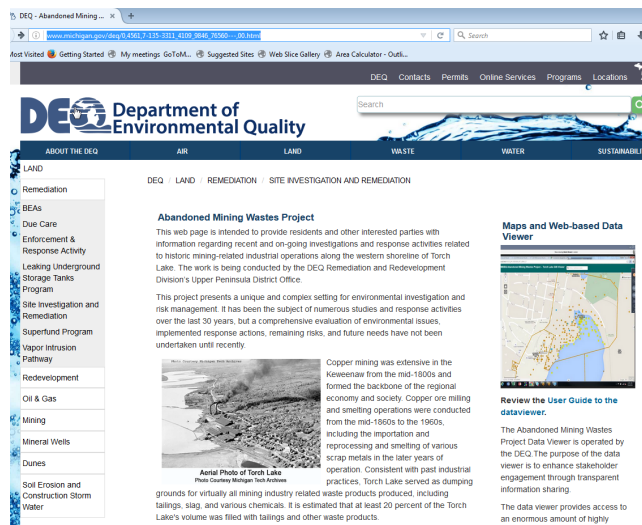


Hi! This note is brought to you by the Remediation and Redevelopment Division (RRD) of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Calumet Field Office. Our division's goal is to keep you up to date on the RRD's environmental projects underway in the Keweenaw Peninsula. My name is Amy Keranen and I'm the DEQ project manager for the Abandoned Mining Wastes—Torch Lake project. I can be reached at the following phone number and addresses, and hope you'll keep in touch! DEQ Calumet Field Office (MSP Post), 55195 U.S. 41 North, Calumet, MI 49913; 906-337-0389; [keranena@michigan.gov](mailto:keranena@michigan.gov).

Amy

## Abandoned Mining Wastes Project—Torch Lake Project Website Now Available



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One of the original goals of the Abandoned Mining Wastes (AMW) project was to share all available environmental information used to evaluate conditions present at our project area along Torch Lake. The environmental data we have compiled spans several decades, and the historical information more than a century. While AMW project planning and field work were underway, we were also busy creating a website where all of the relevant studies, data and findings of past work done at Torch Lake, as well as all the data from the current AMW project could be found. This is something never before available pertaining to the issues surrounding Torch Lake. The website provides links to prior studies, EPA emergency response projects in the area, our project documents, and project newsletters. We hope you find this new website valuable. It can be found at the following link: [http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3311\\_4109\\_9846\\_76560---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3311_4109_9846_76560---,00.html)



## Abandoned Mining Wastes Project Update - What We Did in 2016

### Gate Installation and Asbestos Clean-up - June/July 2016

The Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 project newsletters identified tasks that we intended to complete in 2016. We successfully completed all we set out to do. The next several pages include brief descriptions of what we did and includes before and after photos of our work.



At the former Coal Dock and Mineral Building properties between Hubbell and Lake Linden, during the last week of June 2016, we installed a gate, repaired the damaged fence, and replaced decades -old fading signs. These properties are the location where numerous abandoned mining era wastes including polychlorinated bi-phenyls (PCBs) - contaminated materials are located. Securing these properties was important to reduce the public's potential exposure to the wastes, until we can complete the clean up work, which is being planned for 2017.



During the last week of June and first week of July, asbestos-containing roofing material was removed from the ground surface around the Mineral Building, near Hubbell.





## Demolition Dump Clean-up and Drainage Ditch Clean Out - July/August 2016

In July 2016, we addressed a demolition debris dump area near the Tamarack City Park that contained some asbestos waste material. We removed the asbestos wastes and covered the area when we were finished.



In August 2016, we completed maintenance of certain sections of drainage ditches on the former Coal Dock and Mineral Building properties in order to return flow to its historic locations, routing it away from the most contaminated areas in an effort to reduce potential contaminant flow into Torch Lake.





