

Overview

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with U.S. Forest Service, is conducting a joint Removal Action at the Telluride Valley Floor Site, which is located in Telluride, CO.



Site Location Map

EPA is the lead agency conducting the cleanup and has assigned Federal On-Scene Coordinator, Joni Sandoval, to oversee field activities. The Removal Action will be conducted in 2 phases. The first phase will be an Emergency Response to stabilize eroding tailings in the San Miguel River, as well as provide dust and erosion control in an area closed off by signage containing mill tailings, that is frequently trespassed by bikers and trail passers. This phase one will be conducted in November 2020. The Phase 2 Time Critical Removal Action will be conducted in 2021 and is still in the planning phase. This second action will be conducted to mitigate the remaining tailings that pose a threat to human health and the environment.

This Story Map will provide an up to date summary of work progress during the Phase 2 Time Critical Removal Action.

Background

Phase 1

The Site is mixed ownership (small area of Town Property with mostly Federal lands) and was referred to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), due to resource and budgeting constraints in Fall of 2020. The EPA attended a Site Visit with the USFS, Town of Telluride, and Trout Unlimited to conduct a visual Site Evaluation, as well as gain familiarity with the assessment done by the USFS in prior years. Tailings were visibly sloughing off into the San Miguel River and being stirred up by bikers and trail users who did not heed warning signs along the River. The OSC personally observed multiple recreators passing through the area in a short time, including a gentleman with a baby in a bicycle seat on a bike riding through tailings. The tailings contain high levels of lead on average between 2,000-10,000 ppm, although some areas contain levels up to 100,000 ppm. Arsenic is also above the acceptable exposure limits.



Site Layout

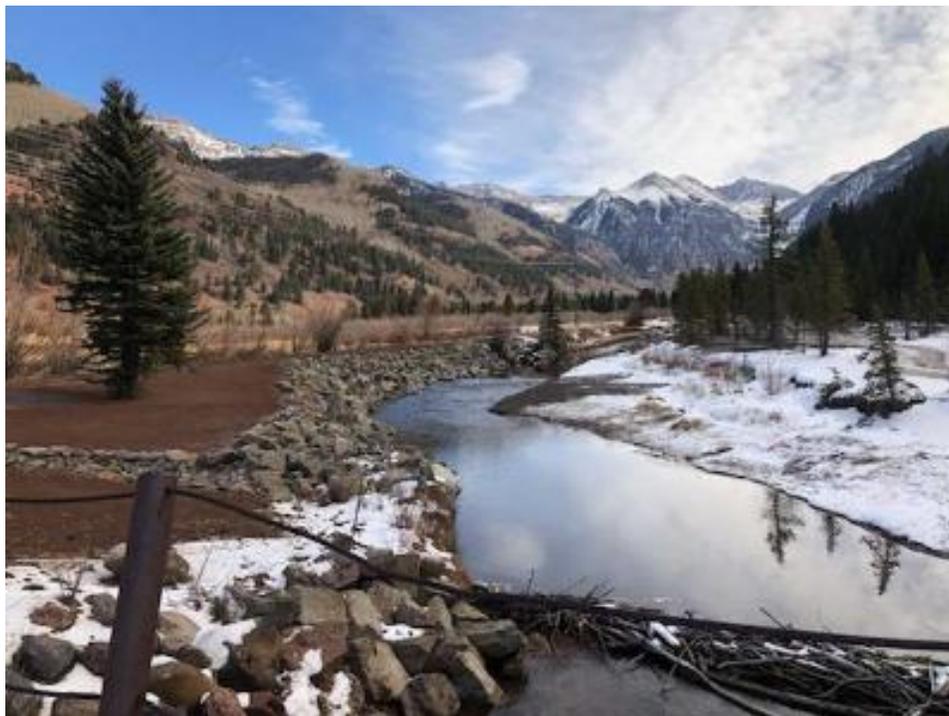
Actions completed as part of Phase 1 include:

- Installation of erosion controls to mitigate runoff from the excavation and stockpile operations.

