. However, EPA has taken advantage of utilizing the presence of abandoned mine shafts and subsidence features for the placement of source materials. By placement and capping of the source materials in these features, the footprint of contamination is reduced, and the risk of exposure and the risk of open holes to people and livestock are reduced. In 2013 alone, over 8 percent of source materials removed were placed and capped in onsite subsidence features and/or mine shafts. Since remediation began, over 150 abandoned mine shafts have been filled and capped to reduce the risk of exposure to site contaminants.

### **Reuse of site materials**

Sustainability through re-use or recycling of site materials is another focus for the remedial action. Trees removed from the work areas during construction are segregated from other wastes to allow re-use and recycling where possible. Root balls from vegetative clearing may have contaminated soil attached, and are transported to the Central Mill Repository, but waste trees and other wood debris are available for mulching. Sampling and analysis of the chipped waste tree and wood debris material is performed, and results indicate concentrations of lead, cadmium and zinc are well below the cleanup goals and Regional Screening Levels for residential soil. From the Distal 7 North site alone, over 2,000 cubic yards of mulch was provided to a local company for use as mulch. Remedial activities at the Distal 7 South site have yielded 2,115 cubic yards of mulch.

### **For more information**

For more information about the Tar Creek Site, contact:

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### **Information Repositories**

The Administrative Record, including the Records of Decision, for the Tar Creek Superfund Site is available at the following locations:

#### **Miami Public Library**

200 North Main St.  
Miami, OK 74354  
918.542.3064

#### **Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality**

707 North Robinson  
Oklahoma, City, OK 73102  
405.702.1000

The Record of Decision for the Tar Creek Superfund Site, OU4 is also available on the Internet at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/6sf-decisiondocs.htm>

All inquiries from the news media should be directed to the Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2200.

Information about the Tar Creek Site also can be found on the U.S. EPA Region 6 Superfund website at:

[http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/oklahoma/tar\\_creek/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/oklahoma/tar_creek/index.htm)



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