FACT SHEET

December 2023

NEVADA DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Anaconda Copper Mine Site Phase 2 Feasibility Study

Background

The remediation program for the Anaconda Copper Mine Site (ACMS) is administered by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection as lead agency in cooperation with the EPA, local stakeholders, and tribal governments. NDEP directs the ACMS cleanup process using a Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) equivalent approach.

The CERCLA process has multiple steps leading to site cleanup, including site investigations, evaluation of health risks to people and the environment, and identifying methods to clean up the site contamination. A feasibility study identifies a range of cleanup methods, called cleanup alternatives, that have the potential to meet the cleanup objectives for the site during each phase of remediation. A feasibility study also evaluates the cleanup alternatives using the criteria identified in the National Contingency Plan. NDEP will be using the alternatives and evaluation performed in the feasibility study to identify the preferred cleanup alternative in a Proposed Plan and, after getting stakeholder, tribal, and community input, select the final remedy for cleanup and reclamation within the Phase 2 area.

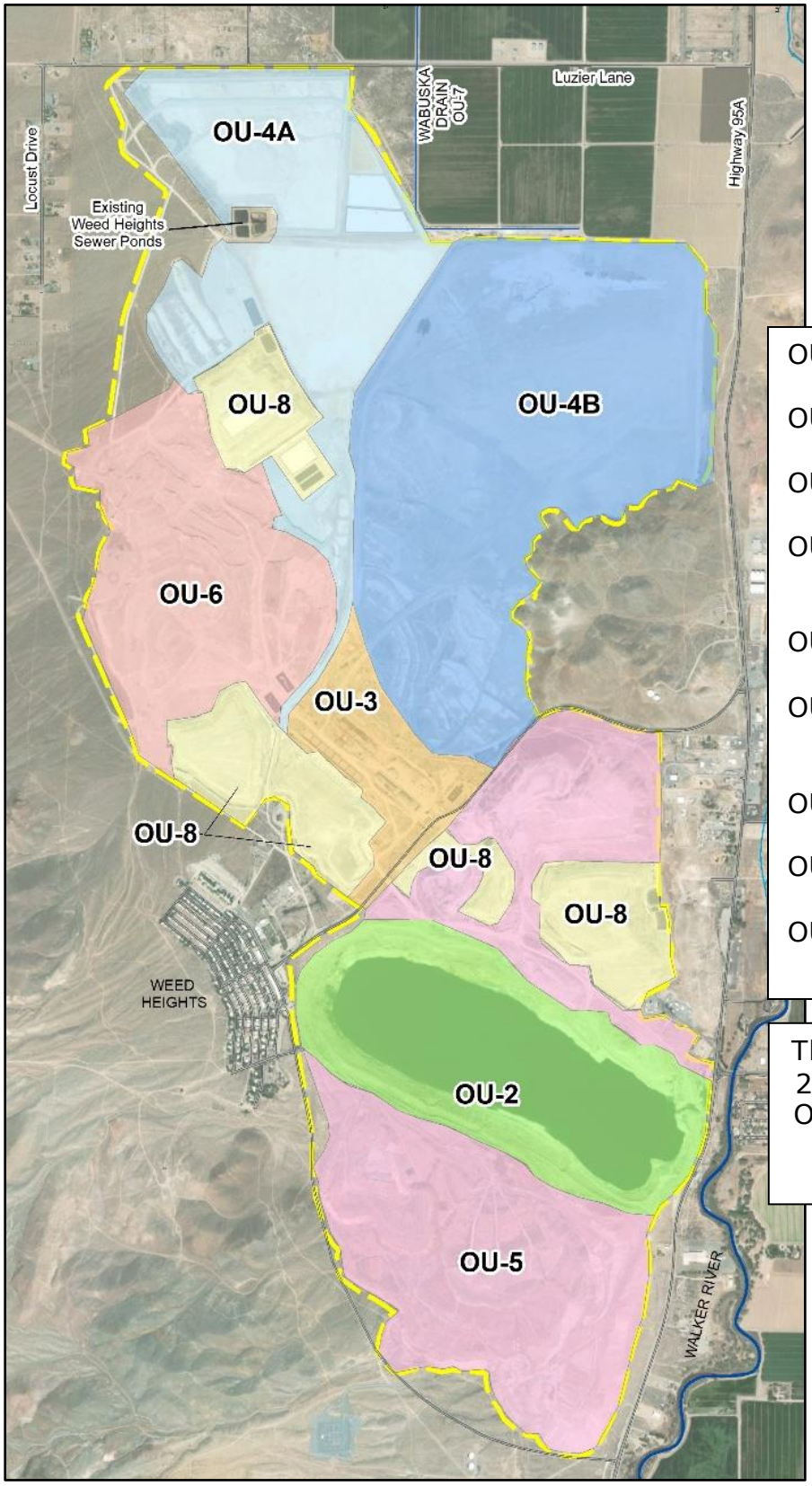
The historic ACMS is an abandoned open pit copper mine and processing facility, located in Lyon County's Mason Valley, in western Nevada. The majority of copper mining, milling and processing at the Site occurred between 1953 and 1978, and secondary milling and processing of ores occurred between 1989 and 2000. This fact sheet summarizes the process that will be followed to develop the feasibility study for the northern Operable Units (OUs) of the ACMS Phase 2 area.

