

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

- **Partial Consent Decree**
- **Site Description and History**
- **Community Participation**
- **Where to get more information**

This fact sheet provides an update on the Chevron Questa Mine Superfund Site (Site).

#### **PARTIAL CONSENT DECREE**

On August 9, 2016, the Department of Justice (DOJ) lodged a proposed First Partial Remedial Design/Remedial Action (RD/ RA) Consent Decree (Consent Decree) with the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico. The DOJ received a request for an extension of the initial public comment period and extended the comment period for an additional 30 days, or until October 14, 2016. Comments may be submitted to DOJ either by email or by mail.

#### **To submit comments:**

By email

#### **Send them to:**

[pubcomment-  
ees.enrd@usdoj.gov](mailto:pubcomment-ees.enrd@usdoj.gov)

By mail

Assistant Attorney General  
U.S. DOJ—ENRD  
P.O. Box 7611  
Washington, DC 20044-7611

The Consent Decree is a settlement agreement between Chevron Mining Inc. (CMI), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the State of New Mexico. Under the Consent Decree, CMI will perform part of the cleanup work described in the EPA's Record of Decision (ROD) and pay over \$5.2 million to reimburse EPA's past costs for overseeing cleanup work at the Site.



*Village of Questa and Chevron Questa Mine Tailing Facility*

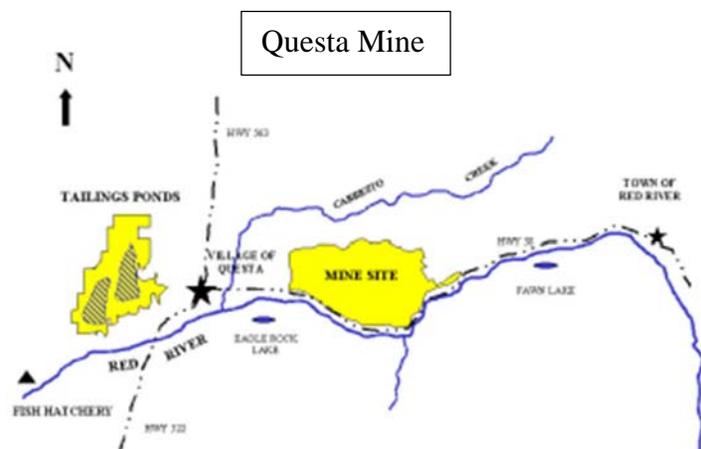
The work in the Consent Decree will include:

- **Tailing Facility Cover Demonstration Pilot Project:** CMI will regrade, cover and revegetate approximately 275 acres of the tailing facility with two feet of cover material. The Pilot Project will test whether two feet of cover will be protective of human health and the environment.
- **Surface-based Mine Dewatering System:** CMI will install a pumping system to keep the water level in the underground mine workings below the level of the Red River.
- **Mine Site Groundwater Extraction System:** CMI will install an additional extraction system to capture impacted groundwater before it reaches the Red River.
- **Mine Site Area Water Treatment Plant:** CMI is constructing a new water treatment plant at the Site which will be used to treat contaminated water prior to its discharge to the Red River.
- **Excavation of Soil at Dry/Maintenance Area:** CMI will excavate an area of soil where molybdenum levels in the soil are over 41 parts per million.

- **Seepage Barrier Upgrade:** Two seepage interception systems at the tailing facility have been operating since 1975 to limit contaminated groundwater from reaching the Red River. The seepage interceptor systems will be upgraded to improve capture of contaminated groundwater.
- **Tailing Facility Groundwater Extraction System:** Under the Removal Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), CMI began piping irrigation water into a diversion channel to keep it from becoming contaminated and seeping into groundwater. If this system does not result in a decrease of contamination in groundwater, CMI shall install a groundwater extraction well system to remove the contaminated groundwater.

### SITE DESCRIPTION and HISTORY

The Site is located near the Village of Questa, in Taos County, New Mexico and includes a mine area and tailing facility. The mine area consists of a closed molybdenum mine and milling facility on three square miles of land currently owned by CMI in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The tailing facility, also owned by CMI, is on approximately two square miles of land west of the Village of Questa. A nine-mile-long tailing pipeline runs along State Highway 38 from the former milling facility to the tailing facility.



The mine site and tailing facility are bounded to the south by the Red River, a tributary of the Rio Grande. The Red River is home to a state fish hatchery located approximately one mile downstream of the tailing facility and is designated as a Wild and Scenic River from just below the hatchery to the confluence with the Rio Grande.

Over the years, numerous breaks in the pipeline resulted in the spilling of tailing into and along the floodplain of the Red River, threatening the fishery and nearby endangered species habitats. Additional threats to groundwater and surface water include seepage from the tailing facility and acidic, metal-laden water generated from the weathering of waste rock (referred to as acid rock drainage or ARD) at the Site. Contaminants of concern include aluminum, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, fluoride, iron, lead, manganese, molybdenum, sulfate and zinc.

The EPA's ROD was finalized on December 20, 2010, and provides a full description of Site contamination, risk assessment, remedial alternatives, and the selected remedy.

The EPA, the NMED and the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department for New Mexico began overseeing cleanup work at the Site in 2012. The EPA and CMI entered into two agreements (administrative orders on consent or AOCs) in 2012 for cleanup work. CMI is still performing work required by the Removal and Early Design AOCs.

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The EPA welcomes the opportunity to improve our communication efforts by obtaining feedback and suggestions from you. Do you have suggestions that can improve the exchange of information or ideas that can enhance the implementation of the removal efforts? If so, we want to hear from you. Information on how you can get involved is available in the "Where to Get More Information" section. Your participation can make a difference!

### WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

**Gary Baumgarten**

**Region 6 Remedial Project Manager**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(214) 665-6749 or 1-800-533-3508 (Toll-free)

**Laura Stankosky**

**Region 6 Remedial Project Manager**

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

(214) 665-7525 or 1-800-533-3508 (Toll-free)

**Joseph Fox**

**Project Manager**

New Mexico Environment Department

(505) 222-9560

**Janetta Coats  
Region 6 Community Involvement Coordinator  
Technical Assistance Grant (TAG), Project  
Officer**

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency  
(214) 665-7308 or 1-800-533-3508 (Toll-free)

**Information Repositories**

**The Administrative Record, including the  
Record of Decision, for the Site is available at the  
following locations:**

**Village of Questa**

2500 Old State Road 3  
P. O. Box 260  
Questa, New Mexico 87556  
(575) 586-0694

**New Mexico Environment Department**

1190 St. Francis Dr.  
Santa Fe, NM  
(505) 827-2340

**Inquiries from the news media should be  
directed to the EPA Region 6 External Affairs  
Office at (214) 665-2200.**

**You can find more information about the  
Superfund program on EPA's website:  
<https://www.epa.gov/science-and-technology/land-waste-and-cleanup-science>**

**A Site Profile for this site can be found at  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/chevron-questa-mine](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/chevron-questa-mine)**

**The EPA wishes to thank the community members for their participation at all EPA community meetings and encourages everyone to attend the next meeting to be held by EPA. We will notify the community of the next community involvement event when it is scheduled.**



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