

Community Fact Sheet

Nabesna Mine Site

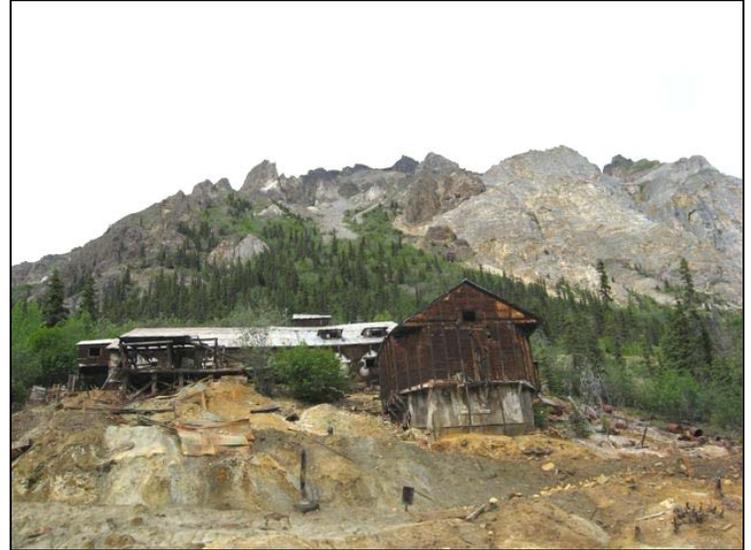
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park
and Preserve



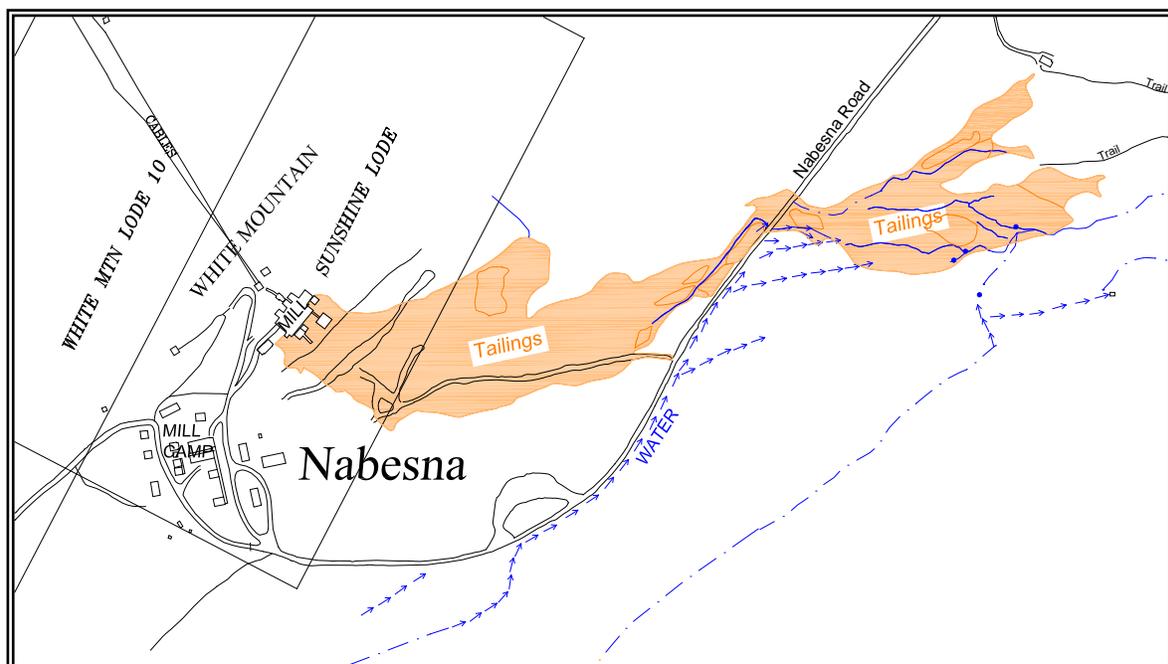
A SITE HISTORY...

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) encompasses nearly 13.2 million acres of land in southeastern Alaska and is part of a World Heritage Area. The Nabesna Mine and mill buildings are located within WRST on land owned by the Ptarmigan Company at the end of the 46-mile long Nabesna Road. The Nabesna Mine and mill camp includes approximately 35 historic buildings that were utilized throughout the 1930s. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Gold mining and milling operations were conducted between 1925 and 1940; past milling processes included grinding and flotation and the use of both mercury and cyanide at different times. Finely milled pyrite (iron and sulfur) tailings left over from the ore processing are located down slope from the buildings.



AND NOW...

The mine, mill, and some of the associated mill tailings, are located on the Sunshine Lode mining claim, patented to the Nabesna Mining Corporation. The remaining tailings are situated on federal land managed by the National Park Service (NPS), on the north and south sides of Nabesna Road. The mill tailings cover approximately 9 acres, with an average thickness of approximately 1.5 feet. Currently, the mill and camp are in disrepair and the tram system used to transport ore from the mine adits is partially collapsed. The iron-rich surface of the tailings has oxidized and appears as a bright orange and grey packed crust. In general, the tailings do not support vegetation, are acidic, and contain heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, nickel, and arsenic (a metalloid).



ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS...

Environmental investigations at the Site have been undertaken previously to define the area covered by tailings and to determine the risks the tailings may pose to human health and the environment. Samples indicate that there are concentrations of metals in the tailings which are above regulatory standards. These metals may have washed and leached into Cabin Creek during periods of high water flow, such as spring runoff. Compounds of potential concern in the tailings and surface soils include arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, and lead. Sediments in Cabin Creek contain elevated levels of silver, arsenic, cadmium, and lead. Metals also have been found to be mobilized to Cabin Creek with surface water runoff during the wet season, with some metals remaining in surface water through the dry season. Subsequent to these investigations, the NPS constructed ditches along the southern side of the tailings that redirect surface water flow away from the tailings.



The NPS has initiated an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) to determine the full nature and extent of contamination at the Site pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). As part of the EE/CA, previously collected data and new data collected in the 2009 field season will be used to conduct ecological and human health risk assessments to identify potential risks posed by Site contaminants. The EE/CA also will evaluate the

need for cleanup action and the effectiveness, feasibility, and cost of a range of cleanup alternatives. Additional information necessary for removal action design will be identified in the EE/CA Report, which will include an outline of design information needs. A cleanup action, if deemed necessary, will be selected as part of the EE/CA process.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT...

The public and local community will have the opportunity to review and comment on the Nabesna EE/CA Report, including the preferred cleanup alternative. The EE/CA Report is expected to be available for public review by spring 2010. The administrative record file, which contains all of the documents upon which the selection of cleanup action will be based, has been established and is available for public review at the following two locations:

National Park Service
Alaska Regional Office
240 West 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Contact: Linda Stromquist
Phone: (907) 644-3576
Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

National Park Service
1050 Walnut Street, Suite 220
Boulder, Colorado 80302
Contact: Gregory Nottingham
Phone: (303) 415-1483
Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

If you have questions concerning the Nabesna Mine EE/CA, please contact Greg Nottingham at (303) 415-1483 or Danny Rosenkrans at Park Headquarters in Copper Center (907) 822-7240.