This fact sheet answers the following questions:

- What work has been done to date to lay the groundwork for the Feasibility Study?
- Where does the Feasibility Study fit in the overall sequence of site remediation?
- What will be presented upon completion of the Feasibility Study?
- How will the Feasibility Study facilitate the later steps in the CERCLA process including the cleanup itself?

The sections that follow expand on these subjects in more detail.

Site Map



OU-1 – Sitewide Groundwater

OU-2 – Pit and Pit Lake

OU-3 – Anaconda Process Area

OU-4A – Lined and Unlined Evaporation Ponds

OU-4B – Sulfide Tailings

OU-5 – Waste Rock Disposal Areas

OU-6 – Vat Leach Tailings

OU-7 – Wabuska Drain

OU-8 – Arimetco Heap Leach Pads and Process Area

The Feasibility Study for Phase 2 will encompass OU-1, OU-3, OU-4A, OU-4B, OU-5 (north of the pit), OU-6, and OU-7

Work Completed to Date

The OU-8 areas were the subject of the Phase 1 remediation which included all the steps in the CERCLA process now being followed for Phase 2. Substantial completion of the work on Phase 1 was completed in October 2022 with several punch list items remaining to be addressed.

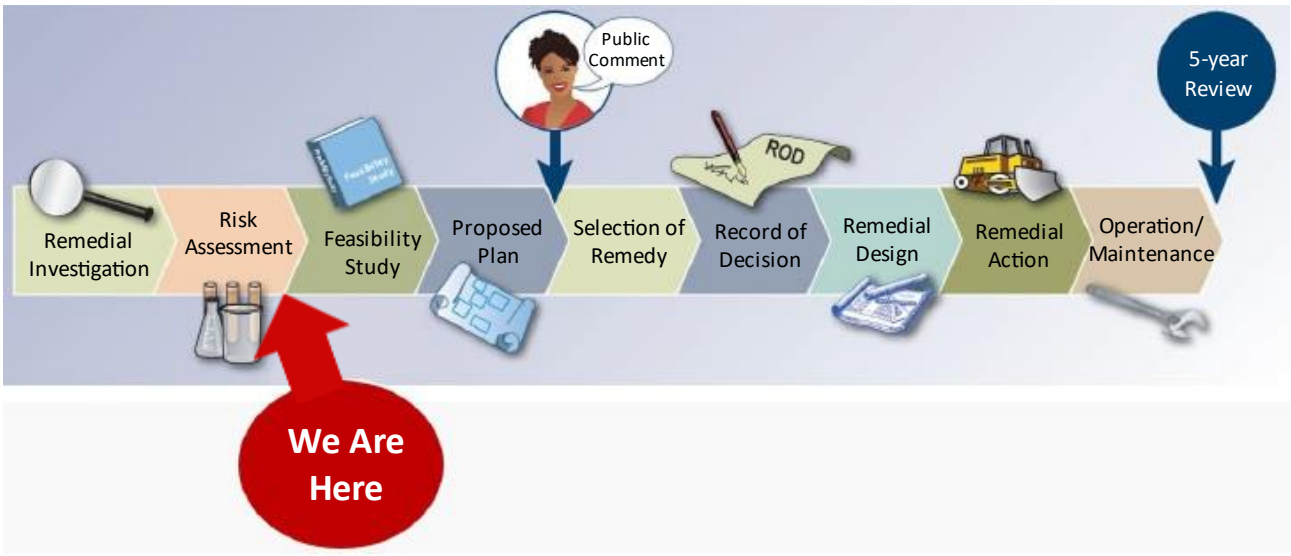
Phase 2 encompasses the following OUs: OU-1, OU-3, OU-4A, OU-4B, OU-5 (those portions north of the pit), OU-6, and OU-7. For these operable units, the following work has been completed or is in the final stages in preparation for the Phase 2 Feasibility Study:

- Remedial Investigations – detailed study of each area to identify the nature and extent of any contaminants of concern;
- Risk Assessments – identification of pathways of exposure for the contaminants studied in the Remedial Investigation to calculate risk factors for human and wildlife receptors who may come into contact.

Note that the risk assessment evaluates the current conditions of the site prior to the initiation of any remedial actions.