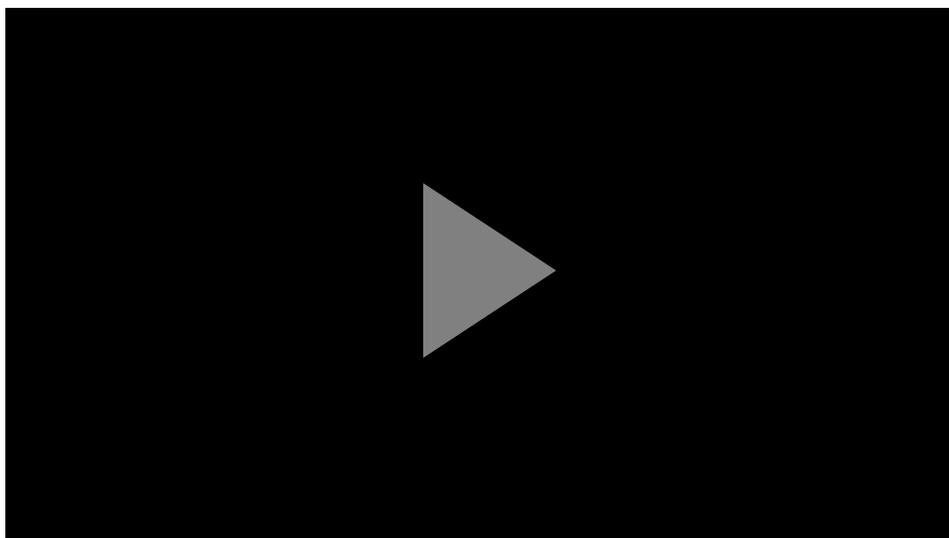
- Removed up to 3,000 cubic yards of tailing and stabilized/armored bank area.
- Installed a low water crossing for moving equipment and material.
- Stabilized hike/bike area by placing a thin cap of gravel over the tailings.
- Placed barriers around contaminated areas, until mitigated or cleaned up.
- Hauled excavated contaminated material to state-designated, responsible party-owned on-site repository.



Completed North Riverbank Lining and Arm



Installed Drainage Controls



Overview of Activities at TVF Boomerang Road Site

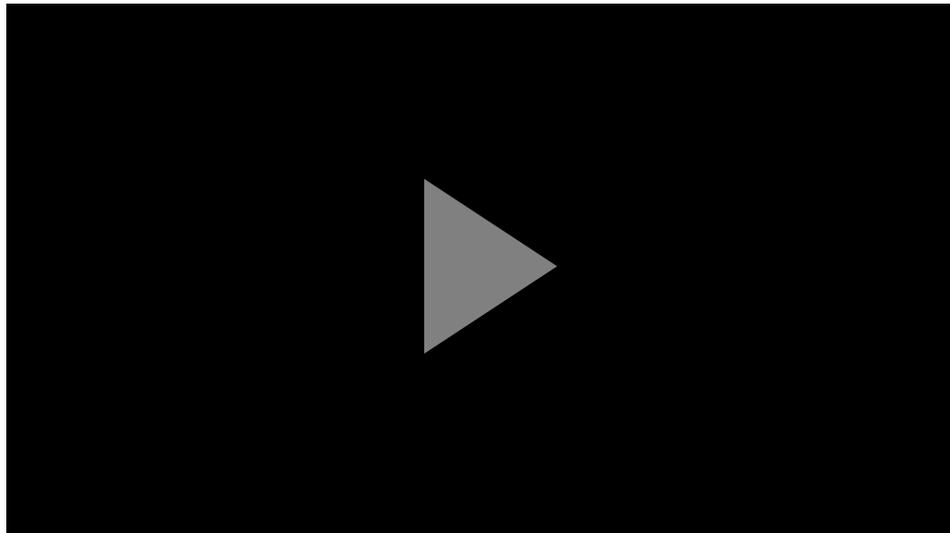
Phase 2

Site objectives of Phase 2 include:

