

Fact Sheet: United Verde Soil Program

The United Verde Copper Company operated a copper smelter northwest of Clarkdale from 1915 to 1932. The smelter was reopened in 1935 when Phelps Dodge Corporation purchased United Verde and continued to operate until 1953. Freeport Minerals Corporation (Freeport) is the successor to Phelps Dodge Corporation.

Because the Clarkdale smelter operated in an era before emissions control equipment was commonly used, historical air emissions from the smelter may have deposited metal-bearing particles on nearby soil. Freeport decided to conduct a soil testing program to investigate potential smelter-related impacts to soil in the area of Clarkdale near the former smelter. If test results determine that metals concentrations in soil exceed the target cleanup levels, then Freeport will offer soil replacement and landscaping restoration. This soil testing and cleanup program is named the United Verde Soil Program.

The United Verde Soil Program (“Program”) is being undertaken voluntarily and will be overseen by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) through ADEQ’s Voluntary Remediation Program. As part of its role, ADEQ will review and approve all work plans to sample and clean up properties under the Program.

Under the Program, owners of eligible properties within an ADEQ-approved initial study area will be contacted and have the opportunity to have soil on their properties sampled and tested for smelter-related metals that are associated with the United Verde/Jerome ore body (lead, arsenic and copper). Common property types include developed residential, non-residential (e.g., commercial) and public (e.g., schools, parks) properties. If concentrations of one or more of these metals exceed soil target cleanup levels approved by ADEQ for the Program, Freeport will remove and replace the impacted soil and restore the landscaping in the reclaimed area to similar condition. All of this work will be conducted at no cost to the property owner and all participation is strictly voluntary.

Freeport will establish a community outreach office in the Town of Clarkdale to provide access to information about the Program. In addition, Freeport will send letters to property owners within the initial study area informing them of the opportunity for soil testing and to request that their properties be entered into the Program for initial soil sampling and testing. Once the sampling results from the properties entered into the Program are validated, Freeport will review the sampling results with ADEQ to evaluate the adequacy of the initial study area. Freeport will also schedule additional opportunities or events for property owners to ask questions and receive information on the Program specifics. Once Freeport obtains sufficient property owner interest in the Program, soil sampling and testing would begin - possibly as soon as the summer of 2015.

Until an office is established locally, please contact Alicia Voss at Freeport Minerals Corporation for general information on the Program, at 602-366-8049.