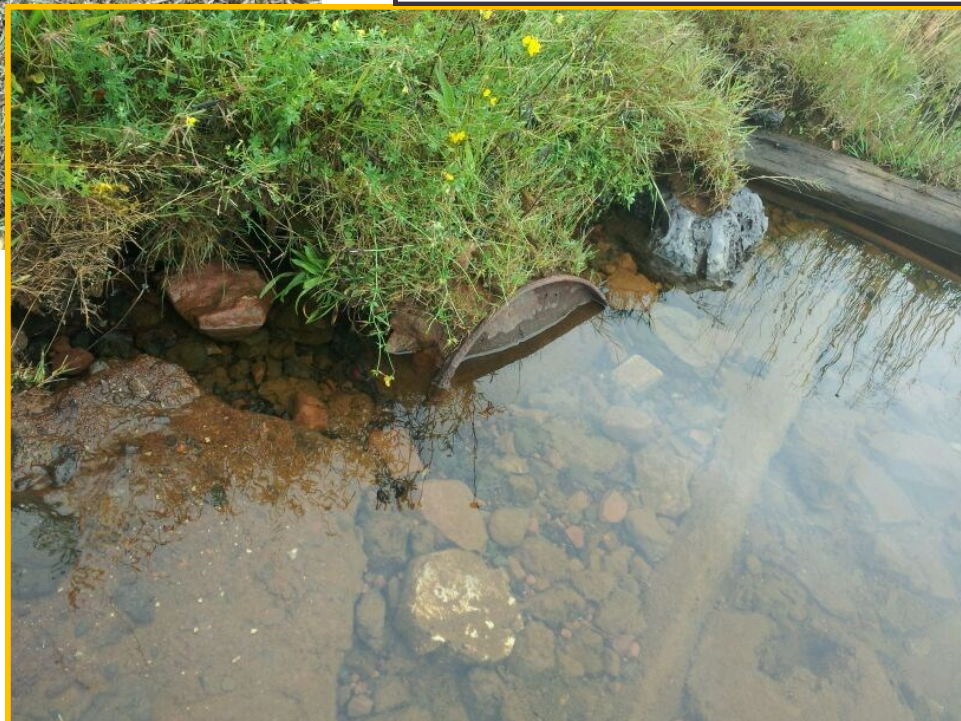
## Buried Wastes Investigation—September 2016

In mid-September 2016 an investigation was conducted at the former Hubbell Smelter property and out on the south side of the Tamarack Sands where our May 2016 geophysical investigations indicated debris has been buried beneath the Superfund soil cap. The geophysical techniques used included electromagnetic surveys (to identify metallic debris) and ground penetrating radar (to identify variations in density of materials beneath the cap).



The photo on the left shows one of the seep areas where fluid wastes are coming up from likely buried drums that have decomposed beneath the Superfund cap. This waste area was investigated using geophysical techniques and the wastes have been slated for removal in 2017. The seeping wastes have been characterized and contain high concentrations of solvents and chemicals not typically associated with mining related industry.

Prior to the fence being installed by the Superfund, the vast stamp sand areas were reportedly used for various unregulated disposal activities.



The photo on the right shows one of several drums buried beneath the Superfund cap along the water's edge at the property near the former Hubbell Smelter.

Geophysical techniques were used to identify what appears to be several areas of metallic debris beneath the cap in this area of shoreline.



## Asbestos and PCB Waste Removal– late September 2016

We removed additional asbestos-containing and PCB-containing wastes at several properties within the Hubbell and Tamarack City areas of the AMW project. Removing these wastes was an important next step to reduce potential exposure to the public and the environment and to ready some of the properties for future work.



In the photo on the left you can see pieces of PCB containing wire coatings discarded on the ground surface during the reclamation processes conducted at the C&H properties in Hubbell. These wastes were removed and disposed.

In the photo on the right, you can see asbestos-containing demolition wastes on the ground surface at the Tamarack Processing property. Waste materials similar to this were removed from several former industrial properties in Hubbell and Tamarack City, and disposed.





