

NPL Site Narrative for Eagle Mine

EAGLE MINE

Minturn, Redcliff, Colorado

Conditions at proposal (October 15, 1984): The Eagle Mine and its tailings piles, previously owned by the New Jersey Zinc Co. and Gulf and Western Industries, cover 110 acres in Eagle County, Colorado, between the towns of Minturn and Redcliff. About 1,300 people live within 3 miles of the tailings.

The company's predecessors began purchasing mines in the area in 1912 and immediately began production. After a merger in 1938, New Jersey Zinc owned the mine. Zinc mining and milling operations ceased on December 30, 1977. Silver mining continued intermittently thereafter. The mine is now shut down completely and owned by Miller Enterprises.

Two major tailings piles exist on the site. The old tailings pond was abandoned in 1946 when it reached capacity. A new tailings pond was constructed about 0.5 mile south where Cross Creek and Eagle River meet. Approximately 7 million tons of tailings remaining in the disposal areas are owned by Battlemountain Corp. Several other smaller tailings piles are located on National Forest land nearby, and tailings have been dumped in areas in the Eagle River floodplain.

In the summer of 1984, EPA used CERCLA emergency funds to remove transformers containing PCBs that had been placed in the mine. The transformers were threatened by rising water levels in the mine after dewatering pumps were turned off.

Status (January 1986): The mine is now filling with water, and acidic metal-laden mine water may overflow into the river in the near future.

Gulf and Western has begun studies to determine concentrations of various metals in surface water and ground water, as well as to gather data on whether leachate from the tailings can reach the Minturn drinking water wells.

The State has filed a natural resource damage suit under CERCLA against the site owner. As part of the litigation, the State has collected data on water quality impacts of the various sources and has developed a remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action. The trial is scheduled for April 1986.

Status (June 10, 1986): This mining site is being placed on the NPL at this time because it is a noncoal site with mining operations that occurred after August 3, 1977, the enactment date of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). Thus, it is neither regulated by SMCRA nor eligible for funds from the SMCRA Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program.

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 [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.