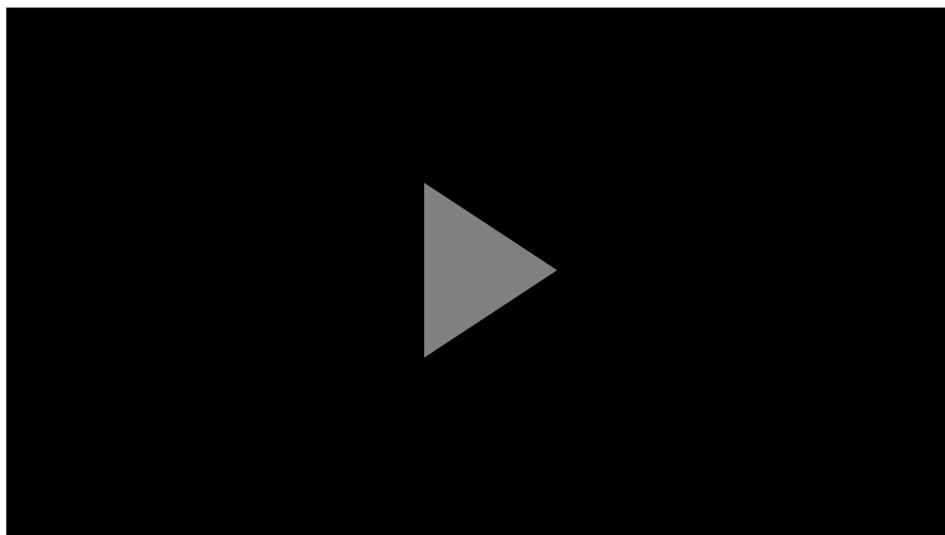
- Protect human health and the environment by performing a Time-Critical Removal Action of old mill tailings containing high levels of lead and arsenic.
- Health and Safety of the public and workers on-site.
- Communication with stakeholders including the community.

- Keep open recreational trails by rerouting trails around the work zone.
- Ensure dust suppression is performed with water trucks on-site to mitigate exposure to human health and the environment, as well as ensure there are no off-site impacts such as wind migration.
- Safely transport and unload tailings at the repository for consolidation, treatment, and ongoing storage at the state permitted and regulated Colorado tailings piles 5/6.
- Ensure no contamination is tracked off site of the Valley Floor or Repository.
- Provide air sampling and particulate monitoring upwind, in Town, and on-site at the repository to ensure there are no airborne tailings during transport.
- Restore the river and Valley Floor back to its original conditions.

To view an overview of activities that are expected to be completed onsite, please watch the videos below.



TVF Boomerang Road Removal action



TVF Boomerang Road Removal Plan Updates Based on Community Feedback



Operational Objectives

The objectives during this operational period (08/02/21 - 08/08/21) were as follows;

1. Monitor and control recreational traffic around the work zone.
2. Keep stakeholders informed of EPA removal actions.
3. Create and emphasize a safe and efficient work zone for EPA crews.
4. Continue to excavate tailings in area ST1 and haul to repository.
5. Conduct air sampling and particulate monitoring on-site and in the community.
6. Ensure daily data management functions are up to date to ensure accurate website reporting.



Current Activities

During the Current Operational Period the EPA Site Team worked Monday thru Saturday. Operations were hampered by a series of

heavy afternoon thunderstorms and lightning. During this period the Team:

- Met with stakeholders on site updates and to discuss post removal restoration of the San Miguel River.
- Additional trail reroutes and site security measures were put in place to prevent folks from entering the exclusion zone.
- Additional investigatory areas of tailings were screened and evaluated for potential removal on the Site footprint. Tailings areas were redefined/expanded and are available on the Map Viewer.
- Continued excavation/hauling in location ST1 (approximately 1,300 cubic yards or 130 truckloads were removed from the site).
- Clean back fill material was brought onto site (approximately 2,000 cubic yards were brought onto site).
- Deployed air sampling and monitoring locations along the trucking route to capture background levels and assess any potential impacts associated with EPA trucking operations for dust and air borne contamination. Sample results and real time data can be found on the Telluride Valley Floor Site Updates page.
- No office location within town has been secured, EPA will continue to follow up on any leads or as space becomes available.
- Issued communications update and announced public office hours to be held on August 25, 2021.