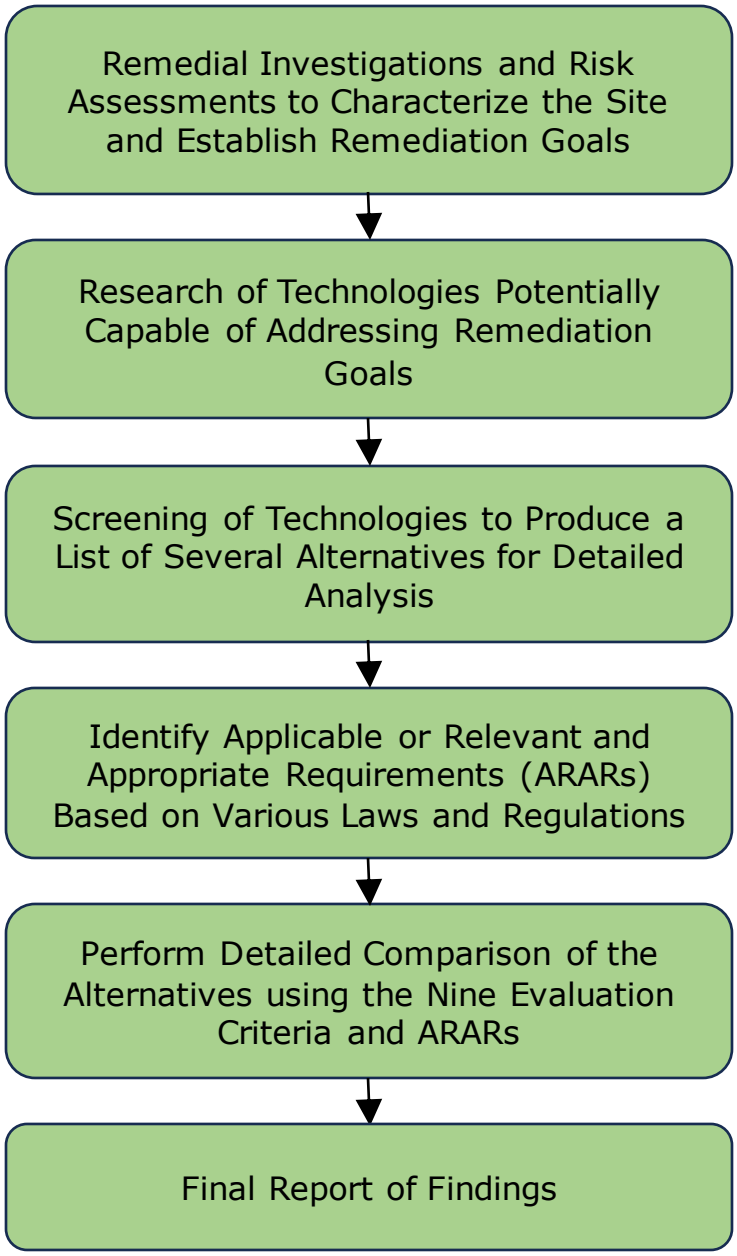
Sequence of Site Remediation

The Feasibility Study uses the information gathered in the Remedial Investigations and the Risk Assessments to identify the necessary goals of the proposed remediation alternatives. Completion of the Feasibility Study report will allow a Proposed Plan to be selected, followed by the Record of Decision, engineering, and construction of the remedy.



Feasibility Study Process

The Feasibility Study process consists of the development and screening of remedial action alternatives and a detailed analysis of a limited number of the most promising options to establish the basis for a remedy selection decision. The alternatives reviewed represent technical concepts, not engineered designs. The report of the feasibility study will summarize these results, not select a cleanup option. Major steps in this sequence include:



Nine Evaluation Criteria

The nine evaluation criteria are provided in EPA guidance documents for the CERCLA feasibility study process.

Threshold Criteria

- Overall protection of human health and the environment
- Compliance with ARARs

Balancing Criteria

- Long-term effectiveness and permanence
- Reduction of toxicity, mobility or volume through treatment
- Short-term effectiveness
- Implementability
- Cost

Modifying Criteria

- State Agency Acceptance
- Community Acceptance

Feasibility Study Final Steps

The Feasibility Study Report will be used by NDEP to prepare the Proposed Plan which will be published for a 30-day public notice and review process. All comments and responses will be used to further inform the final selected remedy and will be published within the Record of Decision.

The Record of Decision will contain all information necessary to proceed with design of the remedy, construction of the various elements, and eventual operation and maintenance of the remedy.

Additional Information

Jeff Collins, NDEP
Bureau of Corrective Actions, Chief
775-687-9381
jrcollins@ndep.nv.gov

Paul Eckert, NDEP
Supervisor, Abandoned Mine Lands
775-687-9484
peckert@ndep.nv.gov