

**Legal Notice of 45-Day Public Comment Period
Copper City and Granite Lake CERCLA Removal Actions
Naches, Washington**

The United States Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is proposing to undertake a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) removal action at the Copper City Mill and Granite Lake Prospect in central Washington. The two inactive mine sites proposes for treatment are located approximately 2.5 miles apart within the Wenatchee National Forest, in Yakima County, Washington and roughly 30 miles west of the town of Naches. Tributaries from both sites drain into Bumping Lake.

Site features at the Copper City Mill include a collapsed building, foundations for the former mill structure, waste rock and/or partially processed ore piles, a former loading ramp, and a small stream running through the mill site possibly associated with former mill operations. A clearing where the former town was once located is situated to the north of the former mill. At Granite Lake Prospect site features include a collapsed mine opening and a small waste rock pile that extends into Granite Lake.

A streamlined ecological risk evaluation identified soil risk ratios greater than five at both sites indicating the potential presence of a significant ecological risk exposure. At Copper City Mill the soil risk ratios greater than five included arsenic (1,320), cadmium (10), cobalt (37), copper (289), lead (19), manganese (7.4), mercury (8.1), selenium (6.3), silver (17), and zinc (11). At Granite Lake Prospect, the soil (i.e., waste rock above the water line) risk ratio for arsenic (11) exceeded 5.

A streamlined human health risk evaluation identified risk to humans from exposure to waste rock. Human health risks are considered to be potentially unacceptable if the risk estimates for carcinogenic endpoints are greater than 1E-06. The carcinogenic risk estimates for both sites exceeded 1E-06. The findings indicated that there is a potential for unacceptable carcinogenic risks to recreational users are likely to occur from dermal exposure, inhalation, and incidental ingestion pathways. The human health risk evaluation calculated hazard quotients (HQs) for both sites, HQs > 1 indicate that that the non-carcinogenic human health risks are considered potentially unacceptable. HQs for Copper City Mill and Granite Lake Prospect exceeded 1 indicating that there is a potential for unacceptable non-carcinogenic risks to adult and child recreational users that may occur from dermal exposure, inhalation, and incidental ingestion pathways.

A Draft Final Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis [EE/CA] for the treatment of the Copper City Mill and Granite Lake Prospects has been prepared and is now available for public comment ([Engineering Evaluation Cost Analysis: Copper City/Granite Lake CERCLA](#)). Soil

cleanup criteria were developed using a combination of regulatory screening criteria, site background concentrations, and regional background concentrations. The waste rock and/or partially processed ore piles contain high concentrations of metals that exceed the soil cleanup criteria and are the primary contaminant sources at the sites. A removal action is necessary to eliminate direct exposure to waste rock and/or partially processed ore piles. The scope of removal actions, therefore, focuses on eliminating direct contact with high concentrations of metals in the waste rock and/or partially processed ore.

Three removal action alternatives were evaluated for each site. For both sites, the alternatives being considered include:

- Alternative 1 – No Action
- Alternative 2 – On-Site Consolidation and Capping
- Alternative 3 – Excavation and Off-Site Disposal

At Copper City Mill, Alternative 2 is recommended to address risk associated with exposure to waste rock and/or partially processed ore as well as to preserve the historic nature of the mill. Remaining debris from the mill structure will be removed, cleaned and set aside to the maximum extent possible. Waste rock and partially processed ore will be consolidated into the footprint of the former mill, covered with a permeable geotextile fabric, and then covered with an aggregate cap. The cleaned debris from the former mill structure will be placed back upon the capped area such that visitors to the site will be able to view the remnants of the mill without exposure to waste rock or partially processed ore. The existing small stream will be relocated to prevent erosion of the cap.

At the Granite Lake Prospect, Alternative 2 is recommended to address risk associated with exposure to waste rock. Clean aggregate will be used to cap the waste rock with sufficient material used to ensure the waste rock present in the water will be safely capped. The upland portion of the cap will be covered with compost, seeded and/or planted with appropriate native species.

Annual monitoring of the Copper City Mill excavation area and the cap surface at both the Copper City Mill and Granite Lake Prospect will be conducted for a minimum of five years to ensure these areas become revegetated (Granite Lake only) and remain stable, and to identify and eliminate infestations of non-native or invasive plant species. The total estimated cost for the recommended alternative at Copper City Mill is **\$120,000**. The total estimated cost for the recommended alternative at Granite Lake Prospect is **\$58,000**.

The proposed project is being considered in compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act [CERCLA]. The EE/CA satisfies the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study portion of the CERCLA process in that it determines the nature and extent of contamination, assesses the treatability of site contamination and evaluates the potential performance and cost of treatment technologies.

Legally required environmental studies and consultations also will be completed in support of the project. Following the public comment period and upon completion of legal consultations, a Removal Action Memorandum (RAM) will be prepared that describes the final scope and mitigations to be implemented for the cleanup remedy. More information about the Copper City/Granite Lake CERCLA project is available on the Forest Web Site at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/okawen/landmanagement/projects?cid=stelprdb5375505>.

Joseph Gibbens is available to answer technical questions about the project:

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The Forest Service would like to hear your comments or concerns about the recommended and alternative removal actions considered for the Copper City and Granite Lake sites in the [Draft Final EE/CA](#). Please submit written letters or email your comments to Joseph Gibbens at the address above. You may also comment on the project by going to the project web site (see link above).

The 45-day public comment period for the Copper City and Granite Lake EE/CA begins on the date of this legal notice advertisement.