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Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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File Code: 2160  
Route To:

Date: OCT 23 1996

Subject: Nemo Work Center site

To: Forest Supervisor, Black Hills NF

Attached is the approved Removal Action Memorandum for the Nemo Work Center clean up.

Since the action memo was signed, Ethylene Dibromide (EDB) has been found in private wells adjacent to the work center. Private well owners have been notified and an Extent of Contamination Survey is being conducted.

**Wm. J. GOURNAY**

Wm. J. GOURNAY  
Director of Engineering

Enclosure

BLS:km

CONCUR: B.SHARK 10/15/96concur:W.MARTIN 10/16/96I Concur: Wm. J. Gournay,  
10/17/96

United States  
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### REMOVAL ACTION MEMORANDUM

October 5, 1996

Subject: Time-Critical CERCLA Removal Action  
Commencing on or about October 7, 1996 at the Nemo Work Center Dumps,  
Spearfish/Nemo Ranger District, Black Hills National Forest

#### I. PURPOSE

This Removal Action Memorandum will briefly document and explain the commencement of a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA; 42 U.S.C. 9604) Time-Critical Removal Action at the Nemo Work Center (W.C.) Dumps on the above-captioned date.

#### II. SITE CONDITIONS AND BACKGROUND

The Nemo Work Center Site is located within the Black Hills National Forest in Section 27, Township 3 North, Range 5 East, BHM, South Dakota. The site is located on lands under the jurisdiction, custody and control of the United States of America, acting by and through the USDA-Forest Service (National Forest System or NFS lands) in Lawrence County with an elevation of about 4700 feet MSL.

The Nemo Work Center Dump Sites are located just west of the USDA Forest Service Nemo Work Center in Nemo, South Dakota, and covers an overall area of approximately 20 acres. The site includes four backfilled dump sites, which have a combined area of 0.23 acres. The site can be reached by driving through the work center and up a graveled access road approximately 600 feet.

The Nemo Work Center has been used for years by the Forest Service in administering the surrounding national forest. The Work Center has seen continued activities for at least the past 50 to 75 years. It was common practice for dump sites to be located near the work centers to dispose of excess or damaged materials.

The Forest Service used the four pits to dispose of excess and damaged equipment, tools, and materials during the 1970's. The Forest Service was also spraying the forest with ethylene dibromide (EDB) and Lindane mixed with diesel fuel in an effort to control the pine beetle. Excess spray was reportedly buried in five gallon fuel cans in the pits. It is also possible that empty cyanide barrels discarded from privately owned and operated surrounding mines could also have been disposed of in the pits.

The area is still being used by the Forest Service to store building materials and to dispose of scrap building materials. Non-Hazardous waste materials are also being stored temporarily while waiting for final disposal, or recycling, such as old used culverts and scrap iron.

In February 1995, a voluntary Removal Preliminary Assessment was completed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. A Geophysical Survey Report was completed in May, 1996, by Maxim Technologies, Inc. and a EE/CA completed in Sept. 1996.

### III. THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH OR WELFARE AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.

From our review of this situation, I feel that there is a threat to public health or welfare, or to the environment, as set forth in the National Contingency Plan at 40 C.F.R 300.415(b)(2). but that it may be fairly limited. Based on data from the Preliminary Assessment, buried fuel cans could be leaking or could begin leaking in the future with the liquid having the potential to enter the groundwater. However, the geologic formations in the area of the pits is not permeable and no problems have been identified with wells in the area with regard to the waste material. There is no visible evidence that the buried cans containing EDB, if they exist, is posing a threat to the nearby population or the environment at this time. Surface and ground water is not likely to have been contaminated. A time-critical removal action is warranted because weather conditions in the local area will soon restrict excavation. Although the contamination does not pose an immediate threat to public health or the environment, it is most cost effective to complete the removal and disposal in a timely manner.

In compliance with the Forest Service's role in protecting the public health and welfare and the environment and because the suspected release is on National Forest System lands administered by the Black Hills National Forest, and pursuant to the authority found at 42 U.S.C. 9604(a) and in Executive Order 12580, I am, effective immediately, initiating a CERCLA time-critical removal action to excavate the dumps and remove the container of fuel oil and EDB mix. The Forest Service will be the "lead agency" for all response actions occurring on National Forest System lands, as defined by the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), 40 CFR part 300, and all response actions will be consistent with the NCP.

### IV. PROPOSED ACTION.

At this time, none of the four pits have been opened to observe the condition of the buried fuel cans or barrels and the adjacent soils. In order to remove the contaminated fuel cans, barrels, and/or soil, each pit will have any overburden removed to expose the buried containers. Potentially contaminated (soils in the immediate area of buried pesticide containers) and stained soil (based on visual observation) will be separated from uncontaminated overburden and separately stockpiled on polyethylene plastic prior to transportation to an approved disposal site. Containers will be visually inspected for integrity once they are uncovered. Containers that are not damaged will be placed inside a polyethylene drum to avoid spilling or leakage. Containers that appear damaged or have a potential to leak contents will be handled to avoid breaking the container or spilling its contents onto the soil. Where appropriate, containers that are damaged will be immediately overpacked. The contents of these containers will be pumped into new 5 gallon Department of Transportation (DOT)-approved drums prior to removal of the original container. All contaminated materials will be removed from the site for appropriate disposal at an EPA approved site. Water samples will be taken from surrounding wells and streams, before and after the removal action and checked for EDB and Lindane to determine the extent of contamination, if any.

This removal action will comply with all of the substantive provisions of federal and state Applicable, Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs), to the extent practicable considering the exigencies of the situation.

Approximate project costs, including the PA, Geophysical Survey and EE/CA are about \$100,000.

**V. EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SHOULD ACTION BE DELAYED OR NOT TAKEN.**

With winter quickly approaching, weather conditions will soon restrict excavation and removal of the contaminated soil. It is most cost effective to complete this removal action quickly.

**VI. OUTSTANDING POLICY ISSUES.**

There are no outstanding policy issues or public concerns of which we are aware.

**VII. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Pursuant to 40 CFR 300.415(m), I am designating Bill Schleining, Forest Facilities Engineer, as the On-Scene Coordinator and Don Murray, District Forester, as spokesperson.

The Administrative Record for this time-critical removal action is located at the Spearfish/Nemo District Office; Boulder Canyon, US Highway 14a; Deadwood, South Dakota and at the Forest Supervisor's Office; US Highway 16/385; Custer, South Dakota; and is available for public inspection during regular business hours. A Notice of Availability of the Administrative Record will be published in the Black Hills Pioneer within 60 days of initiation of the removal action. The Forest Service will accept written comments for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice and will respond to significant comments. This Removal Action Memorandum, the designation of Don Murray as spokesperson, and Bill Schleining as OSC, the above-referenced Notice Of Availability, and the Administrative Record itself shall constitute a community relations plan for this removal action.

By copy of this Memorandum, I am notifying EPA, the State of South Dakota and the City of Nemo of the above CERCLA removal action.

VII. DECISION.

My decision is to proceed with the removal of the buried containers and any contaminated soil on this site, as detailed above.

Recommended:



Forest Supervisor

Approved:

  
for Regional Forester

cc: Region 8 - EPA

SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Spearfish/Nemo District Ranger  
Byron Shark; RO-ENGR  
Ken Pitt; Mountain Region - OGC

