



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

OFFICE OF MINE RECLAMATION

801 K STREET • MS 09-06 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 323-9198 • FAX 916 / 445-6066 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEB SITE conservation.ca.gov

California Abandoned Mine Lands Forum

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDING
1. Becky Wood, Teichert
2. Bill Whiteside, Blue Sky Technologies
3. Brad Hall, Engineering/Remediation Resources Group (ERRG)
4. Carrie Monohan, Sierra Fund/Friends of Deer Creek
5. Charles Alpers, U.S. Geological Survey
6. Cy Oggins, Department of Conservation, Abandoned Mine Lands Unit
7. Dan Millsap, Department of Parks and Recreation
8. Dave Bieber, Geocon
9. Dave Lawler, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
10. Dennis Sederquist, Youngdahl Consulting Group
11. Gary Righetini, East Bay Parks
12. Gene Mullenmeister, Shaw Group
13. Grant Eisen, Nevada County
14. Greg Pelka, State Lands Commission
15. James Giannopoulos, State Water Resources Control Board
16. Jason Muir, Holdrege & Kull
17. Jeff Huggins, Regional Water Quality Control Board
18. Jim Tjosvold, Department of Toxic Substances Control
19. John Key, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
20. Julia Grim, Natural Resources Conservation Service
21. Linda Manning, National Park Service, Death Valley National Park (via teleconference)
22. Lynn Oliver, U.S. Forest Service, Inyo National Forest (via teleconference)
23. Marina Brand, State Lands Commission
24. Mike Zabaneh, Department of Parks and Recreation
25. Pat Graffis, ISP Minerals
26. Randy Adams, Department of Toxic Substances Control
27. Rick Humphreys, State Water Resources Control Board
28. Sandy Karinen, Department of Toxic Substances Control
29. Sarah Reeves, Department of Conservation, Abandoned Mine Lands Unit
30. Stephen L. Jenkins, Facilitator - Michael Brandman Associates
31. Steve Simanonok, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
32. Tracy Gidel, private citizen
33. Wendell Smith, Blue Sky Technologies

1. Welcome, Introductions, & Announcements (start time: 10:05 a.m.)

Stephen L. Jenkins started the meeting by introducing himself as the meeting facilitator. Steve welcomed California Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Forum attendees and reminded participants to sign in to help update the Forum distribution list. Steve then asked for introductions (name and agency/organization).

Steve Simanonok, U.S. EPA, announced the 2008 National Ground Water Association (NGWA)/U.S. EPA Remediation of Abandoned Mine Lands Conference, taking place October 2-3 in Denver, Colorado. The conference is intended to address many issues associated with the assessment and remediation of abandoned mining lands, showcase alternative and innovative remediation technologies, and foster communication between the mining community, stakeholders, policymakers, regulators, ground water scientists, and engineers to advance the cleanup of abandoned mine wastes in the United States. For details, visit <http://www.ngwa.org/development/conferences/details/0810025019.aspx>.

Carrie Monohan of Friends of Deer Creek and Sierra Fund announced the release on March 4 of the Sierra Fund's Report "Mining's Toxic Legacy: An Initiative to Address Mining Toxins in the Sierra Nevada. The purpose of the report is "to present current information on the nature and extent of mining toxins in the Sierra, the problems they pose to human and environmental health, and recommendations for action to address these problems. For more information and a copy of the report, visit <http://www.sierrafund.org/campaigns/mining>.

Cy Oggins, DOC Abandoned Mine Lands Unit (AMLU), noted that several TV stations (KQCA 58/KCRA 3, News 10, and Fox 40 News) and newspapers (Auburn Journal, Colfax Record, Folsom Telegraph, Granite Bay Press Tribune, Loomis News, and El Dorado Hills Telegraph) covered the AMLU's closure of an abandoned mine shaft two weeks ago. A dog, running with its owners on a popular trail within the Auburn city limits, had fallen into and was rescued from the shaft on January 21.

2. Review Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

Steve reviewed the agenda. Item 6 was moved up to accommodate schedules. Steve did not have December's minutes, but they are posted on the Forum website at http://www.consrv.ca.gov/omr/abandoned_mine_land/Pages/amlu_forum.aspx. Anyone who wishes to suggest corrections to the minutes can do so by email to Sarah Reeves of the AMLU at: Sarah.Reeves@conservation.ca.gov.

3. Discussions of California's AML Environmental and Physical Hazard Priority Lists (moved from Item 6 on Agenda)

Cy Oggins, AMLUL, and Rick Humphreys, SWRCB, summarized the process that California federal and state agencies conducted in March 2007 when the agencies compiled priority lists of environmental and physical safety hazards associated with

California's abandoned mines. Cy and Rick stressed the importance of keeping the lists updated as "living" documents. Rick explained how the environmental hazards priority list was compiled with three tiers based on estimated cost of remediation: 1) \$10-100 million; 2) \$1-10 million; and 3) less than \$1 million. Sarah Reeves, AMLU, then explained how the physical hazards priority list was compiled.

