



## Homestake Mining Company Superfund Site Cibola County, New Mexico

January 2009

### This Fact Sheet will tell you about.....

- **Community Meeting**
- **Background Information**
- **Current Status**
- **Benefits**
- **Where to get more information**

### Community Meeting

**Wednesday, January 21, 2009**

**6:00 – 8:00 pm**

**Cibola County Building**

**515 High Street**

**Grants, NM 87020**

**Meeting Format: Presentation followed by Questions and Answers**

### Background Information

The Homestake Mining Company Site is located in Cibola County, just north of the village of Milan and the town of Grants, New Mexico. Homestake Mining Company operated a mill at the site from 1958 until 1990. The mill was decommissioned and demolished between 1993 and 1995. Seepage from mill tailings wastes (i.e., Large Tailings Pile and Small Tailings Pile) resulted in the contamination of groundwater with radiological and non-radiological contaminants, including uranium, thorium-230, radium-226 and radium-228, selenium, molybdenum, sulfate, and total dissolved solids, among others.

In 1982, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed the Homestake Mining Company mill on the National Priorities List. The National Priorities List is EPA's list of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. In response to placement on the National Priorities List, Homestake extended a municipal water supply line to homes in subdivisions near the mill. Homestake has also implemented an aquifer restoration program at the site.

### Current Status

On December 24, 2008, the EPA announced the completion of the draft final Remediation System Evaluation (RSE) Report and is currently seeking comments from the stakeholders. The RSE team consists of expert scientists and engineers conducting a third party evaluation of the remediation system. The recommendations in the RSE Report are solely made by the RSE team that is independent and does not represent endorsement from EPA. The purpose of the RSE was to provide an independent and comprehensive review of the groundwater extraction and treatment system and determine if protectiveness and/or cost improvements are possible without reducing overall protection of human health and the environment, in accordance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Remediation System Evaluation instruction guide. The report is available for review and download at:

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

The community meeting, which will be held on January 21, 2009, will provide a forum for discussion of the outcome of the RSE and answer community questions.

The EPA is providing technical assistance to the Bluewater Valley Downstream Alliance, a community organization, through a program called Technical Assistance for Superfund Communities. This program will assist the local community to receive expert technical help with the various reports.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry released a draft Health Consultation Report on May 19, 2008. In the report, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry provides some recommendations for the use of ground water on the site.

Homestake is proposing to construct a new evaporation pond to expand the ground water extraction/injection system at the former mill site to dewater the large tailings impoundment and clean up the ground water contaminated by tailings seepage. Collected ground water is piped to either the Reverse Osmosis plant for treatment and re-injection into the aquifers or two lined evaporation ponds for disposal. Homestake is also operating a secondary ground water extraction and irrigation system to remediate the down-gradient portion of the contaminant plume. The reclamation activities are anticipated to continue until 2017.

## Benefits

The initial action to connect the nearby residences to the municipal water supply provided a safe drinking water supply. In addition, the study on indoor radon levels showed that site contamination was not contributing to elevated indoor radon levels found in some area homes.

During 2005-2007, the EPA and the New Mexico Environment Department completed a study of private wells in the subdivisions to identify residences without access to alternate water. The regulatory agencies are working together to come up with solutions for providing alternate water to residences impacted by Homestake Mining Company operations.

Homestake Mining Company has reported significant reduction of the contaminant mass that has been flushed from the large tailings pile since the inception the tailings flushing program.

## Where to get more information

### Sai Appaji

#### Remedial Program Manager

U.S. EPA Region 6 (6SF-RL)

Tel: 214.665.3126

Fax: 214.665.6660

appaji.sairam@epa.gov

For press inquiries, please call, EPA Region 6 Press Office, at 214.665.2208 or 214.665.2261.

You can find more information about the Region 6 Superfund program on EPA's Region 6 website:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region6/superfund>

### Stephen Harper

#### Community Involvement Coordinator/SEE

U.S. EPA Region 6 (6SF-VO)

Tel: 214.665.2727 or 1.800.533.3508 (toll free)

Fax: 214.665.6660

harper.stephen@epa.gov

### David L. Mayerson

#### Ground Water Quality Bureau

#### Superfund Oversight Section

New Mexico Environment Department

Tel: 505.476.3777

Fax: 505.827.2965

Call U.S. EPA at 1-800-533-3508 (toll-free) to receive a Spanish translation of this fact sheet.

Para recibir una traducción en español de esta Hoja de Datos, comunicarse con la Agencia de Protección del Medio Ambiente de los EEUU (la EPA) al número de teléfono 1-800-533-3508 (llamada gratis).



Region 6  
1445 Ross Ave. (6SF-VO)  
Dallas, TX 75202