



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

1410 North Hilton • Boise, Idaho 83706 • (208) 373-0502

C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
Curt Fransen, Director

March 28, 2012

Mr. Ken Marcy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
12928 SW 276th Street
Vashon, WA 98070

RE: Abbreviated Preliminary Assessment Report for the Congress Mine, Idaho County, Idaho.

Dear Mr. Marcy:

Attached is an Abbreviated Preliminary Assessment (APA) for the Congress Mine near Elk City, Idaho. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) made several attempts to request access from the landowner of the Congress Mine, but permission was never granted.

The Congress Mine was investigated by the Idaho Geological Survey (IGS) on June 7, 1999. IGS reported the adit was discharging a small amount of water that disappears into the dump. A water sample was taken and analyzed. An examination of other water samples taken from mines in the same geology and vicinity show similar elevated metals concentrations. These values are not remarkable and it is unlikely any human health risks or ecological health risks are associated with this area.

The IGS report contained no information indicating any environmental concerns were observed or documented. This would indicate no potential releases of heavy metals by airborne means or surface and ground water existed which would cause any human health risks or ecological health risks. Additionally, potential discharges of other deleterious materials, such as petroleum products and ore processing chemicals, would have been investigated.

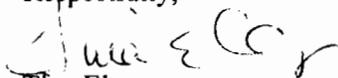
As a result of the above information, **DEQ is recommending the Congress Mine site be designated as No Remedial Action Planned (NRAP).**

A link to DEQ's Congress Mine APA can also be found on DEQ's Mining Preliminary Assessment Web page at:

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/waste-mgmt-remediation/remediation-activities/mining-preliminary-assessments.aspx>

If you have any questions about this site, the report, or DEQ's recommendations, please do not hesitate to call me at (208) 373-0563.

Respectfully,


Tina Elayer
Mine Waste Specialist

attachment

cc: Scott Sanner – BLM
Congress Mine File

ABBREVIATED PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

This is an Abbreviated Preliminary Assessment (APA) for the Congress Mine near Elk City, Idaho. This document provides the rationale for the determination of No Remedial Action Planned (NRAP) and that no additional analysis or site investigation is necessary for the Congress Mine. The information to produce this document was taken from the 2003 Idaho Geological Survey (IGS) report. A map generated during desktop research is attached.

Preparer: Daniel D. Stewart **Date:** 3/19/12
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
300 W. Main
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208) 983-0808
daniel.stewart@deq.idaho.gov

Site Name: Congress Mine

Site Owner: Jory Mollenhauer

Address: 4819 West Hoffman Place
Spokane, WA 99201

Site Location: From IGS 2003:

Access from the Elk City Ranger Station is via County Road 443 northeast to the junction with FS Road 1809, 0.2 mile on Road 1809 to the American River at the junction with FS Road 2541, and then 0.3 mile on Road 1809 to Box Sing Creek, where the road turns northeast away from the river. Where Road 1809 turns, an old road follows the east side of the river for about 0.4 mile to the mouth of Baboon Creek, where a new road crosses the river. At a point approximately 1,000 feet to the northwest on the new road, the Congress Mine is 500 feet south of the new road, on a logging road, and on private land.

Township 29 North, Range 8 East, Section 24

Latitude: 45.83444°N **Longitude:** -115.41389°W

Describe the release (or potential release) and its probable nature:

DEQ was unable to access the property after various attempts to contact the property owner were unsuccessful.

The Congress Mine was investigated by IGS on June 7, 1999. IGS reported the adit was discharging a small amount of water that disappears into the dump. A water sample was taken and analyzed. An examination of other water samples taken from mines in the same geology and vicinity show similar elevated metals concentrations. These values are not remarkable and it is unlikely any human health risks or ecological health risks are associated with this area.

The IGS report contained no information indicating any environmental concerns were observed or documented. This would indicate no potential releases of heavy metals by airborne means or surface and ground water existed which would cause any human health risks or ecological health risks. Additionally, potential discharges of other deleterious materials, such as petroleum products and ore processing chemicals would have been investigated.

Part 1 - Superfund Eligibility Evaluation

If all answers are “no” go on to Part 2, otherwise proceed to Part 3.

