

**Responses to EPA Comments on the
Draft Non-time Critical Action Memo, Red Devil Mine**

General Comments:

Comment 1. The format of the action memo does not follow EPA's 2009 guidance for preparing an action memorandum. That may be one of the main reasons it is difficult to follow and thus hard to determine the main points that an action memo should address. A red line/strikeout version of the Action Memo, reformatted to conform to EPA guidance, is attached.

Response 1: Understood. However, BLM has determined that the current format for the AM more adequately presents the information needed to justify the removal action.

Comment 2. In Section II, Site Conditions and Background, there should be a brief discussion regarding the Site in terms of sensitive populations, habitats, and natural resources, including a short description of historical, cultural or tribal issues, as appropriate.

Response 2: This information will be added to the AM.

Specific Comments:

Comment 1. P. 1, Section II, A. Recommend that first paragraph be rewritten to read; "The RDM is an abandon mercury mine and processing facility located on forested public lands managed by the BLM. The mine ceased operation in 1971. Since the closure of the mine, vegetation has reclaimed much of the site. The primary contaminants are metals, specifically, mercury, arsenic, and antimony. The main source of these contaminants are the tailings that were generated by the processing facility in the central area, i.e. the Main Processing Area. Red Devil Creek cuts through the Main Processing Area and transports the tailings, and the associated contamination, into the Kuskokwim River. Many villagers in the vicinity of the site utilize the Kuskokwim River as a subsistence fishery."

Response 1: The BLM agrees that this information is pertinent to the AM. This background information is presented in the Site Conditions and Background section.

Comment 2. P. 6, Section II, B, 2. Replace the title "Other Actions" with "2013-2013 Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis". Also include a more thorough discussion of the community outreach, such as the notice of availability and the responsiveness summary.

Response 2: It is agreed that the Section II, B, 2 header will be changed to 2013 Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis. Community Outreach text will be added by BLM.

Comment 3. P. 9, Section V, A. The discussion of the proposed action should include additional text discussing the necessary short and long term best management practices necessary to address construction impacts.

Response 3: References to slopes/grades, prevention of dust generation, implementation of erosion and sediment controls, which are considered to be BMPs are included in the text. The text in the Action Memorandum referencing slope/grades, dust prevention and erosion controls paraphrase more detailed requirements defined in the specifications that were included in the procurement package distributed to potential bidders. The text will be modified to reference the project A SWPPP, which will be submitted

to ADEC for review prior to beginning site work, and will document BMPs to be applied during construction.

Comment 4. P. 11, Section V, A, 1st parg. The first paragraph notes that no cover will be placed over the geomembrane covering the temporary stockpile. A projection of how “temporary” this stockpile will be should be stated. It is anticipated that after a couple years, it would be necessary to ensure the durability and protectiveness of this cover against erosion, wind, and/or mechanical forces, wild animals, etc. Also a more detailed discussion of how post removal site controls will ensure the long term durability and protectiveness of the removal action, i.e. what is the inspection criteria and the frequency, etc., should be included.

Response 4. As stated in the text, the cover will be polyethylene scrim reinforced polyethylene that is 12 mil thick and capable of withstanding hydrostatic pressure of 100 psi. The geomembrane also possesses significant density and tensile strength so that it will withstand exposure to ambient conditions over an extended period of time if necessary. Text will be added indicating that the BLM will inspect the cover annually during the interim period before site-wide remediation. .

Comment 5. P. 11, Section V, A, 2. Additional discussion regarding the planned remedial action, including scope and projected schedule of when it may be completed, should be included in this section.

Response: A detailed schedule for this action will be generated by the contractor. The following text will be inserted before the last sentence in the 3rd paragraph of this section, “Field construction of the activities described in Section V.A.1 will be accomplished in 2014.” .

Comment 6. P. 12, Section V, B. The project ceiling is very close to \$2 million statutory exemption. If this exemption applies, it would be worthwhile to include information related to a waiver to avoid having to amend this initial action memorandum at a later date.

Response 6: The \$2 million statutory exemption applies to actions supported by the Superfund. This action is being funded by the BLM and therefore the statutory exemption is not applicable.

Comment 7. P. 12, Section VI. In the last sentence after “action would” add the following; “reduce mobility of the contamination, not through treatment, but by placing the excavated material in a secure storage area and . . .”

Response 7: Agreed. The insertion will be made.

Comment 8. P. 12, Section VIII. Add the following phrase to the end of the first paragraph; “The selected action is also the most consistent with the potential final remedial actions at this site.”

Response 8: Agreed. The sentence will be added.

Attachment B

Comment 9. Figure 3. The extent of excavation label references Detail 9. Either include Detail 9 in this attachment or delete the phrase from the figure.

Response 9: The reference to Detail 9 will be deleted.

Typos:

Comment P. 10, Last paragraph, first sentence. Sentence should read, “. . . transport to the temporary stockpile.”

Response: Agreed. The change will be made.