



Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

*The Mission of the  
Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control is to  
provide the highest  
level of safety, and  
to protect public  
health and the  
environment from  
toxic harm.*



State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency

June 2011, Fact Sheet

## **You may comment on the draft cleanup plan for the North area of the Argonaut Mine Tailings site June 10 to July 11, 2011**

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has prepared a draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) proposing a cleanup plan to address current uncontrolled migration and exposures from the elevated levels of lead and arsenic found in site soil and residual mine tailings. The Argonaut Mine Tailings site consists of 65-fenced acres located along Argonaut Lane in Jackson, California. Please see map on page three. The 65-acre site was used for gold mining operations from 1850 to 1942. Mine tailings are the mined rock that is left over after the gold is removed. The area on the property targeted by the cleanup plan is about five acres in size on the northern end of the site close to Buena Vista Drive and Argonaut Lane. Also, DTSC believes this area to be the source of contamination found on other portions of the site. Please see the picture on page two.

### **Why cleanup is necessary?**

This removal action is necessary to protect human health and the environment. Migration of the highest concentration of the arsenic and lead contamination is not currently controlled. Surface water runoff, water infiltration, and windblown migration spreads contamination from this area. Extended exposure to elevated levels of arsenic can cause adverse health effects such as rashes, vomiting, blood vessel damage and cancer.

### **Investigation Findings**

In 1987, 1992, 1993 and then again in December, 2008, DTSC staff and contractors collected samples that showed elevated metals (arsenic and lead) throughout the site. The latest samples taken in December 2008 show the barren soil in the 5-acre area has elevated levels of arsenic to concentrations of 39,000 parts per million (ppm), well above the naturally occurring background level at 20 ppm. DTSC estimates the total volume of contaminated soil in the five-acre area is about 106,000 cubic yards. The contamination extends from the surface to a depth of 15-20 feet below ground surface.

**Our Public Comment Period begins on June 10  
and ends on July 11, 2011**

Please send comments to:

Ms. Tami Trearse

Project Manager, DTSC

8800 Cal Center Drive

Sacramento CA 95826

E-mail to [TTrearse@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:TTrearse@dtsc.ca.gov).



## Draft Removal Action Workplan

The draft RAW proposes to address a five-acre section of the 65-acre site. DTSC recommends this remedy on the basis of its effectiveness, ability to implement, and cost. The area is currently fenced and access is limited, but migration of contamination is currently not controlled. This plan proposes to consolidate and neutralize in place the mine tailings, cap with two feet of clean soil and reseed with native grasses. The remedy would require a land use covenant and long term management. Neutralizing the highly caustic nature of the tailings and covering them with a cap will control migration and human exposures. DTSC will oversee the cleanup.

The proposal includes the following safeguards to protect the community:

- o Spray water on soil to control dust during all construction work;
- o Monitor air at the site to make sure that the air levels stay safe;
- o Take soil samples from the outer edges of the consolidation area to verify cleanup goals are met;
- o Water down all equipment to make sure no contaminated soil goes off-site;
- o Grade the work area to blend with the surrounding ground surface and control drainage, and;
- o Secure heavy equipment when not in use.

## California Environmental Quality Act

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DTSC has evaluated the potential environmental effects of the proposed cleanup action. DTSC believes that the draft RAW qualifies for an exemption under CEQA because the removal action will not have significant negative impacts on the environment. The draft NOE is available for public review in the information repositories.