	YES	NO
1. Is the site currently in CERCLIS or an “alias” of another site?		x
2. Is the site being addressed by some other remedial program (Federal, State, or Tribal)?		x
3. Are the hazardous substances that may be released from the site regulated under a statutory exclusion (e.g., petroleum, natural gas, natural gas liquids, synthetic gas usable for fuel, normal application of fertilizer, release located in a workplace, naturally occurring, or regulated by the NRC, UMTRCA, or OSHA)?		x
4. Are the hazardous substances that may be released from the site excluded by policy considerations (i.e., deferred to RCRA corrective action)?		x
5. Is there sufficient documentation to demonstrate that there is no potential for a release that constitutes risk to human or ecological receptors? <i>(e.g., comprehensive remedial investigation equivalent data showing no release above ARARs, completed removal action, documentation showing that no hazardous substance releases have occurred, or an EPA approved risk assessment completed)?</i>	x	

Please explain all “yes” answer(s):

A site inspection by IGS involving direct observations confirmed that contaminants of concern including hazardous materials and petroleum products were not reported in concentrations that present a threat to human health or the environment. No contaminants or hazardous substances remain on the site. No surface water, ground water or airborne pathways were detected. No homes or cabins exist on the claim.

Part 2 - Initial Site Evaluation

For Part 2, if information is not available to make a “yes” or “no” response, further investigation may be needed. In these cases, determine whether an APA is appropriate. Exhibit 1 parallels the questions in Part 2. Use Exhibit 1 to make decisions in Part 3.

If the answer is “no” to any of questions 1, 2, or 3, proceed directly to Part 3.	YES	NO
1. Does the site have a release or a potential to release?		x
2. Does the site have uncontained sources containing CERCLA eligible substances?		x
3. Does the site have documented on-site, adjacent, or nearby targets?		x

If the answers to questions 1, 2, and 3 above were all “yes” then answer the questions below before proceeding to Part 3.	YES	NO
4. Does documentation indicate that a target (e.g., drinking water wells, drinking surface water intakes, etc.) has been exposed to a hazardous substance released from the site?		
5. Is there an apparent release at the site with no documentation of exposed targets, but there are targets on site or immediately adjacent to the site?		
6. Is there an apparent release and no documented on-site targets or targets immediately adjacent to the site, but there are nearby targets (e.g., targets within one mile)?		
7. Is there no indication of a hazardous substance release, and there are uncontained sources containing CERCLA hazardous substances, but there is a potential to release with targets present on site or in proximity to the site?		

Notes:

It is unlikely any human health risks or ecological health risks are associated with this mine site. No surface water, ground water or airborne pathways were reported by IGS. No homes or cabins exist on the claim. The adit is discharging a small amount of water which goes subsurface immediately in the dump.

During the site assessment, DEQ used references from several different documents including U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maps, county tax rolls, and historical reports that have spelled numerous claim names, town sites, and/or geographic features differently from one and another. DEQ’s use of the different spellings is to remain in context with the reference used for each given section of text or written in this report.

Exhibit 1 – Site Assessment Decision Guidelines for a Site

Exhibit 1 identifies different types of site information and provides some possible recommendations for further site assessment activities based on that information. The assessor should use Exhibit 1 in determining the need for further action at the site, based on the answers to the questions in Part 2. Please use your professional judgment when evaluating a site. Your judgment may be different from the general recommendations for a site given below.

Suspected/Documented Site Conditions		APA	Full PA	PA/SI	SI
1. Releases or potential to release are not documented at the site. YES		Yes			
2. Uncontained sources with CERCLA-eligible substances have not been documented as being present on the site. (i.e., they do exist at site) YES		Yes			
3. On-site, adjacent, or nearby receptors are not present. NO RECEPTORS		Yes			
4. There is no documentation or observations made leading to the conclusion that a sensitive receptor is present or may have been exposed (e.g., drinking water system user inside four mile TDL). YES	Option 1: APA	Yes			
5. There is documentation that a sensitive receptor has been exposed to a hazardous substance released from the site. NO	Option 2: Full PA or PA/SI	No			
6. There is an apparent release at the site with no documentation of targets, but there are targets on site or immediately adjacent to the site. NO	Option 1: APA SI	No			
	Option 2: PA/SI	No			
7. There is an apparent release and no documented on-site targets and no documented targets immediately adjacent to the site, but there are nearby targets. Nearby targets are those targets that are located within one mile of the site and have a relatively high likelihood of exposure to a hazardous substance migration from the site. YES		Yes			
8. There are: no indications of a hazardous substance release; uncontained sources containing CERCLA hazardous substances; but there is a potential to release with targets present on site or in proximity to the site. NO		Yes			

