



Update on Phase 1 Remedial Investigation Kerr-McGee Caselton Mine Area, Pioche, Nevada

Greenfield Environmental Multistate Trust LLC, Trustee of the Multistate Environmental Response Trust (Multistate Trust), prepared this Fact Sheet in consultation with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) to update the Town of Pioche and the Caselton Heights community on the status of cleanup activities at the former Tronox/Kerr-McGee Corporation Caselton Mine Area (the Site) located near Pioche, Nevada, along Highway 93, approximately 125 miles north of Las Vegas. The Site, which covers approximately 3,400 acres, has a history of metals production and has been used to mine silver, gold, lead, zinc, and copper. While the mining operations have been discontinued, some aging structures remain at the Site. For the purpose of investigating the different areas of the Site and developing cleanup goals and remedial strategies appropriate for these areas, the Multistate Trust and NDEP have divided the Site into five distinct geographic locations. These separate areas are called “operable units” or “OUs” in order to identify the specific area of the Site within which environmental actions may occur.

Quick Site Facts

- Caselton Mine has not been actively mined since 1957.
- As with many abandoned mines, prior hard rock mining has left behind materials that could present environmental, health, and safety risks.
- NDEP and the Multistate Trust are working to identify whether any such materials present risks and, if so, will also be developing and implementing remedial measures to address concerns.
- The Multistate Trust is an independent, court-appointed trustee tasked with investigating and cleaning up designated portions of the Site.

2015 Site Activities

In 2015, the Multistate Trust completed a remedial investigation of (i) an area located 0.25 miles from Pioche’s Main Street known as Treasure Hill (OU-1), and (ii) a residential subdivision known as “Caselton Heights” (OU-2). The investigations were conducted to determine whether any identified contaminants might pose a risk to human health or the environment.

The remedial investigation included soil testing and characterization of waste rock, sediment, and residential yards. Samples were tested for chemicals of potential concern (COPCs) such as arsenic and lead.

Other work included:

- Development of a Conceptual Site Model (CSM)
- Development of a 1-foot topographic contour map for Treasure Hill (OU-1) to support remedial design and remedial action activities
- Screening level human health risk assessments (HHRAs) for Treasure Hill (OU-1) and Caselton Heights (OU-2)

Brief Site History

Ore was first discovered in Pioche in 1863. The Combined Metals Reduction (CMR) Company operated at the Site from 1924 to 1976. Caselton Mill was constructed in 1941, and after 1953 was largely used to process ore. In 1957, milling operations ceased. In the early 1970s, CMR filed for bankruptcy and in 1976, Kerr-McGee purchased the areas known as Treasure Hill, Caselton Heights, and the Caselton Mine Site from the bankrupt CMR, as well as certain other subsurface rights.

As noted above, the Site has been divided into five operable units (OUs):

- OU-1 (Treasure Hill)
- OU-2 (Caselton Heights Residential Yard Soils)
- OU-3 (Caselton Mine Site)
- OU-4 (Caselton Mill Site and Adjacent Tailings)
- OU-5 (U.S. Bureau of Land Management [BLM] Off-Site Caselton Tailings)

The Multistate Trust

The Multistate Trust is an independent, court-appointed trustee whose primary purpose is the protection of human health and the environment. The Multistate Trust was created as part of the 2011 Tronox bankruptcy settlement involving the United States, 24 state governments, the Navajo Nation and Tronox. Greenfield Environmental Multistate Trust LLC is the named Trustee, with responsibility for: owning and managing more than 400 former Kerr-McGee sites in 24 states, including the former Kerr-McGee Caselton Mine Area; cleaning up the sites using available funds from the settlement; and facilitating safe redevelopment and long-term stewardship of the sites. The Multistate Trust reports directly to the Caselton Mine Area’s two beneficiaries—the United States and the State of Nevada.

2015 Remedial Investigation and Accomplishments

The remedial investigation and analysis of possible human health risks, if any, were completed in December 2015. The investigation concluded that no further characterization of OU-1 or OU-2 materials was necessary. The risk assessment concluded that soils at Caselton Heights (OU-2) do not present a risk to human health.

At Treasure Hill (OU-1), the investigation concluded that only lead and, to a lesser extent, arsenic may pose a risk to frequent recreational users. Tourists are unlikely to be presented with any risk. The data suggested that soils migrating downhill during stormwater events could potentially result in lead and arsenic concentrations at levels of concern in nearby residential areas.

Upcoming Activities

Two primary investigation and cleanup activities are planned for 2016. As with the 2015 Site work, environmental consulting firm of Brown and Caldwell will be performing the field activities and preparing reports on their findings.

Planned 2016 Treasure Hill (OU-1) Remedial Design and Remedial Actions:

Treasure Hill is undergoing stormwater modeling to assess the potential effect that rain and stormwater runoff have on the migration of sediment from Treasure Hill. The assessment modeling is expected to be completed during the 1st half of 2016.

- Treasure Hill work will also include the development of a feasibility study (FS) report. This report will summarize the results of the stormwater run-off assessment and propose remedial action objectives and one or more alternatives for managing possible sediment migration as a result of the effects of rain and stormwater on Treasure Hill.
- The FS report will also (1) include various land and utility survey maps to assist with the description of the findings and to present a conceptual design of a system for stormwater and sediment management; and (2) address integration of the proposed Treasure Hill remedy with existing Town of Pioche stormwater management facilities.
- A public meeting will be held Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at 6 p.m. at the Thompson Opera House to discuss Site progress and activities.
- Remedial construction is planned to begin sometime in 2017.

Planned 2016 Remedial Investigation and Aerial Survey of Caselton Mill (OU-4) and BLM Tailings (OU-5):

- A remedial investigation work plan will likely be developed for the Caselton Mill Site to identify the specific actions required to investigate the area for materials that could present a risk to human health or the environment.
- Work will also include an aerial survey of the area to enable investigators to better understand Site boundaries and conditions.

Community Informational Meeting

The Multistate Trust and NDEP recognize the importance of keeping the Pioche community and stakeholders informed about the status of investigation and cleanup activities. The Multistate Trust and NDEP will hold a public meeting to discuss Site progress and activities in Pioche on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at 6 p.m. at the Thompson Opera House, 644 Main Street, Pioche, NV 89043. All members of the community are encouraged to attend.

Please Contact the Multistate Trust or NDEP with Questions about the Caselton Mine Area

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NDEP – Jeryl Gardner at (775) 687-9484 or jgardner@ndep.nv.gov