

STATE OF MISSOURI  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Bob Holden, Governor • Stephen M. Mahfood, Director

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January 6, 2003

Mr. John V. Harrison  
Director/Registered Agent  
Valles Mining Company  
14116 Valles Mines School Road  
Valles Mines, MO 63087

RE: Pre-CERCLIS Site Screening Report for the Valles Mines Company Site

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Enclosed, please find a copy of the Pre-CERCLIS Site Screening (SS) report for the Valles Mines Company Site in Jefferson County, Missouri. This investigation was conducted by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Hazardous Waste Program, under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). CERCLIS is the Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Information System, which is a list maintained by the EPA of sites where hazardous substances have been released to the environment. The purpose of the Pre-CERCLIS investigation is to determine whether a release of hazardous substances is present onsite that presents a risk to human health or the environment. The findings and recommendations of the Pre-CERCLIS SS investigation for the Valles Mines Company Site are detailed below.

The Valles Mines Company Site is a former lead mine and smelter operation. The company has been in existence since 1749, with the major lead mining operations running from approximately 1824 through the mid-1930s. The company now operates the Valles Mines property as a tree farm and Reclamation Project. Existing historic structures onsite include the old general store, log cabin, smelter chimney, and mill building remains. The general store is currently used as the onsite headquarters and the log cabin is now the Lost History Museum. A chat pile is present onsite, at the confluence of Finney and Valles Mines Creeks and a former railroad spur area is located to the west of Valles Mines Creek.

Analytical sampling confirmed a release of hazardous substances to the onsite surface soils within the former smelter and railroad spur areas. Concentrations of lead ranged from 41,600 to 50,800 parts per million (ppm) within the smelter area and 14,300 ppm at the railroad spur, all of which significantly exceed the measured background concentration of 1800 ppm. All detections of lead in the surface soils were significantly above the Corrective Action Levels for Missouri, Soil Target Concentrations, and EPA Preliminary Remediation Goal benchmarks for residential soils of 260 and 400 ppm, respectively, and industrial soils of 660 and 750 ppm, respectively.

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Analytical sampling also detected elevated concentrations of dissolved lead in the surface water. Additionally, concentrations of cadmium, lead, and zinc were detected at levels above relative health-based benchmarks in the sediment; however, no background sediment sample was available for comparison. The groundwater sample collected from the onsite artesian well did not detect any hazardous substances above health-based benchmarks.

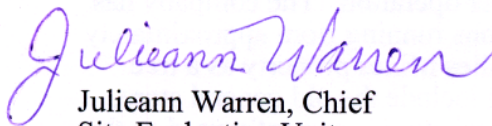
Due to documented contamination in the onsite surface soil, further CERCLA action is warranted at the Valles Mines Company Site. The site is recommended for CERCLIS entry and further investigation under CERCLA authority. The Hazardous Waste Program intends to conduct a Preliminary Assessment/ Removal Action (PA/RA) investigation under CERCLA authority. This investigation will include further onsite sampling in order to determine the extent of surface soil contamination and potential sampling of nearby residential yards along Valles Mines School Road and Highway V. Additionally, the PA/RA investigation will determine a more representative background concentration of lead for soils in the area, outside the relative influence of the former smelter.

Please be aware that the concentrations of lead detected near the former smelter were extremely high and significantly exceed the relative health-based benchmarks. Lead is a hazardous substance and exposure to lead is dangerous, especially to young children. Children under six years of age are at the most risk for health effects associated with lead contamination. The Hazardous Waste Program intends to request a Health Consult from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to determine a relative health risk for visitors to the smelter area. It is expected that the risks of exposure to contaminated soil near the smelter is limited to short-term visits to the area, and therefore, relatively low. If you have specific questions or concerns regarding the health effects from exposure to lead, you may contact the DHSS Section for Environmental Public Health at (573) 751- 6111.

Thank you for your cooperation throughout this investigation. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kimberlee Foster of my staff at (573) 751-8629 or PO Box 176, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

Sincerely,

HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM



Julieann Warren, Chief  
Site Evaluation Unit

JW:kft

Enclosure