Cashier Mill, Death Valley National Park
Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis Fact Sheet

Overview

The National Park Service (NPS) is investigating the abandoned Cashier Mill Site (Site) in Death Valley National Park to evaluate cleanup options. The Site consists of the remains of former gold processing mill operations (Figure 1). Gold ore supplying the mill was taken from the nearby Cashier and Eureka Mines. Pink sand-size tailings are present in the vicinity of the mill foundation where cyanide and mercury processing took place. A separate tailing deposit is present upslope of the mill site. Access to the Site is via Emigrant Canyon Road (Figure 2).

Figure 1 - View of the Cashier Mill looking northeast.

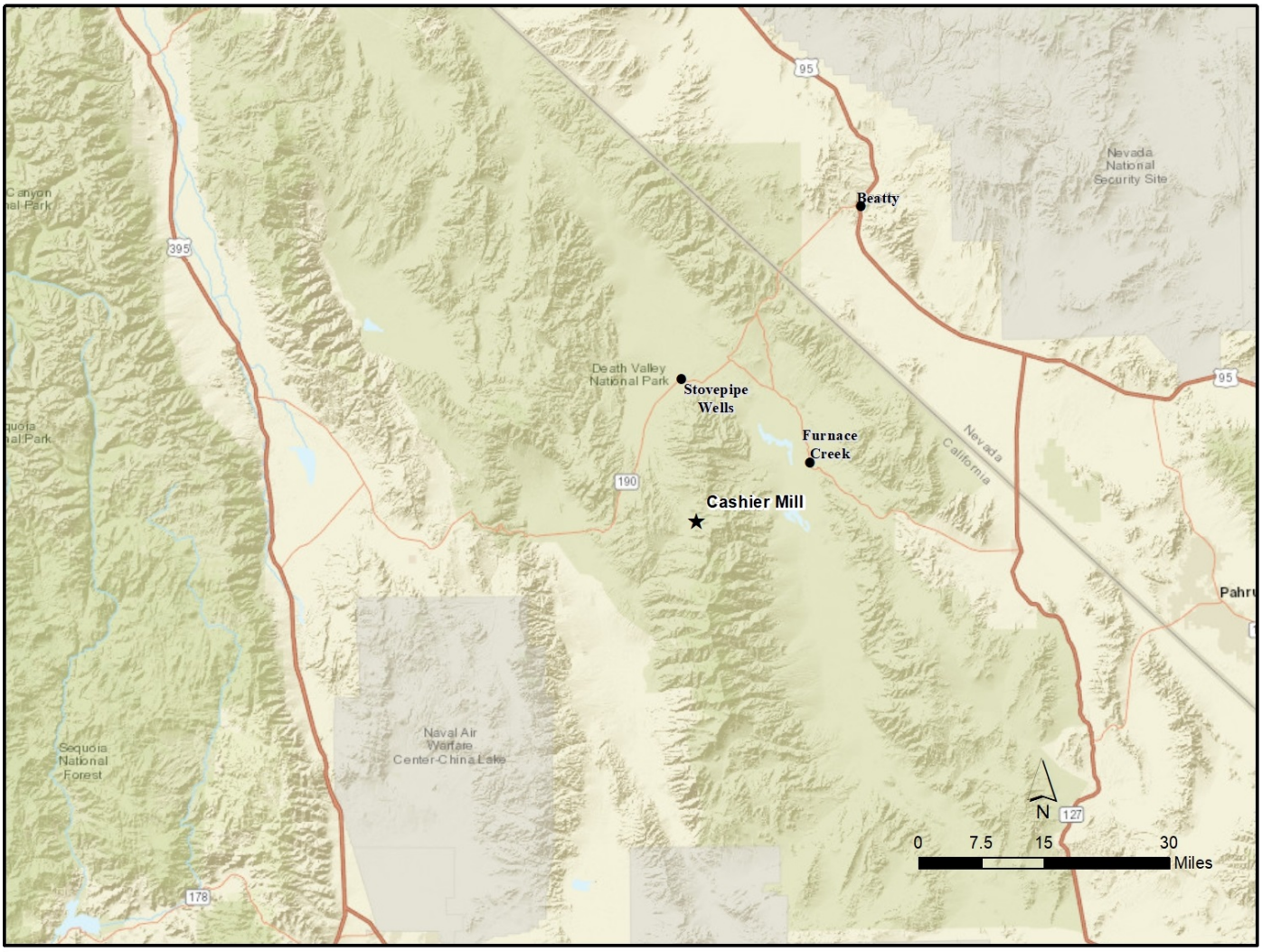

Figure 2 – Site Location Map

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History of Cashier Mill

Initially, a five-stamp amalgamation and concentration mill was built at the Site by the Cashier Gold Mining Company, and began operating in the summer of 1909. The Cashier Gold Mining Company also constructed a 7-mile pipeline to obtain water for the mill. In 1915, a five-stamp mill and cyanide plant was installed on the Cashier Mine property, either to replace the previous mill or because the previous mill was insufficient for the workload. In 1926, the Cashier Mill was listed as idle and was assumed closed, although mining in the area continued intermittently through the 1950s.

Environmental Investigations at Cashier Mill Site

Contaminants of Concern

The milling operations left behind hazardous materials at Cashier Mill Site, such as mill tailings. The NPS is investigating Cashier Mill Site 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 Cashier 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 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. In addition, a surface water sample, the result of an overnight rain storm, was collected for sampling. There are no perennial surface water bodies near the Site.

Concentrations of several metals--including antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, silver, and zinc exceeded the background levels. 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 Cashier 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 the Cashier Mill Site. Once the range of cleanup alternatives are identified, NPS will request public feedback during a public comment period.

Further Information:

- **Online:** https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Cashier
- **Contact:** Abby Wines, Public Information Officer, 760-786-3221 or abby_wines@nps.gov
- **Full Documents Available to View:** at Furnace Creek Visitor Center and Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station