

Alaska's 2012 Integrated Report

Category 4b Waterbody Rationale

September 28, 2012

Waterbody Name: Cabin Creek

1) Statement of the problem causing the impairment.

Abandoned gold mine tailing piles cover an area of approximately nine acres. The unconfined mine tailings combined with rainfall events and overland flow across the tailings has resulted in elevated metal levels detected periodically in the Cabin Creek drainage within the one mile reach below the tailings.

2) Proposed implementation strategy and supporting pollution controls necessary to achieve water quality standards.

The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) is exercising its Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority to respond to the environmental issues associated with the tailings at the Nebesna Mine in a manner consistent with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) and CERCLA. The NPS is the lead agency on this site. Some of the tailings contributing to the impact are on a private land in-holding surrounded by National Park lands. NPS is working with the private land owner to facilitate that portion of the clean up. ADEC has advised NPS that future work needs to comply with state regulatory authority under 18 AAC 75 and CERCLA.

NPS developed a "Surface Water Flow Mitigation Plan for the Nabesna Mine Tailings," which was implemented in 2004. The flow mitigation plan was designed to control, re-direct, and divert surface water flows that may have been contributing to heavy metals and acid mine drainage into Cabin Creek during high-level flow periods (springtime). Controls included: re-establishment of non-functioning or filled in ditches; testing of a talus/soil cap over the tailings; re-excavation of existing historic and contemporary ditches; construction of new ditches; and limiting the surface water flow onto the tailings to reduce the input of metals into Cabin Creek.

NPS is in the process of updating site information, data analysis, and current conditions and plans to issue an Engineering Evaluation/Cost

Analysis Report (EE/CA) for public review in 2013. This EE/CA will incorporate tailings, soil, sediment, surface water, and ground water data, including data collected after the 2004 surface water flow mitigation project and 2009 supplemental sampling effort. Implementation of the removal action recommended in the forthcoming EE/CA is expected to permanently address human health and ecological risks associated with site contaminants, including contaminant migration to Cabin Creek.

The EE/CA remains at the internal draft stage. The forthcoming EE/CA Report will fully characterize Site contaminants and risks, evaluate applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs), and compare response action alternatives. Alaska's water quality standards (WQS) (18 AAC 70) and the soil clean-up levels (SCLs) in Alaska's Oil and Hazardous Substances regulations (18 AAC 75) will be addressed as part of the evaluation of ARARs.

The site remains on the CERCLIS list of sites eligible for the National Priorities List.

3) Estimate or projection of the time when water quality standards will be met.

WQS are expected to be attained upon implementation of the recommended removal action, which is anticipated to be finalized in 2013-2015.

Surface water monitoring will be evaluated and likely will be included as part of post-removal action monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the action in meeting removal action objectives.

4) Reasonable schedule for implementing the necessary pollution controls.

It is anticipated that the Site removal action will be implemented in 2013-2015.

Alaska National Park Service personnel conducted a physical site inspection/visit in September of 2012, no water quality sampling water was conducted (see attached).

5) Schedule for monitoring milestones for tracking and reporting progress to EPA on the implementation of the pollution controls.

Following implementation of the selected removal action, NPS will undertake confirmatory sampling and, unless a complete removal alternative is selected, initiate the 5-year review process consistent with CERCLA guidance. Results of these monitoring events will be shared with the State.

6) Commitment to revise as necessary the implementation strategy and corresponding pollution controls if progress towards meeting water quality standards is not being shown.

The National Park Service is committed to implementing a Site removal action that addresses unacceptable risks and meets the removal action objectives, including attainment of ARARs. Post-removal action monitoring and the 5-year review process, if warranted, will document the effectiveness of the action and dictate the need for further action if cleanup objectives are not being met.