



# EPA

# Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA • OCTOBER 1999

## INTERIM CONSTRUCTION WORK BEGINS AT SULPHUR BANK MERCURY MINE SUPERFUND SITE

### Summary

On November 1, 1999 contractors hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), through a contract with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will begin construction of surface water diversions on and near the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund site near Clearlake Oaks, CA. The diversions will prevent contaminated sediments and water from the site from flowing into Clear Lake. A road cut to install pipeline across Sulphur Bank Mine Road will require closure of one lane of traffic from time to time. In addition, the EPA will install monitoring wells on the site to characterize the amount and movement of water below the surface of the ground.

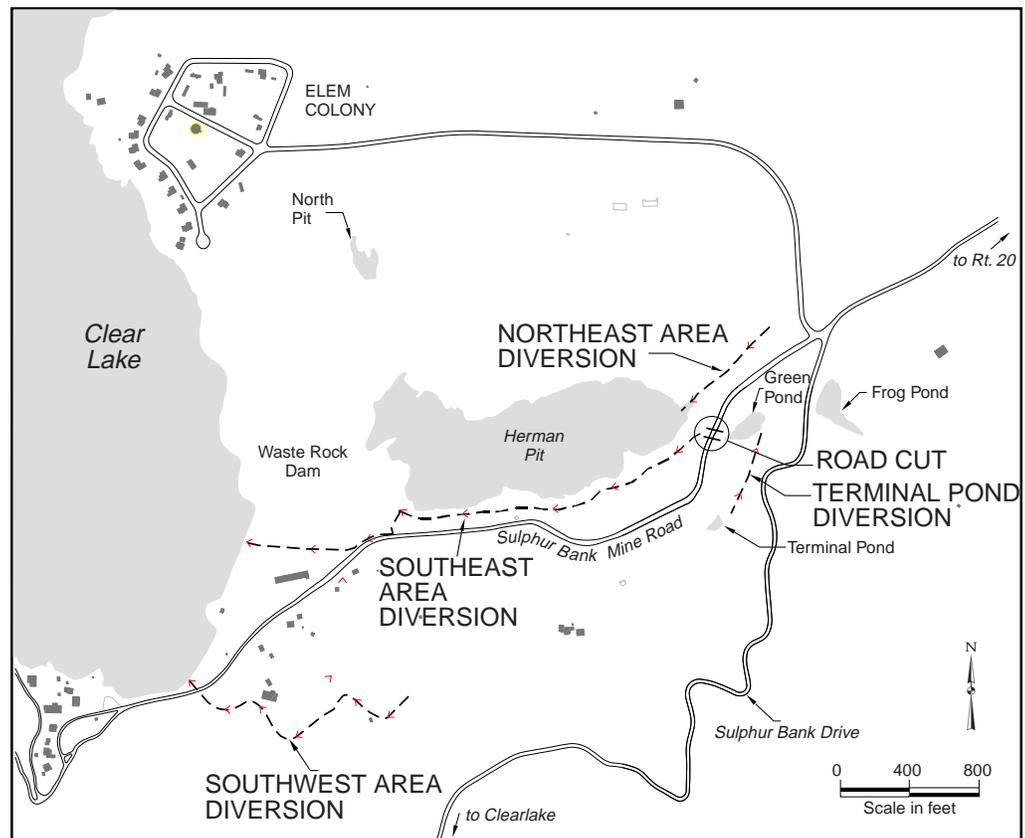
### Surface Water Diversions

The surface water diversions are being installed to:

- Prevent water from flowing through mine wastes on the site and transporting mercury into Clear Lake;
- Prevent water from surrounding areas from flowing into Herman Pit to decrease the likelihood that Herman Pit will overflow into Clear Lake, especially during heavy winter rains; and
- Prevent potentially contaminated water from flowing off site.

Some preparatory work started in mid October, including surveying and brush clearing. The construction workers are subcontractors hired by the ACE.

*Continued on Page 2*



**Figure 1:** Location Map of Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site

Workers will wear standard construction attire including hard hats, safety boots, and possibly coveralls.

The construction work will not cause an increased health threat to the public, including residents and travelers on Sulphur Bank Mine Road.

The construction work will continue for approximately 12 weeks or as long as weather permits. Work crew members will begin work at 7:30 a.m. every day (including weekends) and continue until 6:00 p.m. Crew hours will be adjusted as work continues to avoid working in the dark.

During the week of November 15th, 1999, a pipeline will be installed across Sulphur Bank Mine Road (see Figure 1). This road cut will require the closure of one lane of traffic. The road cut and pipeline installation should be completed before November 25th, however the exact start date and duration is dependent on weather conditions and material procurement. Before the road cut is started, an EPA representative will visit each residence on Sulphur Bank Mine Road and deliver a flyer with the exact start date and schedule for the road cut.

Area residents may see equipment such as tree chippers, bulldozers, and backhoes on and around the Sulphur Bank site during this construction work. Piping and other materials will be delivered to the site at the beginning of the work.