Barren ground on the north end of the site

## Next steps

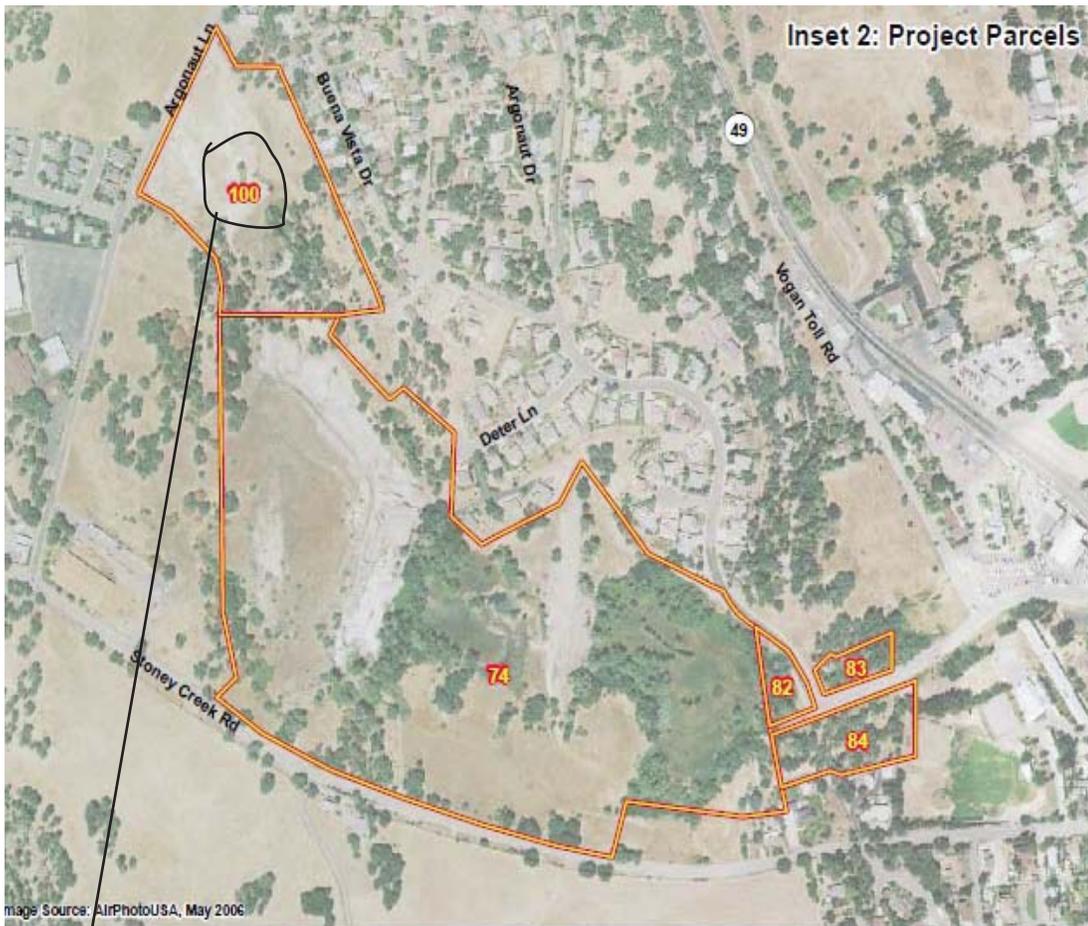
DTSC will review and consider comments received during the 30-day public comment period before making a decision to approve, modify or deny the draft RAW. DTSC will respond to comments received from the community. Anyone who submits comments will receive a copy of the “Response to Comments” document. Additionally, a copy will be placed in the information repositories.

Upon approval, implementation of the RAW, we estimate, will begin this fall. After completion, DTSC will then prepare a RAW Completion Report that will summarize the removal and consolidation activities and confirm that the clean up goals were met.

## For more information

Please contact any of the following individuals with questions or concerns you have regarding the site or the draft cleanup plan:

Ms. Tami Trearse  
Project Manager  
(916) 255-3747 or e-mail at [TTrearse@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:TTrearse@dtsc.ca.gov)



Estimated  
Consolidation  
Area

Mr. Nathan Schumacher  
Public Participation Specialist  
Call either toll free at 1 (866) 495-5651 or (916)  
255-3650  
e-mail at [NSchumac@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:NSchumac@dtsc.ca.gov).

For media inquiries, please contact:  
Ms. Sandy Friedman, Public Information Officer  
(714) 484-5383 or by e-mail at  
[SFriedma@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:SFriedma@dtsc.ca.gov).

### Places to review the documents

Electronic versions of the documents related to the Argonaut mine tailings site are available on the DTSC web site—<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public>

The draft RAW and other related documents may be viewed at the following locations:

Reference Section  
The Jackson Public Library  
530 Sutter Street  
Jackson California 95642  
(209) 223-6400

These documents as well as the full administrative record are available at the DTSC Sacramento office file room:

DTSC  
8800 Cal Center Drive  
Sacramento CA 95826  
To arrange an appointment, please contact Ms. Amy Ly (916) 255-4159

### Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 (TDD). Please ask them to contact Mr. Nathan Schumacher at (916) 255-3650 regarding Argonaut.

### Anuncio

Si prefiere hablar con alguien en español acerca de ésta información, favor de llamar a Jesús Cruz, Departamento de Control de Substancias Tóxicas. El número de teléfono es (866) 495-5651.