



# Gold Hill Mill, Death Valley National Park Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis Fact Sheet

## Overview

The National Park Service (NPS) is investigating the abandoned Gold Hill Mill Site (Site) in the Death Valley National Park to evaluate cleanup options. The Site covers less than one acre and consists of the remnants of an old mill and other related mining paraphernalia (Figure 1). The Site is located in Warm Springs Canyon and accessed via 14 miles of infrequently graded dirt roads requiring



Figure 1 - View of Gold Hill Mill

high clearance four-wheel drive vehicles (Figure 2). Immediately west of the mill are the concrete foundations of a mill house. The mill is complete and well-preserved with evidence of mercury amalgamation. A slightly warm spring is less than a ¼ mile south of the mill Site. The mill structures are considered to be of regional significance and warrant nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

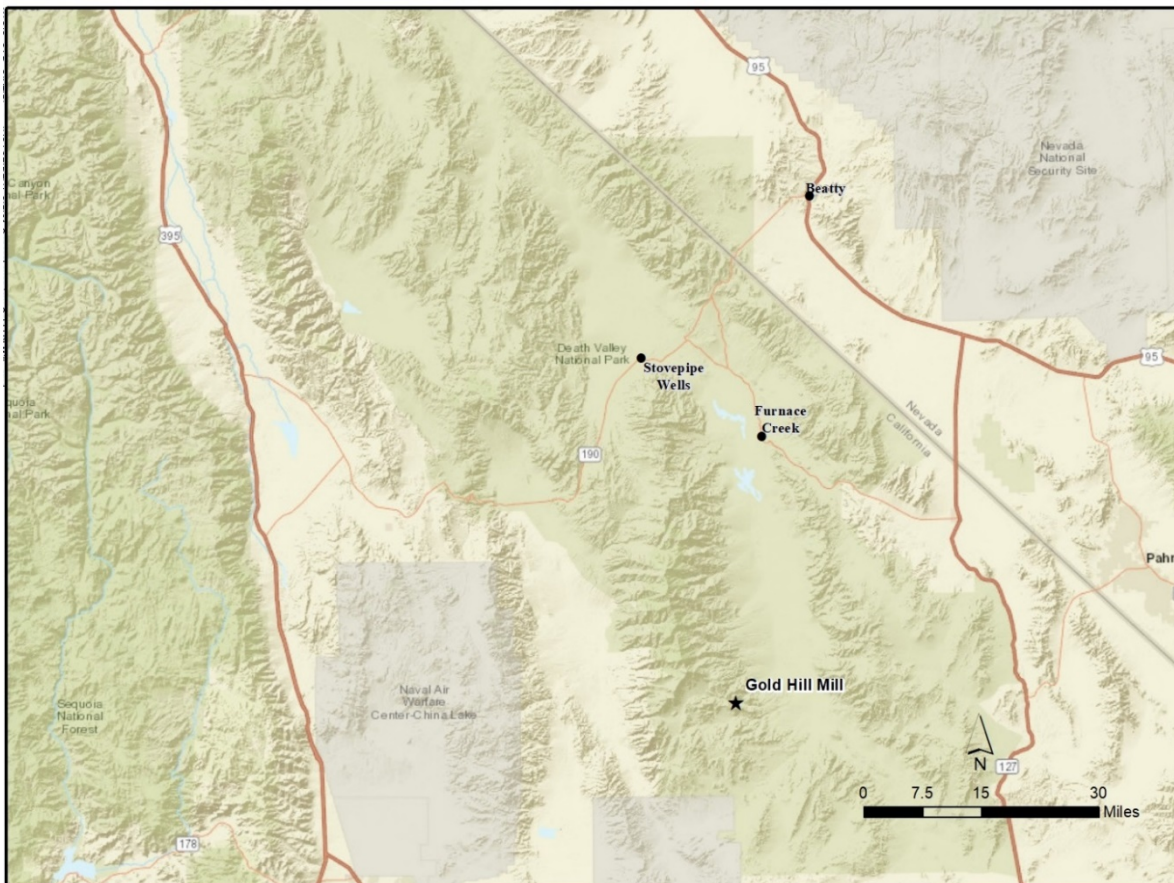


Figure 2 – Site Location Map



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## History of Gold Hill Mill

The Gold Hill Mill Site claim was filed in 1933, immediately prior to establishment of Death Valley National Monument. Louise Grantham was already leasing the Gold Hill Mine, and she established the Gold Hill Mill Site to use water from the nearby spring. The mill appears to have been built in the late 1930s. It is not known how long the mill operated. The mill processed gold-bearing ore from several nearby mines, including the Gold Hill Mine and Panamint Treasure Mine.

## Environmental Investigations at Gold Hill Mill Site

### Contaminants of Concern

The milling operations left behind hazardous materials at Gold Hill Site, such as mill tailings. The NPS is investigating Gold Hill to evaluate cleanup options, pursuant to Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Congress enacted CERCLA, also known as Superfund, in 1980 to address releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances into the environment.

A preliminary assessment of the Gold Hill Mill Site was conducted in 2014. Based on operational history and information gathered during the preliminary assessment, the chemicals of concerns were cyanide and metals. During a site inspection in 2016, soil and surface water samples were collected and analyzed for metals, cyanide, and pH. Soil samples were analyzed for acid-base accounting, a measure of the potential for acid mine drainage from the Site.

Concentrations of several metals--including lead, arsenic, antimony, and mercury were found at levels elevated above natural background conditions. Several metals exceeded regulatory levels that require further human and ecological risk evaluations. Acid mine drainage is not considered a concern at the Site

### Upcoming Investigations and Cleanup

The NPS has determined that preparation of an engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) is appropriate for Gold Hill Mill Site, based on the chemicals of concern found there. The EE/CA is being prepared to evaluate associated potential risks to human health, safety, and the environment; identify relevant cleanup requirements; and develop a range of cleanup alternatives for Gold Hill Mill Site. Once the range of cleanup alternatives are identified, the NPS will request public feedback during a public comment period.

## Further Information:

- **Online:** <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GoldHill>
- **Contact:** Abby Wines, Public Information Officer, 760-786-3221 or [abby\\_wines@nps.gov](mailto:abby_wines@nps.gov)
- **Full Documents Available to View:** [at Furnace Creek Visitor Center and Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station](#)