

**Iron King Mine / Humboldt Smelter Superfund Site:**

**Environmental Protection Agency Update on Recently Completed Field Work**

In December 2013, EPA provided information at a public meeting and in a fact sheet describing extensive additional field investigation efforts planned for the first five months of 2014. With the exception of installing and sampling 6 groundwater monitoring wells (now scheduled for July) EPA has completed this field investigation work, which includes both residential and non-residential areas.

In 2009-2010, EPA sampled 228 yards for arsenic and lead, collecting more than 2000 samples and covering a significant portion of residential areas potentially affected by the mine and smelter. Our recent field efforts substantially expanded the 2009-2010 investigation in residential yards. EPA sampled 368 additional yards, taking more than 4100 additional samples. Between the earlier and recent investigations, EPA now has sampled the great majority of yards in town. Some residents did not grant access to their properties for sampling. As part of this effort, we also screened 10 large areas peripheral to the core area of town to make sure we didn't need to further expand the investigation. Our sampling showed that soils in those 10 peripheral areas do not pose an elevated risk from arsenic or lead and so we are confident we have sampled all residential areas potentially affected by the site. The results from the yard sampling and screening will allow EPA to evaluate whether there is an effect from the former mine and smelter in soils at over 1000 yards, so that we can determine where cleanup is needed. EPA needs to compile and evaluate all the data and should be able to begin communicating findings to residents within about three months.

EPA also sampled extensively in non-residential areas. The purpose of our additional investigation was to get a better sense of the volume, depth, and composition of the tailings contamination at the former Humboldt Smelter and in the Chaparral Gulch; as well as the stability of the former Iron King Mine tailings pile; so that we can begin evaluating possible cleanup alternatives. Non-residential sampling included a total of 268 borings drilled to as much as 30 feet deep. We extracted the soil and rock cores from these borings and sampled them to understand how and when the layers of tailings were laid down, the levels of metals in them, and what potential there may be for toxic mine drainage in the future. Sampling included 48 borings in the great tailings flood plain, 16 borings in the smelter tailings swale, 47 borings in the upper and middle Chaparral Gulch, 6 borings in the area of the tailings dam in Chaparral Gulch, 6 borings in the flat "plateau" area on the smelter property, 135 borings in the smelter "dross" (light-colored material that looks like ash), and 3 new deep borings in the top of the main tailings pile at the former mine. Over the next few months, EPA will be validating and confirming all data, evaluating what the data are showing, and developing ways of presenting it to the community.

EPA will continue engaging with community members about residential results and cleanup alternatives for the mine and smelter. If you have questions or concerns about EPA activities in Dewey-Humboldt, please contact Amanda Pease, Community Involvement Coordinator, at (415) 972-3068 or [pease.amanda@epa.gov](mailto:pease.amanda@epa.gov). Additionally, the Community Coalition of Dewey-Humboldt, EPA's Technical Assistance Grant recipient, will be holding a small question and answer session regarding EPA work. If you are interested, please contact Rose Eitemiller at [reitemiller@gmail.com](mailto:reitemiller@gmail.com).