

Section 4.0 Background/Reference Area Evaluation

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4.0 Background/Reference Area Evaluation

This section presents the background/reference area evaluation conducted for the Silver Bow Plant and includes background/reference information for the region and the site. The Streamside Tailings Operable Unit (SSTOU) investigations have developed a significant data set for the region's groundwater, surface water, and soil. The data from the SSTOU, as well as the Expanded Site Investigation (ESI) and Voluntary Cleanup Plan (VCP) investigations, are considered here in assessing background/reference concentrations for the Silver Bow Plant.

Background/reference information has been grouped into two categories: (1) regional and (2) site. The regional background/reference concentrations provide an indication of the natural occurrence and variability of hazardous constituents in the area. It also provides a basis for understanding the maximum reasonably achievable cleanup goals for the site in light of the constituent concentrations in nearby areas unrelated to the Silver Bow Plant. Site background/reference information is available for groundwater. As will be explained, the site background/reference data displays natural variability. Significant attention is given to this information as it provides a context for understanding the site influences on groundwater quality.

The evaluation of soil background/reference information presents the range of concentrations found, as well as (where possible), the 95% upper confidence limit (UCL) of the mean. The range is an indication of the variability in concentrations to be expected for this area. In some cases, the 95% UCL of the mean background/reference concentration provides a statistic that represents a concentration suitable for use in comparing to site mean concentrations. In this RFI, the 95% UCL of the mean background/reference concentration was also used as a highly conservative value for comparison to site soil analytical results on a point-by-point basis.

For surface water, sediment and groundwater, maximum background/reference concentrations were summarized in this RFI. All data will be retained for evaluation in the human health and ecological risk assessments. The definitive background comparison will be conducted in the risk assessment using a statistical approach consistent with EPA guidance (U.S. EPA, 2002).

Table 4.0-A lists the analytical parameters and the corresponding background/reference values for surface water, groundwater, soil, and sediment that were used for comparison purposes in this report.

4.0.1 References

U.S. EPA. 2002. Guidance for Comparing Background and Chemical Concentrations in Soil for CERCLA Sites. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA 540-R-01-003. OSWER 9285.7-41. September 2002

Tables

Table 4.0-A
Analytical Parameters and Corresponding Background Values
Phase 1 RFI Report
Rhodia Silver Bow Plant

| | | Surface Water | | | | | | | | | | | | Soil | | | Sediment | | |
|--|-----------|---------------|------|---------|-----------|------------------|---------|----------|------|-------------|-------|--------|---------|--------------|------|---------|----------|------|---------|
| | | Sheep Gulch | | | | Silver Bow Creek | | | | Groundwater | | | | | | | | | |
| Chemical Name | Fraction | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL | Max. | Min. | 95% UCL |
| General Parameters | | mg/l | | | | | | | | | | | | mg/kg | | | | | |
| Alkalinity, bicarbonate as CaCO ₃ | NA | 357 | -- | -- | 100 | -- | -- | 322 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Alkalinity, carbonate as CaCO ₃ | NA | 41 | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | 8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Chloride | NA | 125 | -- | -- | 30.6 | -- | -- | 386 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 59.7 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Fluoride | NA | 0.7 | -- | -- | 0.5 | -- | -- | 12.2 | -- | -- | 37 | 0.10 | 7.6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Fluoride by Bellack | NA | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 230 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Nitrate + Nitrite, as N | NA | 0.47 | -- | -- | 2.80 | -- | -- | 1.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Nitrogen, ammonia (NH ₃) as N | NA | 0.29 | -- | -- | 0.53 | -- | -- | 0.05 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 28.3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Phosphorus, elemental (white) | NA | 0.0000234 | -- | -- | 0.0000234 | -- | -- | 0.000716 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.00028 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Phosphorus, total | NA | 0.24 | -- | -- | 0.53 | -- | -- | 8.68 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 813 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Sulfate | NA | 35.6 | -- | -- | 115 | -- | -- | 72.6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 152 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Metals | | ug/l | | | | | | | | | | | | mg/kg | | | | | |
| Antimony | Dissolved | -- | -- | -- | 0.36 | -- | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 3.9 | 0.072 | 1.0 | 1.68 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | 0.29 | -- | -- | 0.36 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Arsenic | Dissolved | 4.5 | -- | -- | 6.8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 120 | 1.4 | 40 | 14.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 7.8 | -- | -- | 59.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Barium | Dissolved | 30.11 | -- | -- | 39.71 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 290 | 90 | 170 | 295 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 45.65 | -- | -- | 101 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Beryllium | Dissolved | 0.02 | -- | -- | 0.02 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.3 | 0.32 | 0.55 | 0.69 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.02 | -- | -- | 0.076 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cadmium | Dissolved | 0.03 | -- | -- | 0.15 | -- | -- | 2.7 | -- | -- | 8.9 | 0.09 | 1.1 | 1.47 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.33 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Calcium | Dissolved | 53200 | -- | -- | 54800 | -- | -- | 212000 | -- | -- | 14000 | 1300 | 4500 | 5740 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 54900 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Chromium | Dissolved | 0.5 | -- | -- | 0.3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 48 | 4.8 | 12 | 12.9 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 | -- | -- | 2.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Cobalt | Dissolved | 0.60 | -- | -- | 0.36 | -- | -- | 0.547 | -- | -- | 9.5 | 3.5 | 6.1 | 7.31 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.42 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Copper | Dissolved | 6.8 | -- | -- | 15.2 | -- | -- | 80 | -- | -- | 300 | 7.1 | 64 | 72.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 25.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Iron | Dissolved | 20 | -- | -- | 134 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 35300 | 11700 | 20600 | 19400 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 609 | -- | -- | 7040 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Lead | Dissolved | 0.08 | -- | -- | 0.36 | -- | -- | 30 | -- | -- | 190 | 3.8 | 35 | 29.0 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 2.24 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Magnesium | Dissolved | 12500 | -- | -- | 12800 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 5700 | 1700 | 3700 | 4760 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 12900 | -- | -- | 30700 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Manganese | Dissolved | 2.61 | -- | -- | 135 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1100 | 280 | 570 | 700 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 271.6 | -- | -- | 63.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mercury | Dissolved | 0.2 | -- | -- | 0.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.20 | 0.0020 | 0.038 | 0.033 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Nickel | Dissolved | 2.5 | -- | -- | 2.4 | -- | -- | 16 | -- | -- | 21 | 2.5 | 6.0 | 8.90 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 2.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Potassium | Dissolved | 2030 | -- | -- | 5700 | -- | -- | 16100 | -- | -- | 5300 | 1600 | 3200 | 4920 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 5700 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Selenium | Dissolved | 1.0 | -- | -- | 1.0 | -- | -- | 13 | -- | -- | 0.70 | 0.20 | 0.47 | 0.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 1.0 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Silver | Dissolved | 0.02 | -- | -- | 0.02 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7 | 0.20 | 0.35 | 0.25 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.05 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Sodium | Dissolved | 120000 | -- | -- | 31200 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 620 | 29 | 220 | 1000 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 30900 | -- | -- | 149000 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Strontium | Dissolved | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 300 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Thallium | Dissolved | 0.02 | -- | -- | 0.02 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.0 | 0.19 | 0.46 | 0.407 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | Total | -- | -- | -- | 0.02 | --</ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Phase 1 RFI Report
Rhodia Silver Bow Plant