Trail closure with map depicting direction of rerouted trail running east to west.



Excavated tailings up to the eastern-most fence line in ST1. Tailings can be visually identified by its characteristic coloring, grain size and deposition.

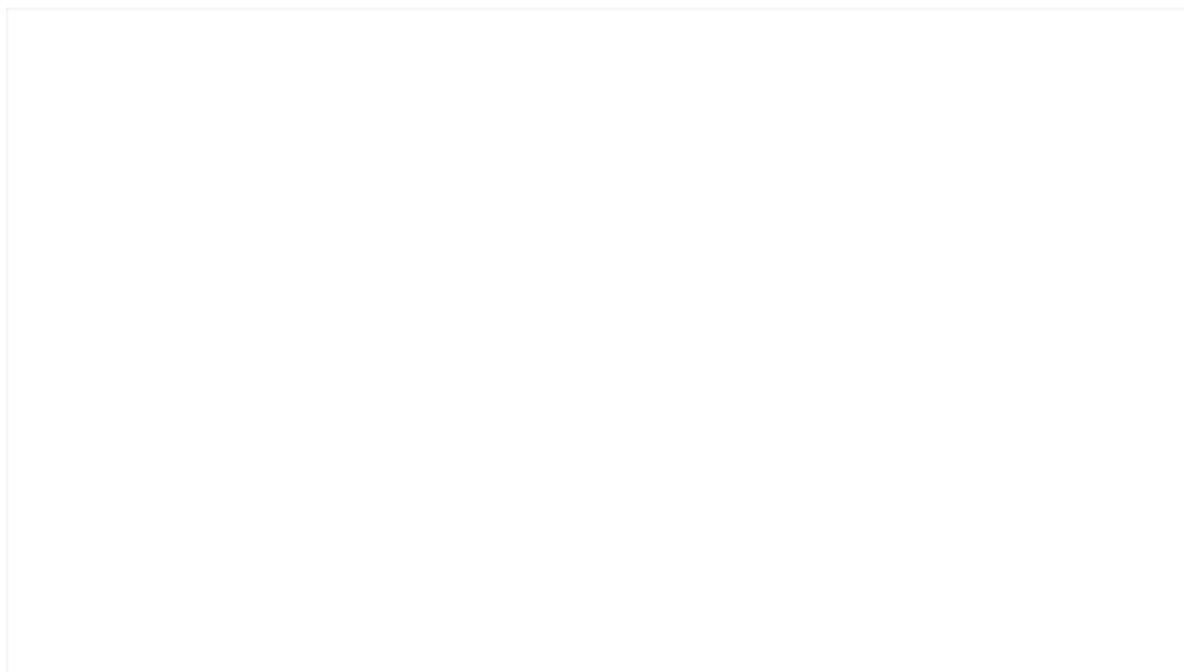


Ponding of water after excavation of tailings in the south-central portion of ST1. Tailings can still be seen as EPA contract crews continue removal actions.