The EPA is working with the ACE to minimize any inconvenience that the construction and possible added traffic would represent for area residents. Traffic speeds for vehicles are 20 miles per hour. An office trailer with a designated parking area will ensure that cars will not be parked along the road. Flag men will be on hand to keep the operations safe. Some minor grading will be part of the culvert work on Sulphur Bank Road. To control dust, a water truck will be at the site to spray the road. After the construction is complete, roads will be restored to their pre-

construction condition. The work will take place at the mine site and on Sulphur Bank Mine Road. No material or waste will be taken off-site during the construction and monitoring wells installation work.

The construction work is described in detail and evaluated in a Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis report. Copies of the report are available for review at the site information repositories (see additional information below).

### Groundwater monitoring wells

As part of the EPA's ongoing field investigations, approximately 25 groundwater monitoring wells will be installed at the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine site over the next two months. Observations and samples taken from the monitoring wells will assist in characterizing the amount and movement of groundwater at the site. This information will be used to develop an appropriate cleanup plan for the Sulphur Bank Mine Superfund site.

### Cleanup plan to be proposed next year

The EPA plans to propose a cleanup plan for the site by the end of 2000. Construction of the surface water diversions is an interim step in the process of cleaning up the site. The site investigations are scheduled for completion by the end of 1999. The EPA will then develop a proposed cleanup plan which will be released for public comments. After the release of the proposed plan, the EPA will hold a meeting to explain the plan and receive comments.

Based on existing data, the EPA believes that the most significant public health threat associated with the Sulphur Bank Mine site comes from people eating more fish caught from Clear Lake than advised by the state of California (see Table 1, page 3). People face no health threat from mercury when swimming or boating on the lake. ■

Information about the Superfund program is available on the Internet at:

Region 9 Web site: [www.epa.gov/region09](http://www.epa.gov/region09)  
EPA Superfund Program Web site: [www.epa.gov/superfund](http://www.epa.gov/superfund)



Because of elevated mercury levels, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has provided specific consumption advice for fish taken from Clear Lake. Per OEHHA's California Sport Fish Consumption Advisories 1999, "...advisories are not intended to discourage you from eating fish entirely.... The advisories should be followed to make your sport fish eating safer."

<b>Fish Species (see notes 1 and 4)</b>	<b>Adults should eat no more than the amount indicated per month (see note 2)</b>	<b>Children 6-15 years of age should eat no more than the amount indicated per month (see note 3)</b>
largemouth bass over 15" largemouth bass under 15" white catfish all sizes channel catfish over 24" channel catfish under 24" brown bullhead all sizes Sacramento blackfish all sizes crappie over 12" crappie under 12" hitch all sizes	1 pound 2 pounds 3 pounds 1 pound 3 pounds 6 pounds 6 pounds 1 pound 3 pounds 10 pounds	½ pound 1 pound 1 ½ pounds ½ pound 1 ½ pounds 3 pounds 3 pounds ½ pound 1 ½ pounds 5 pounds
Note 1: Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children under age 6 <u>should not</u> eat fish from Clear Lake.		
Note 2: The limits given for each species and area assume that no other contaminated fish is being eaten. If you consume several different listed species from the same area, or the same species from several areas, your total consumption still should not exceed the recommended amount. One simple approach is to just use the lowest recommended amount as a guideline to consumption.		
Note 3: Amounts listed for children 6-15 years of age are one-half the amounts indicated for adults.		
Note 4: For additional information, consult the <u>California Sport Fish Consumption Advisories 1999</u> or contact the Pesticide and Environmental Toxicology Section (PETS) of OEHHA in Sacramento (telephone 916-324-7572) or Oakland (telephone 510-622-3170).		

**Table 1:** OEHHA's 1999 Clear Lake California Sport Fish Consumption Advisory

## M a i l i n g L i s t

If you would like to be included on the mailing list to receive future mailings about the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site, please send your name and address to:

Catherine McCracken, Community Involvement Specialist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)  
San Francisco, CA 94105



You may also provide this information by calling 415-744-2182 or (toll-free) 800-231-3075, by sending a fax to 415-744-1796 or by sending an email message to [mccracken.catherine@epa.gov](mailto:mccracken.catherine@epa.gov)

# For More Information

## INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Additional information about the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund site is available at these local information repositories:

**Lake County Library**  
1425 N. High Street  
Lakeport, CA 95453  
Telephone: 707-263-8816

**Redbud Library**  
14785 Burns Valley Road  
Clearlake, CA 95422  
Telephone: 707-994-5115

Library hours at both locations are:  
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday: Noon-8 p.m.  
Sunday/Monday: closed

## CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Ellen Manges**, Remedial Project Manager  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-7-2)  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901  
Tel: 415-744-2228  
Fax: 415-744-1796  
Email: [manges.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:manges.ellen@epa.gov)

**Catherine McCracken**, Community Involvement Specialist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901  
Tel: 415-744-2182  
Fax: 415-744-1796  
Email: [mccracken.catherine@epa.gov](mailto:mccracken.catherine@epa.gov)

or call **800-231-3075** and leave a message and your call will be returned.



Printed on 30% Postconsumer Recycled /Recyclable Paper

---

 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Attn: Catherine McCracken

---

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
U.S. EPA  
Permit No. G-35

*Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use, \$300  
Address Correction Requested*

Postal Customer  
Clearlake Oaks, CA 95423