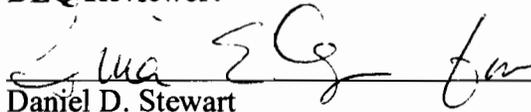
Part 3 - DEQ Site Assessment Decision

When completing Part 3, use Part 2 and Exhibit 1 to select the appropriate decision. For example, if the answer to question 1 in Part 2 was “no,” then an APA may be performed and the “NRAP” box below should be checked. Additionally, if the answer to question 4 in Part 2 is “yes,” then you have two options (as indicated in Exhibit 1): Option 1 -- conduct an APA and check the “Lower Priority SI” or “Higher Priority SI” box below; or Option 2 -- proceed with a combined PA/SI assessment.

Check the box that applies based on the conclusions of the APA:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Remedial Action Planned (NRAP)	Defer to NRC
<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Priority SI	Refer to Removal Program
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower Priority SI	Site is being addressed as part of another CERCLIS site
<input type="checkbox"/>	Defer to RCRA Subtitle C	Other:

DEQ Reviewer:


Daniel D. Stewart

3/28/12
Date

Please Explain the Rationale for Your Decision:

The 2003 IGS report indicated no areas of concern were found. No homes or cabins exist on the site. No pathways exist relative to human health risks or environmental risks. IGS did not indicate any hazardous or deleterious materials on site. A water sample taken indicated elevated levels of cadmium, copper, iron, manganese and lead. Elevated metals concentrations in highly mineralized areas are typical for this geology.

As a result of the information contained in this APA, DEQ recommends the property status of the Congress Mine be designated as No Remedial Action Planned (NRAP).

Notes:

The italicized text below was taken directly from the 2003 IGS report.

Site Description: The mine has one partially open, flooded adit that is discharging a small amount of water that disappears into the dump. There appears to have been some recent work to open the portal and drain the adit, but fresh slumps have formed a low dam in front of the opening. The partially oxidized waste dump is 60 feet long, 30 feet wide and 25 feet thick. The disturbed area covers about 1 acre.

There are no structures at this site. The partially open, flooded adit can be entered with a moderate amount of effort. Should the adit still be open, DEQ recommends it be closed for safety reasons.

Geologic Features: *This mine is in the biotite gneiss and schist unit of the Middle or Early Proterozoic Elk City metamorphic sequence (Lewis and others, 1990, 1993). The Congress Mine explored quartz veins in the gneiss.*

Water Sample: *Adit water sample E6079902 exceeds all standards for aluminum, equals or exceeds all standards for cadmium, equals or exceeds both Aquatic Life standards for copper, exceeds all standards for iron, and exceeds the Secondary MCL for manganese in the dissolved metals screen. Lead exceeds the Aquatic Life Chronic standard in the EPA 200.8 test. No total recoverable metals screen was run for this sample.*

An examination of other water samples taken from mines in the same geology and vicinity show similar elevated metals concentrations. These values are not remarkable and it is unlikely any human health risks or ecological health risks are associated with this area.

History: *There is no information on the history of the Congress Mine.*

References:

IGS (Idaho Geological Survey). Erdman, Ted, John Kauffman, Earl H. Bennett, and Victoria E. Mitchell. 2003. *Site Inspection Report for the Abandoned and Inactive Mines in Idaho on U.S. Forest Service Lands (Region 1) Nez Perce National Forest. Volume III, Section A: Elk City, Orogrande, Buffalo Hump, and Surrounding Areas, Idaho County, Idaho.* Prepared for the U.S. Forest Service Under Participating Agreement No. FS-01-96-14-2800. Staff Report 03-21.