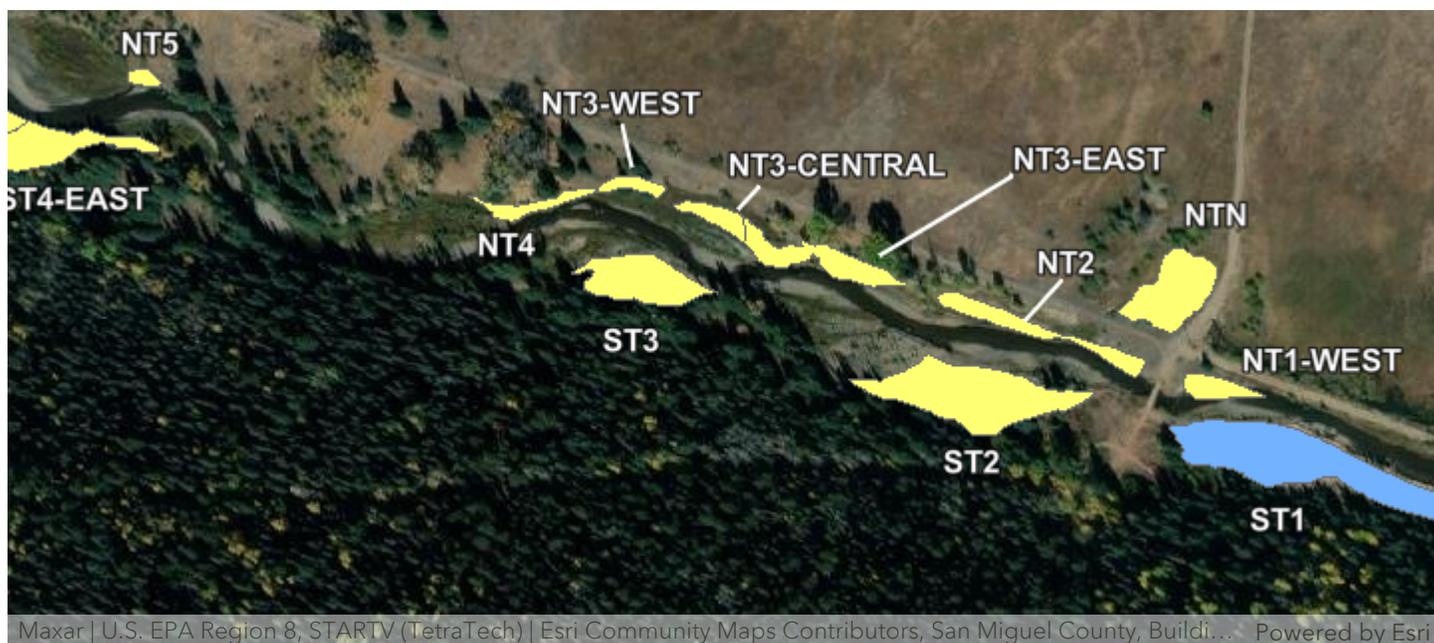


EPA contractor loading tailings within area ST1. The excavator loads tailings directly into dump trucks. Once loading is complete, trucks cover the load with a tarp and are cleaned prior to making the drive to the repository.

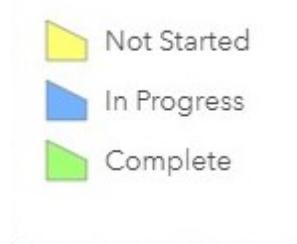
A summary providing on overview of vehicle traffic and material transported to the repository is included below.



Truck Load Dashboard



Excavation progress from the tailings piles is displayed here. The tailings areas are depicted in yellow to indicate that excavation progress has not yet started, blue to indicate that excavation is in progress, and green indicates it is complete.



Safety Issues

EPA will adhere to all CDC and local recommendations pertaining to COVID-19 during the site work.

EPA will adhere to all construction and hazardous substance safety best management practices.

EPA and contractor crews will adhere to dedicated speed limits for all EPA truck traffic through town, monitor any potential community impacts and redirect recreators outside the exclusion zone.

EPA will monitor potential impacts to site operations and worker health and safety from increased particulate matter from wildfire smoke.

