

Anvil Points Research Facility



The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is conducting site investigations at the former Naval Oil Shale Reserve, Anvil Points Research Facility in Rifle, Colorado. These investigations will support a non-time-critical removal action at the former facility in accordance with the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Background

The federal government constructed the Anvil Points Research Facility in 1947 to pioneer the mining and processing of oil shale. It occupied approximately 365 acres of land and included an underground mine, crushing plant, demonstration retorting plant, refinery, and housing units. The facility was owned and operated at various times by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the Colorado School of Mines, and Development Engineering, Inc. The U.S. Department of Energy acquired the facility with the transfer of the Naval Oil Shale Reserves from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Department of Energy in 1977.



The gas-combustion demonstration retorting plant was designed to process 200-300 tons of oil shale per day. Shale was fed continuously into the hopper on top of the retort vessel. Spent shale was conveyed from the bottom of the retort.

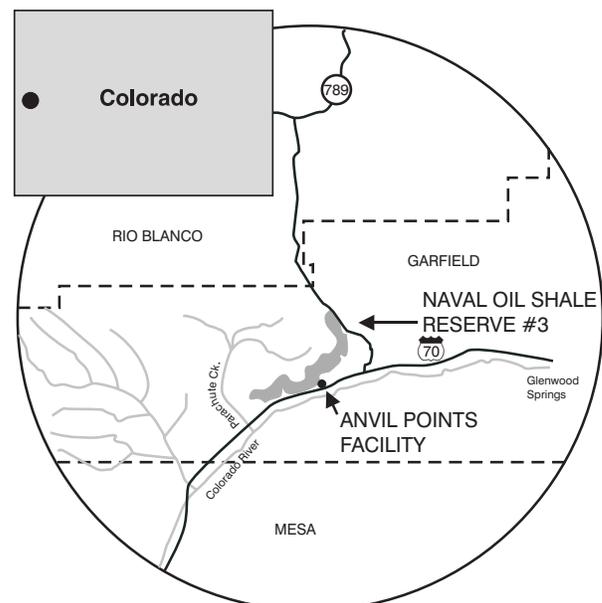
spent shale pile. In the late 1970s, the waste shale pile auto-ignited and burned internally for several years. It produced a liquid oil residue that was diverted to a series of processing ponds constructed at the base of the pile.

During its operation, the Anvil Points Research Facility generated an estimated 350,000 to 400,000 tons of retorted and fine raw shale waste. The waste was transported and deposited along the side embankment and along approximately 1,000 feet of the channel of West Sharrard Gulch, which was altered through the years to contain the

The U.S. Department of Energy decommissioned the facility in 1984 as commercial interest in oil shale research had declined. By 1986, the housing, plants, and associated structures were demolished and removed. Remnants of the facility include the waste shale pile and processing ponds, road network, pump house, and water storage tanks.

Since the facility was decommissioned, numerous environmental investigations of the site have been performed to determine whether the site, particularly the waste shale pile, is releasing hazardous waste or hazardous constituents to the environment. None of the investigations determined that site constituents pose an imminent threat to human health or the environment.

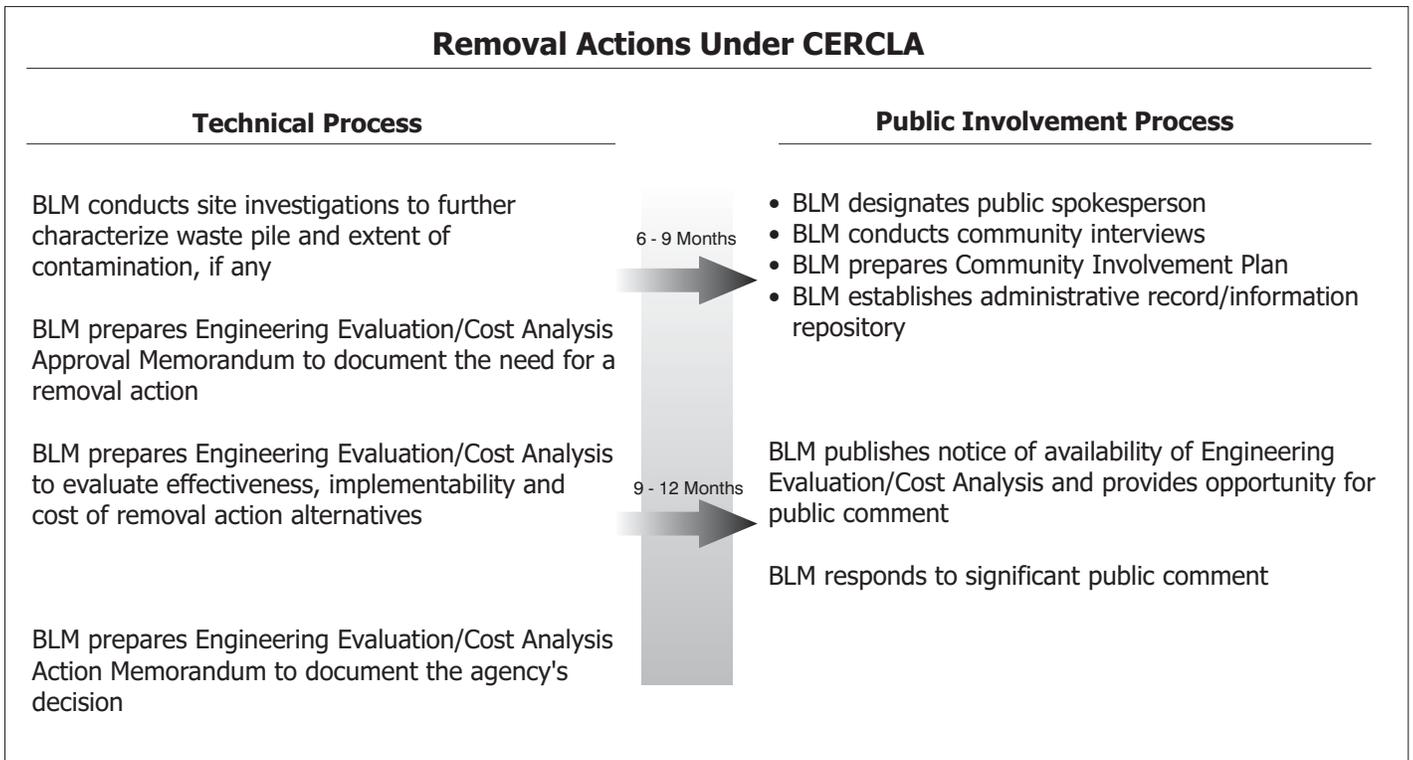
In 1997, Congress approved transfer of the Naval Oil Shale Reserve #3 from the U.S. Department of Energy to the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management.



Environmental Concerns

The waste shale pile contains inorganic materials typically associated with mining waste in concentrations that may be present above background (natural) levels. These include aluminum, arsenic, iron, magnesium, and sodium. The BLM is investigating whether there is a potential for risks to human health and the environment from these materials. To date, no significant amounts of these inorganics appear to have migrated from the site. In addition, the BLM is investigating the potential for sediment loads from the shale pile to impact the Colorado River.

The site investigations conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management will support selection of a removal action alternative for the waste pile to minimize or eliminate the potential release of any site contaminants that would present a risk to human health and the environment. A removal action may include a number of actions to minimize or eliminate the potential for release, including excavation and removal, containment, or stabilization.



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