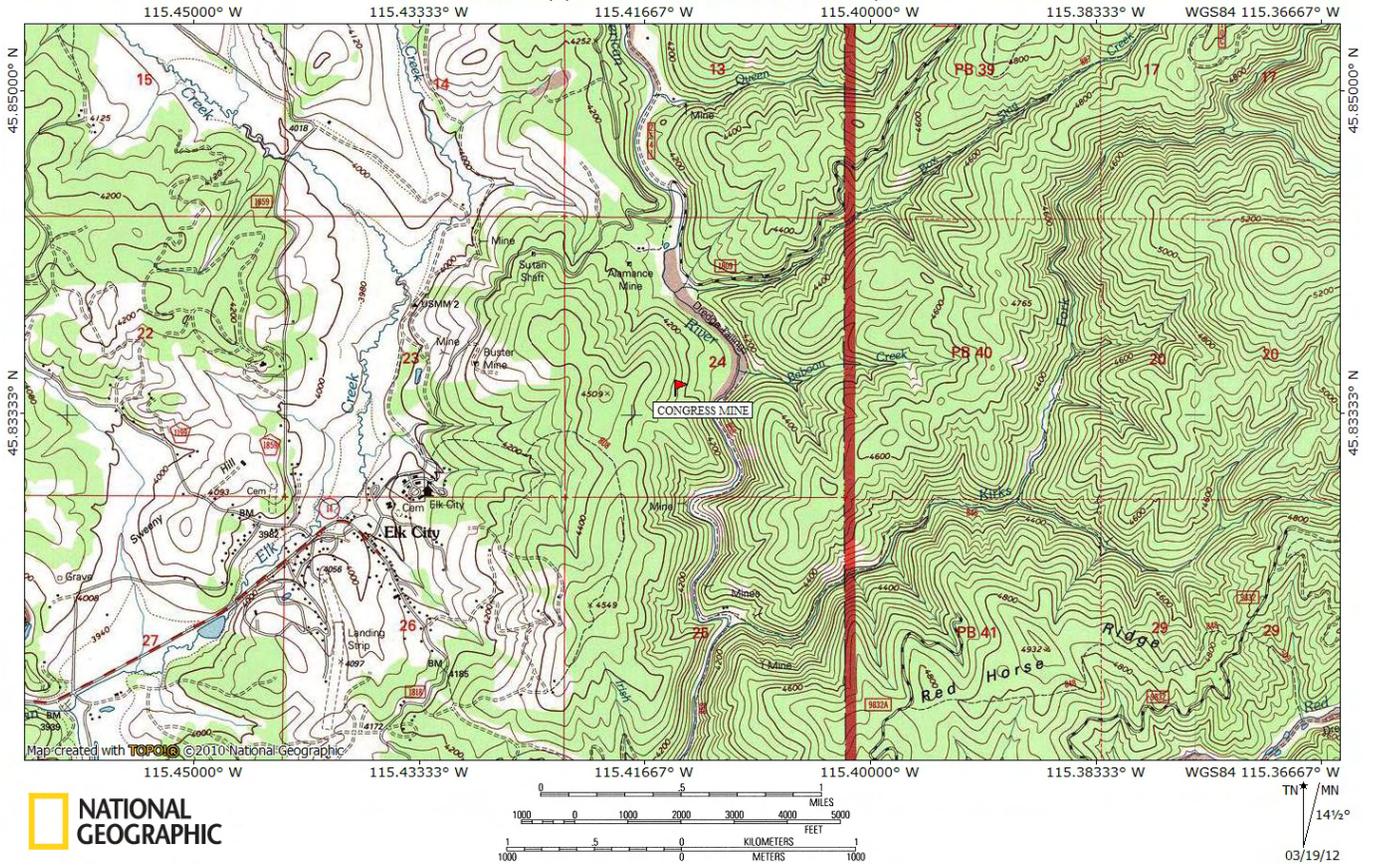
Topographic Overview Map of the Congress Mine Location. 10/25/2011. 1:24,000. Daniel Stewart; National Geographic Topographic Software.

<http://shop.nationalgeographic.com/ngs/product/topo%21-state-series/topo%21-idaho>

Attachment:

Map

TOPO! map printed on 03/19/12 from "Untitled.tpo"



**Topographic Overview Map of the Congress Mine Location
(Map Source: National Geographic Topographic Software).**