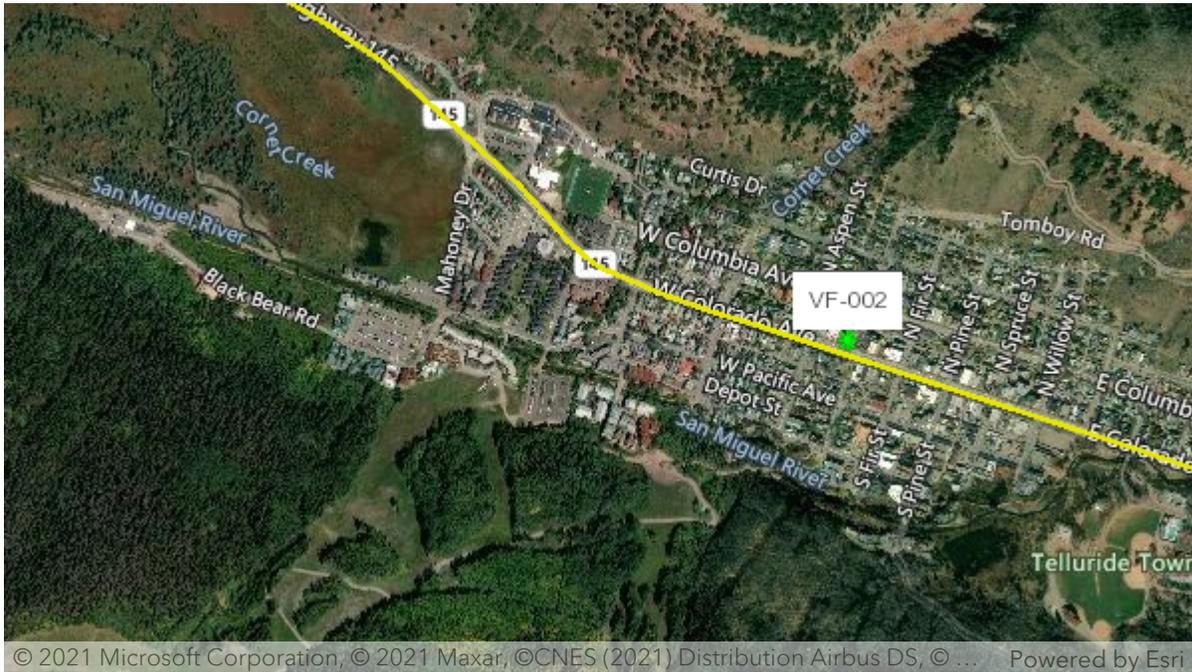


Planned Activities

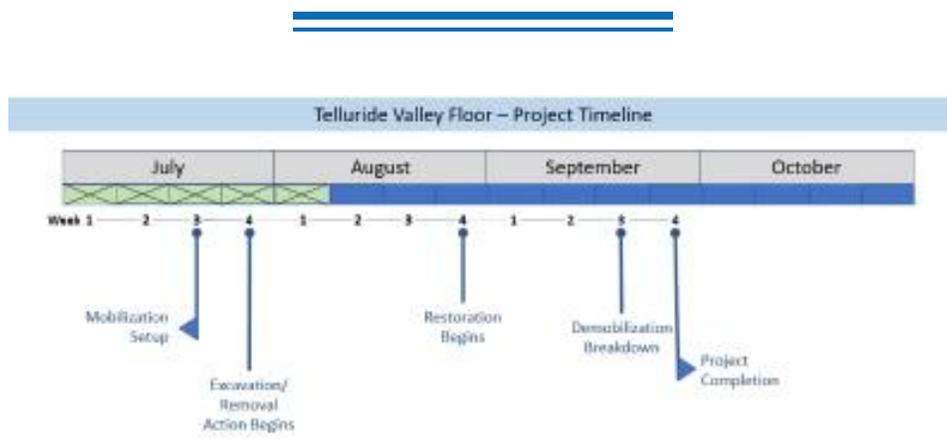
For the next Operational Period, August 9 thru August 14, 2021, the EPA Site Team plans to:

1. Keep stakeholders informed of EPA removal actions.
2. Continue to seek office space on or near main street.
3. Continue to create a safe and efficient work zone for EPA crews.
4. Continue excavation of tailings in ST1 and haul to repository.

5. Start excavation in ST2 and haul to repository.
6. Conduct air monitoring and sampling.
7. Ensure daily data management functions are up to date to ensure accurate website reporting.
8. Stockpile clean fill material.
9. Bring on additional crew and equipment to meet response action timeline.



Work Areas, Air Monitoring, and Vehicle Route



Timeline

NOTE: Timeline may change due to weather and/or other constraints.

Map Viewer

A map viewer can be accessed by clicking the button below.

[Map Viewer](#)

More Information

Archived StoryMaps from previous operational periods can be found on the Documents Section of the EPA website.

[Archived Story Maps](#)

More information can be found on the EPA website. Please click the button below to connect to the EPA website.

[EPA Website](#)