## Preparation for Removal of Buried Drums – Planned for 2017



The above picture shows waste material seeping up from beneath the Superfund cap on the south end of the Tamarack Sands. These wastes will be removed and disposed in 2017. In mid-September we met with potential bidders and project planning will be completed in the upcoming months.

In the two photos on the right, drums are visible sticking out into Torch Lake from beneath the Superfund cap near the former Hubbell Smelter property. We conducted a pre-bid meeting with prospective bidders in mid-September in preparation for the drum removal anticipated for the summer of 2017. We are required to apply for and obtain permits from the State and Federal governments to remove these drums. We expect our State permit at the end of October, but the Federal permit is still pending.

Results of waste characterization samples collected from this area in September 2016 are similar to the results of other drum samples we have collected; PCBs and hazardous levels of lead have been identified.





## Abandoned Container Removal– September/October 2016



The drum pictured at the left is one of 59 similar drums pulled out of a drum disposal mound created during the late 1970s or early 1980s on the former Coal Dock property. The area is clearly visible as a recent disturbance on the 1986 aerial photos– around the time the Torch Lake Superfund site was being established by the EPA Superfund Remedial program.

Abandoned containers we had previously identified at properties that were addressed by the Superfund were prepared for disposal. A total of 117 abandoned containers were removed from 7 properties between the Traprock Dump and the south end of Tamarack City, at the former Reclamation Plant property. Once characterization sample results are obtained, the drums will be disposed.

The photo on the right shows drums being removed from the drum disposal area on the former Coal Dock property.

Note arrow pointing to buried drums.





## Work planned for Fall/Winter 2016/2017

- Compile information collected from the July 2016 in-lake side-scan sonar work conducted in the Mason area. This data will be used to guide the 2017 evaluation in Torch Lake.
- Obtain access to properties in the next phase of the AMW project– the Quincy Mining Company – Mason Area (QMCM). We hope to conduct an initial site walkover in October 2016 to become familiar with the project area so we can efficiently develop the QMCM Sampling & Analysis Plan (SAP).
- Prepare the QMCM on-land and in-lake SAP for 2017 implementation.
- Develop engineering estimates and designs for the Hubbell Processing Area (the former Coal Dock & Mineral Building properties), pertaining to PCB contamination and the demolition debris piles on site. Until conditions at the site can be improved, the public should continue to avoid accessing this private property without taking appropriate precautions.
- Prepare summary reports documenting all aspects of the 2016 Emergency Response Actions (most of which were highlighted on previous pages of this newsletter).
- Continue to develop plans for Emergency Response Actions to remove drums beneath the Superfund cap along the shoreline at the former Hubbell Smelter and the seep areas at the Tamarack Sands. Removal of the shoreline drums in 2017 is contingent on receiving the Federal permit.
- The EPA Emergency Response Branch from Grosse Ile, Michigan continues to work with Honeywell Specialty Materials and the Houghton County Historical Society to remove asbestos near the foundations within the railroad tracks at the Museum in Lake Linden . The Historical Society has been asked to post signs and caution tape and not operate the train until the asbestos material is removed. Delays in signing consent documents among the parties has delayed cleanup activities but they are currently expected to begin in October 2016.
- All project documents will be posted on the Abandoned Mining Wastes project website as they are finalized. Most AMW document preparation takes place over the winter and reports generally become available in May .
- We plan to have another Abandoned Mining Wastes project open house, with our usual drop-in format in May 2017, and hope to see you there.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, other information regarding historic waste issues we should be aware of, or any concerns you wish to discuss , please contact me ( [keranena@michigan.gov](mailto:keranena@michigan.gov) ).

I'll keep you informed as significant progress is made. Thanks for your interest, patience, and attention to this project. I am hoping to see you at the project open house in May. *Amy*