During follow-up discussions, members discussed the types of information that the private sector (e.g., consulting companies) could provide to assist agencies with updating and maintaining the lists. Additional discussion addressed which agency or agencies would/should be the primary contact(s) for maintaining the list and consistency of the information on the list. Members indicated their desire for the list to be accessible to the public at large as well as public agencies. Suggestions were made to add additional categories; for example it was suggested that a fourth category or tier be created to include those abandoned mine sites where most of the site was partially remediated, but needed additional funding...kind of a "watch list". It was also suggested that a fifth category be added that would include fully remediated sites ("success stories"), so that they do not get "lost" in the process. Questions were also asked about how to add newly found or missing sites to the list, and how sites can be re-prioritized. Tracy Gidel, formerly of the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health, suggested the need for outreach to local government to get the AML issue on their radar. The DOC agreed to host the priority lists for now. A suggestion was made to continue discussing this issue at future meetings in the context of the DOC's proposal to host a Statewide AML Clearinghouse (to be discussed later on the agenda).

4. Update on Recent Federal Funding for California Abandoned Mine Lands

Cy Oggins provided an update on the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, which was signed into law in December (H.R. 2764, Public Law No: 110-161). The law provided \$1,000,000 to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and \$980,000 for the National Park Service (NPS) for abandoned mine reclamation in California and \$525,000 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Restoration of Abandoned Mine Sites (RAMS) Program for a project at Mount Diablo in the East Bay. The dollar amount will be reduced by an across-the-board rescission of 1.56% for all federal funding, and funds must be encumbered by September 30 (end of the federal fiscal year). The Law also retained a Senate recommendation requiring the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to provide a report on prioritization of abandoned mine land clean-up on national forest lands within 90 days of enactment of the Act.

5. Presentation on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Program and Role in AML Remediations

Julia Grim, NRCS, introduced her agency as another potential partner in abandoned mine land reclamation in California, particularly on private agricultural land that contains abandoned mines (see attached presentation). The NRCS provides technical and cost-share assistance to agricultural producers through numerous

programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS has a number of conservation practices related to abandoned mines that are not on the current list of approved conservation practices, but could potentially apply including practices such as Mine Shaft and Adit Closing (#452), Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment (#453), and Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mine Land (#543).

Julia concluded her presentation by stating that “Practices that address local resource concerns on agricultural lands where abandoned mines are present may be eligible for EQIP cost-share assistance.” Trying to use EQIP funds for this will hinge on two items: (1) the requirement for agricultural production, and (2) the ability to rank high enough to be competitive for funding so the landowner would have to have an interest in conservation beyond the issues of abandoned mines on the property and the willingness and ability financially to do the project as planned.

6. Presentation on U.S. EPA Brownfields Site Assessment and Cleanup Grant Process for AML Sites

Steve Simanonok, U.S. EPA, provided information and answered questions on the U.S. EPA Region 9’s program for brownfields sites, some recent changes to the program, and pending deadlines for those seeking grants. Region 9’s Brownfields Program works to clean up and redevelop potentially contaminated lands in the Pacific Southwest region, making it easier for such lands to become vital, functioning parts of their communities.

Steve began by defining “brownfields sites” as land or “property, the reuse of which may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substance, petroleum, pollutant or contaminant.” Brownfields sites include mine scarred land. There are three types of grant funding available: (1) Assessment; (2) Revolving Loan Fund (RLF); and (3) Cleanup. Information discussed included eligibility criteria for applicants, proposed assessment grant funding, proposed cleanup grant funding, and the ranking criteria for grant proposals. Detailed information can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/brown/>.

7. Brief Discussion on Developing a Statewide Clearinghouse for AML Information and Resources

This is a DOC Strategic Initiative. There is a lot of information available on the web and in paper copy on AML issues, but the information is often hard for agencies and the public to find. Forum members discussed the AMLU’s proposal to host a website with links to information from multiple sources—a web-based AML “clearinghouse.” The consensus of the group was that this is a good idea and that the AMLU should continue developing a model to present at future Forum meetings. Suggested categories of information were proposed for the AMLU to consider.

8. Other Items / New Business

The contract with Michael Brandman Associates to facilitate the meetings expires at the end of March and Steve Jenkins has indicated that workload constraints will prevent him from continuing in this role. Tracy Gidel, who recently retired from the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health, expressed interest in facilitating future Forum meetings. Forum members thanked Steve for his two years as Forum facilitator.

9. Summary of Action Items from Meeting

Agenda Item 6: A group was formed to report back on where to go with the list to keep it alive with a standard database and single point of contact. The group includes Sarah Reeves (AMLU), John Hillenbrand (USEPA), Rick Humphreys (SWRCB), Jim Tjosvold (DTSC), John Key and Dave Lawler (BLM), and Dennis Geiser (USFS).

Agenda Item 7: AMLU will prepare an example web site and ftp location for discussion at the fall meeting.

10. Future Meeting and Agenda Ideas

The next meeting will be tentatively scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday in June 2008.

ADJOURN: 12:35 p.m.